ONE LOCAL VOTE AT A TIME:
ELECTORAL PRACTICES OF KAZAN PROVINCE, 1766-1916

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By

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ABSTRACT

Local elections in the Russian Empire were conducted long before the Great Reforms in the mid-nineteenth century, the point from which many scholars have traditionally dated them; and gradually became a routine part of local life. Such practices were founded on the provincial reforms initiated by Peter the Great in the early eighteenth century, and were further solidified by the electoral procedures adopted for the 1766 elections to Catherine the Great’s Legislative Commission as well as by her local reforms. Through a series of case studies of local elections in the ethnically and religiously diverse Kazan province, this dissertation analyzes how local elections expanded into the early twentieth century, across a host of institutions, and suggests possible ways that future scholarship may place the electoral activity in the Russian Empire in a larger comparative context. The goals of this dissertation are to examine: 1) how people of various religious, ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds participated in the governance of Kazan province through elected institutions; 2) how elections served as a mechanism for negotiating life amidst such diversity of people, balancing the demands of the imperial government with the realities of the local context; and, 3) how local elections created experiences and practices that contributed to evolving notions of rights, participation, and representation as expressed in the words of voters themselves.

Research findings indicate that the habits of electoral practice served as ready experience and knowledge when the dynamic changes of the mid-nineteenth century ended serfdom and
reformed provincial administration, ushering in an era of greater self-government, more direct representation of individuals and interests, and more deliberate expression of political notions. These foundational habits of electoral practice served as a well-spring of experience that fed calls for fuller participation in the political decisions of the Russian Empire through elected delegates to a partially representative parliament. When this call was heeded in response to the 1905 revolution, the bedrock of practical electoral knowledge and experience held by Russia’s diverse peoples was already there, laid inadvertently by the processes initially implemented by the central government in need of more efficient local administration.
The research and writing of this dissertation is dedicated to ML, EBK.

I am grateful to Professors Catherine Evtuhov, Harley Balzer, David Goldfrank, and Eric Lohr for their insights and encouragement over many years and through many iterations of this project. I am also appreciative of the long-term support provided by the Department of History at Georgetown University and the U.S. National Academies.

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With sincere thanks,

RITA S. GUENTHER
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INTRODUCTION

A dispute arose from the participation of two merchants’ sons, one Tatar and one Russian, in the Kazan merchant elections for members of the orphans court in 1896. Had a mistake been made in allowing them to cast votes? Should their votes be disqualified and the elections be considered invalid? Yes, believed one member of the city’s powerful merchantry, Karl Ivanov¹ Shtiben, who filed a formal complaint with the provincial governor’s office arguing that since these two were the sons of merchants and did not own property individually, they should not have been allowed to participate in the elections, and the elections should therefore be invalidated and rerun – without the participation of the two “offenders.”

As routinely as the merchant elections had been conducted for decades, the governor’s office investigated Shtiben’s complaint, providing a ruling that was as telling as it was logical: while there were no clear legal statutes specifically addressing whether or not the sons of merchants could act as proxies for their parents and vote in elections of the merchant society, there seemed to be an accepted means of reasoning out whether or not they should have been allowed to participate.² The governor’s office determined that the legal statutes regarding official proxy voters for one estate (soslovie), the gentry, should be applied to another estate, in this case the merchantry, since the relevant legal statutes had what the governor described as “a general character.”³ In interpreting the statutes on proxy voters’ participation in elections for one estate as applicable to other estates, the governor drew on accumulated experience in overseeing

1 Patronymic names in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were at times written with the modern Russian endings (e.g., “-ich”), and at times, were written without them (e.g., ending with “-in” or “-ov”). This indicates that these rules were not standardized in practice as they are in modern Russian.
2 Proxies were officially designated, and later officially certified, persons who could act on behalf of someone who was not personally able to participate. Such persons were the old, infirm, and women. Depending upon the institution – estate institution or city administrative institution – proxies were empowered to conduct various actions such as voting and speaking on behalf of the person he represented. Proxies were often male relatives, especially sons, of the person who could not participate.
3 National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan (NA RT), f. 419, op. 1, d. 115, l. 8-9.
and certifying local elections to resolve the electoral inquiry; Mukhamet-Sadik Musin’s and
Pavel Mel’nikov’s votes were counted and the elections were allowed to stand.

At first glance, the ruling made by the governor’s office appears to have been a routine
and perhaps even a common sense solution to an ordinary inquiry – and it was. It is this routine,
almost matter-of-fact manner in which the merchant society’s elections were conducted and in
which Shtiben’s complaint was resolved that reveals something quite far from obvious about
local governance in the Russian Empire. Just as the Tatar and Russian merchants’ sons exercised
their rights to cast votes on behalf of their parents as proxies, and just as Shtiben exercised his
right to challenge the elections he deemed unlawful, so too did experience in overseeing
elections and interpreting legal statutes guide the verdict provided by the governor’s office. The
ease with which each of these people participated in the process of Kazan merchant elections
indicates the degree to which such processes of local elections themselves had become part of
the evolving electoral culture of Kazan province. Local elections had been occurring over the
course of more than a century across the Russian Empire, creating an electoral culture that
formed a slow, steady, and non-linear foundation of electoral procedures. These procedures and
associated practices, established by the imperial government in the early eighteenth century and
expanded and modified throughout the early twentieth, were repeated and ultimately developed a
series of electoral habits that may form a part of “lived liberalism” on the local level.

ELECTIONS IN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

It was reading of Russia’s contemporary electoral practices – their context and their
meaning – that led me to pose several initial questions about the nature of elections and electoral
politics more broadly. Why do people vote in elections? Is it an obligation, a choice, a right, a
responsibility, or simply an expected habit? Why did people choose to be listed as candidates for local elected office or to decline such service? Why hold elections if the outcome is known or deemed irrelevant? Why did people participate in or abstain from them? And, did the answers to these questions change over time?

These questions first led me to what most scholars have traditionally considered the epicenter of Russia’s electoral experience: the period of the Great Reforms in the middle of the nineteenth century that created bodies of locally elected rural and urban self-government in which all estates were permitted to participate albeit in an indirect, limited fashion. As often occurs with historical research, however, the desire to understand the elections of this period led me farther back in time than I had originally planned. In following the pull of my inquiry, a rich yet under-researched world of Russia’s evolving electoral history unfolded. What emerged from following the history of elections back to the provincial reforms of Catherine the Great, which established the first local elective institutions, was a set of practices that, rather than beginning with the zemstvo and duma elections in the 1860s and 1870s, had actually commenced much earlier. Further, Russia’s electoral history was broader in scope and range of institutions and organizations than previously considered, including such diverse entities as estate assemblies, institutions of local administration, and self-government, the Orthodox Church, and local courts.

As a result of elections practiced over such a long span of time in multiple institutions, electoral processes laid a foundation that provided the roots for elections in the periods of significant political change – the periods of the Great Reforms and of the State Dumas. It was during these periods that the evolution of Russia’s imperial electoral culture was particularly evident. My inquiry, initiated by several foundational questions and pursued through archival and secondary research, is centered around this long evolution, from the eighteenth century onward, during
which time elections were practiced on the local level in a perhaps somewhat unexpected number of institutions.

What the case of imperial Russian electoral culture suggests is that when and where people were given the ability to participate in local and eventually national elections, regardless of constraints imposed on that ability, they did so through a host of electoral practices reaching many more people than those who actually cast votes. In doing so, they expressed a developing political culture that included the principles of representation, normative as well as legal rights, participation and abstention, and the expression of individual and collective interests.

I also suggest that the experiences of Russia’s evolving electoral culture may be usefully compared with the historical experiences of other counties and regions of the world in ways not yet explored. Electoral experiences as disparate as those in nineteenth century Latin America, early twentieth century Ottoman Empire, and contemporary China suggest that comparative analysis may lead to new insights, such as: the degree to which groups often perceived as being excluded from the electoral process were actually involved (e.g. peasants, and ethnic or religious minorities); and the relationship between the formal electoral procedures and the sentiments that those voters expressed, particularly in non-democratic contexts. By placing Russia’s experience with local and eventually national elections in a larger comparative context, developments of electoral and political culture can be seen in a fuller, more complete light of broader, global electoral experience.

**ELECTING LOCALLY: KAZAN PROVINCE AND CHALLENGES OF IMPERIAL GOVERNANCE**

My understanding of how and why electoral practices developed as they did in the Russian Empire also required me to wade into the details of concrete experiences over time in a
steady, constant fashion. The best approach to such steady and constant analysis of electoral behavior, particularly given the sheer volume of source material available, is a case study. This is the approach I have chosen to both focus the lens of analysis on one collection of documents allowing for consistency and, further, in doing so to provide a narrative context of real experience through which to understand the broader electoral experience across the empire. Real people voted and protested elections, and it is their voices that emerge through this narrative. Likewise, it was real people, motivated by a variety of reasons, whom they elected. While providing necessary and essential clarity making possible the study of broader phenomena, the focus on a single province, specifically Kazan province, illuminates questions uniquely relevant to its location in the empire – in terms of geography as well as identity. Why Kazan?

Given Kazan’s early incorporation into the Russian Empire in 1552, by the time that elections became a regular practice of local governance, the province was considered a core territory in European Russia as well as an essential military and commercial center, and was therefore given the same administrative structures by the central government as other European provinces. In this way, the electoral and political experiences of those in Kazan province were similar to those of other core imperial territories. The electoral practices of these areas was far more extensive than previously considered and part of the larger, expanding narrative of electoral politics. Kazan, however, has always played a singular and unique role in the empire as the gateway to the east, to Asia.

With a diverse population of many ethnic groups, languages, and religions, dominated by Islam, animism, and by Orthodox efforts at conversion, Kazan has long symbolized Russia’s Eurasian identity – both western and eastern at the same time. On the eastern frontier, Kazan has also symbolized Russia’s imperial identity – having conquered the Tatar capital in the sixteenth
century, the expanding Muscovite state could thereby claim the status of empire. Bearing the multiple dualities of east and west, frontier and core, Kazan as the center of this study provides the means by which to grasp at once the details of electoral practices consistent with other European territories while also uniquely illuminating questions that were at the crux of Russia’s imperial experience – the challenges of governing a multi-ethnic, multi-national, and multi-confessional empire. Situated as much at the conceptual as at the geographical crossroads of east and west, Kazan province provides a combination of experiences both consistent with and divergent from that of other provinces of the empire. As such, Kazan is an important case study of imperial electoral practices. Similarly, the electoral processes practiced by Kazan’s many peoples were consistent with the core practices experienced elsewhere – completing voter lists, casting voting balls into boxes – yet were also divergent in that they adapted elective institutions and electoral rules to the local realities reflective of their diversity: the defiant acceptance of Old Believer candidates and the mosaic constellation of institutions rather than one dominant institution.

Located at the confluence of the Volga and Kama Rivers, the province of Kazan as an administrative unit of the young empire was established in 1708 by the provincial reforms of Peter the Great. After centuries of Russian migration into the region and the assimilation of non-Russians, by the mid-nineteenth century ethnic Russians comprised a considerable portion of the diverse population in Kazan province.⁴ According to the first national census conducted in 1897, the province had a population of 2,170,665 people, 1,059,388 men and 1,111,277 women.⁵ Of the approximately 2.2 million people who lived in the province, 8.5% were city dwellers –

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⁵ N. A. Troinitskii, ed., Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis’ naseleniia rossiiskoi imperii 1897 g.: XIV. Kazanskaiia guberniia,” (St. Petersburg: Izdanie tsentral’nago statisticheskago komiteta ministerstva vnutrennikh del, 1904), iv.
129,959 of whom lived in Kazan. The ethnicity of the population, for the purposes of the census, was determined by native language, and the census determined the following ethnic composition of the province:

Table I: Ethnic composition of Kazan province based on the 1897 census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>398,939</td>
<td>434,401</td>
<td>833,340</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>332,301</td>
<td>348,118</td>
<td>675,419</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuvash</td>
<td>248,845</td>
<td>253,197</td>
<td>502,042</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheremis⁸</td>
<td>59,963</td>
<td>62,754</td>
<td>122,717</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mordvinian</td>
<td>11,003</td>
<td>11,184</td>
<td>22,187</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Votiak</td>
<td>4,892</td>
<td>4,787</td>
<td>9,679</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>1,317</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>1,381</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>1,155</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>1,045</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>1,059,388</td>
<td>1,111,277</td>
<td>2,170,665</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 1897 census also recorded the religious beliefs of the province’s population, as summarized in the following table.

Table II. Religious beliefs of populations of Kazan province as recorded in the 1897 census⁹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox and edinovertsy</td>
<td>728,058</td>
<td>768,539</td>
<td>1,496,597</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>311,568</td>
<td>321,456</td>
<td>633,024</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Believers and others who left Orthodoxy</td>
<td>10,302</td>
<td>13,232</td>
<td>23,534</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Non-Christians</td>
<td>6,135</td>
<td>6,339</td>
<td>12,474</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>1,558</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>2,014</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>1,558</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestants</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>1,417</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christians</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>1,059,388</td>
<td>1,111,277</td>
<td>2,170,665</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

⁶ Troinitskii, Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis’, iv.
⁷ Adapted from ibid., v.
⁸ This ethnic group is currently called Mari.
⁹ Adapted from Troinitskii, Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis’, vii.
Taking these two together – ethnicity (as determined by native language) and religion – the population of Kazan province according to the 1897 census was as follows:

Table III. Ethnicity of the population of Kazan province, correlated with religion as recorded in the 1897 census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Orthodox</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Pagans</th>
<th>Other Christians and Non-Christian Faiths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>97.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>93.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuvash</td>
<td>98.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheremis</td>
<td>97.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mordvinian</td>
<td>99.6%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Votiak</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the 1897 census data is perhaps the best available information about the population of the empire at the time, as I. K. Zagidullin outlines in his analysis of the conduct of the census in Kazan province, it should be read and interpreted with caution, as there were many problems associated with the preparations for and conduct of the census. The experience of the taking of the 1897 census in Kazan province reflected many of the most sensitive political and social issues, including the conversion and Russification policies of the government, and local efforts at improving primary education. Nonetheless, these figures provide a helpful sketch of the peoples who lived in the diverse province.

The Tatar population was largely engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry, and crafts (sewing, weaving, and making leather goods). This served as the basis for the trading activity of the Tatar merchants who were prominent throughout the empire and beyond; the significant Tatar merchant class was well-educated and supported a great deal of charity activity including

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10 Reproduced from ibid.
11 See I. K. Zagidullin, Perepis’ 1897 goda i tatary Kazanskoi gubernii (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 2000).
local schools, hospitals and food banks for the needy. Their prominence was also visible in their involvement in the political life of Kazan. The Bashkirs were also primarily Muslims and engaged in semi-nomadic agriculture. The Chuvash people largely converted from animism to Orthodoxy and represented large majorities of the population in certain areas of Kazan province as well as neighboring Simbirsk province.

While efforts at conversion had been ongoing from times predating Kazan’s incorporation into the empire, there was a particularly aggressive conversion effort in the 1740s that resulted in many thousands of conversions from Islam, animism, and other traditional beliefs to Russian Orthodoxy. The newly baptized non-Russian Orthodox Christians were called novokreshchenye. The Office for the Affairs of New Converts (Kontora novokreshchenkh del), located in the province’s city of Sviiazhsk, was primarily responsible for these conversion efforts, including offering of freedom from the military draft, tax breaks, and the direct payment of cash, clothes, and food to those who had converted. As a result, those converted by such means were often viewed as being unreliable, and indeed a large number reverted back to Islam in the first decades of the nineteenth century when imperial policies were more tolerant. In addition to focusing on converting people, these efforts included direct attacks on Islam as hundreds of mosques were destroyed and the building of new ones was prohibited. This only exacerbated tensions in the province and often led to violent resistance. With the closing of the Kontora in 1764, the conversions continued in a much more muted tone. However, both the scale and intensity of earlier conversion efforts left an indelible mark on the history of Kazan province, and even after the mass conversions ended, fear of a new wave long remained among the non-Orthodox peoples.
With the provincial reforms of Catherine the Great, Kazan province was divided into 12 districts (uezdy), which were further divided into counties (volosti). These jurisdictional territories had corresponding administrative and judicial units, many of which had either fully or partially elected institutions. In addition to these elected bodies, the estate assemblies introduced under Catherine the Great’s reign were also elected; the Orthodox Church held local elections for church wardens, and Church representatives participated in other local elections as well. Muslim officials participated extensively in local elections, and many ballot lists identify candidates and voters as mullahs or sons of mullahs. There is archival evidence that elections occurred in Islamic institutions on the most local of levels, i.e. at the level of individual mosques and in Muslim communities and neighborhoods, but I could find no evidence of how these elections occurred, nor I did find reference to how these elections occurred in secondary sources. In the twentieth century, both Orthodox priests and their sons, and mullahs and sons of mullahs were elected as delegates from Kazan province to the State Duma.

As the Great Reforms and the 1905 revolution brought considerable change to the empire and to Kazan province, its diverse peoples engaged in greater degrees of self-government and political expression. They also continued to engage in electoral practices largely as they had since the mid-eighteenth century, conveying through not only the direct act of casting their ballots, but also through their complaints about electoral improprieties, their own evolving notions of participation, representation, rights and interests. The Tatars, Russians, Chuvashes, Bashkirs, Old Believers, Orthodox Christians, and Muslims of Kazan province participated in numerous elections over time and in various local institutions, those important ones and those

12 The districts of Kazan province were: Cheboksary, Chistopol’, Kazan, Koz’modem’iansk, Laishev, Mamadysh, Spassk, Sviazhsk, Tetiushi, Tsarevokokoshaisk, Tsivil’sk, and Iadrinsk.
13 This evidence may exist in other sources or in other collections, or in Tatar language archival documents.
less so, gaining in professionalism of practice, and ultimately articulating their own evolving political interests and demands.

**Sources for this Study**

The primary source base for this study is the wide collection of archival documents associated with the spectrum of local elections in Kazan province found at the National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan (NA RT). These documents include official election papers and materials (voter lists, ballots, election confirmation paperwork) and other documents associated with elections such as complaints prior to and following the elections, letters requesting dismissal or absence from service, and inquiries into electoral irregularities. These documents are substantial in number, and from the mid-nineteenth century, in detail as well. Given the frequency of fires in Kazan that destroyed many of the archival documents from the period prior to the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the documents available for the mid- to late eighteenth century, expectedly, are not as numerous as those for subsequent periods, however, they are still sufficient in number to provide a glimpse of electoral practices from the late eighteenth century on. Those electoral documents available from the first half of the nineteenth century are not only more numerous, they are more diverse in nature, and include those of the estate assemblies, local administrative institutions, and the Orthodox Church. They also include many letters and petitions from those who either chose to participate in the elections or those who wished to be relieved of service.

The document base regarding the various local elections conducted in the second half of the nineteenth century is richer in quantity, quality, and scope. They consistently span the full electoral cycle from the calling of elections through the resolution of any questions or challenges.
that may have arisen. Having examined the majority of these electoral documents from the late eighteenth century through the last years of the empire available at NA RT, I specifically chose to focus my analysis on the electoral complaints filed by those who either participated in or were interested in various local elections. This subset of electoral documents comprises complaints filed by nearly all peoples in the province. These complaints fall into several broad categories: complaints about technical issues with the conduct of elections or with the eligibility of candidates or voters; complaints about service either by those who strove to participate or by those who wished to avoid service; and complaints about the validity of the elections, based on (real or perceived) moral or technical problems. There were also numerous inquires about the proper conduct of elections themselves.

Collectively, these complaints also provide a particularly valuable vantage point from which to understand how and why elections were conducted because the participants themselves often elaborated their reasoning for filing their complaints. In articulating the reasoning behind their complaints, they themselves open a window into the way that they understood the electoral practices of which they were a part. At other times, it was the competing descriptions of what happened during local elections, presented by multiple participants, that provided a more telling view of motivations for electoral participation or avoidance and divergent perceptions of local elections in the minds of those participants. These complaints, and official responses to them, reveal a perhaps surprising degree of engagement in elections, even when that engagement was motivated by personal interest. Likewise, a great deal is revealed through those documents associated with the complaints, including the official inquiries into the alleged problems, statements from others involved in the cases, and any appeals to the inquires. Of the complaints examined for this study, the majority of filers were not successful in achieving their desired
result, yet there was still a large number – perhaps approximately 20% in the second half of the nineteenth century and fewer in the twentieth century – that were decided in favor of the filer. This affirmative response rate did not deter others from filing complaints - over time, the number of complaints increased as did the degree to which the filer elaborated the reasoning behind the complaint. There were also a handful of cases for which either no resolution was recorded or the resolution was not available in the archival documents.

While the traditional focus of scholarly attention following the 1905 revolution has been on the national elections for the four State Dumas, I chose to maintain my focus primarily on local elections. I did, however, examine some complaints associated with elections for the State Duma. Consistent with, yet beyond the complaints filed in previous decades, those from the twentieth century were more articulate and often more explicitly expressed overtly political concerns of the person filing the complaint. Understandably, considering the limited franchise that until the twentieth century that excluded peasants, a greater number of peasants filed complaints about twentieth century elections than they did previously, although beginning with the earliest zemstvo elections in the 1860s, peasants either filed their own complaints (often drafted by others) or were parties to complaints filed by multiple people. Finally, the routine nature of electoral practices is also evident in a body of documents examined in detail elections from two of Kazan province’s cities, Tetiushi and Spassk from 1910-1916. The stenographic records of their local elections, including those for members to the increasingly prevalent commissions and committees, reveal that electoral practices were accepted to the extent that there were almost no inquires about how to conduct elections as there had been in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.
Taken together, the considerable volume of Kazan’s local electoral documents spanning more than a century, demonstrates that not only were elections more widely held over a longer period of time and in a broader range of institutions than is generally understood, but also the significance of that repetition is revealed in the explicit articulation of political notions in the context of local elections as expressed by the participants themselves. Rather, the issues that lay behind the inquiries into those elections were of a political nature: participation, normative and legal rights, individual and collective interests, and representation.

Complementing these archival documents, I also utilized memoir literature to provide a better understanding of why people chose to participate as elected officials, how they understood their roles, and how they conducted the activities of the elected institutions. While the memoirs available from Kazan’s elected officials are few, those available for the period of time examined in this dissertation provided invaluable insights into the personalities of elected officials and into the motivations for their actions, whether personal or on behalf of their institutions or constituents.

Likewise, local newspapers from Kazan province, in particular Kazanskii birzhevoi listok and Volzhskii vestnik, often contrasted the observations of those provided in memoirs to criticize local officials and their actions, or lack thereof. Further, through these two types of published primary sources, interactions among the province’s diverse populations is seen in a more stark light, providing different perspectives than those offered either by the archival documents or the secondary sources utilized in this study.

Given its long view of the evolution of electoral practices, this study also draws upon and responds to several bodies of secondary sources representing a wide range of existing scholarship. Central to my research were works on the provincial reforms of Catherine the
Great, the Legislative Commission, the reign of Nicholas I, the Great Reforms, the 1905 revolution, and the State Duma, as well as comparative electoral history. Equally central to my research were works of local history by scholars in Russia – a source base rarely and insufficiently utilized in the past for studies such as this dissertation. In thematic terms, these and other works examine the local political and social context in which elections occurred, the overarching historical narrative of which the local context is a part, the institutions and organizations through which and for which elections were conducted, and the broader experience of elections beyond the Russian Empire.

The electoral experiment of Catherine the Great’s Legislative Commission and provincial reforms provide the basis of Russia’s imperial electoral history, and therefore of my study. This foundation led me to works on Catherine the Great’s reign, specifically to Isabel de Madariaga’s comprehensive and detailed study of the subject. While de Madariaga, along with other prominent scholars of the eighteenth century such as John LeDonne, explain the motivations behind Catherine’s Enlightenment-influenced Commission and her provincial reforms as a desire for more efficient imperial governance, neither they nor other scholars have examined these twin initiatives through the lens of Russia’s electoral experience. Therefore, while well-known to nearly all historians of Russia, the perspective raised through this dissertation offers a new way of examining these foundational works. This is true for the primary source materials of the Legislative Commission, the nakazy (instructions), utilized by Zenon E. Kohut and John Walter Sinton, and other historians for purposes other than electoral history.

15 Isabel de Madariaga, Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981).
Next, while taking existing scholarship on the reign of Nicholas I as a point of departure, I endeavor to contribute to the reconsideration of the second quarter of the nineteenth century as overly bureaucratic, and hence, static and stagnant. Specifically, I build upon the classic works of Bruce Lincoln, including his study of enlightened bureaucrats and his biography of Nicholas I. Lincoln’s characterization of the reign as heavily bureaucratic and clouded by secrecy obscures a more nuanced and dynamic picture that emerges through archival documents, which provide a glimpse into a more lively and active world of electoral experiences.

These classic works, by Lincoln and others, however, have been complemented and challenged by new scholarship that seeks to provide a more complete and multifaceted image of the era of Nicholas I and of the emperor himself. Among the book-length works to analyze the epoch is Rossiia v nikolaevskoe vremia, that opens with the essential observation that Nicholas’s reign was one of contradictions, which in part accounts for the emerging diversity of scholarship on a host of specific topics. Among these topics is the analysis provided by A. N. Biktasheva about governors in the first half of the nineteenth century (based on her archival research on Kazan province). Among the factors that local governors had to balance were the lack of firm parameters defining their position, the strength of the local estates, and an emerging practice of the submission of complaints to the government by people of the province. Other works that challenge the once-accepted notion of the second quarter of the nineteenth century as dark and

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20 Lincoln, *In the Vanguard of Reform*.
22 A. M. Biktasheva, “Kazanskoe gubernatorstvo pervoi poloviny XIX veka: antropologiya vlasti” (avtoreferat dissertatsii na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni doktora istoricheskikh nauk, Kazanskii (Privolzhskii) federal’nyi universitet, 2011).
bureaucratically stagnant, particularly in the provinces, is that of Andreas Kappeler, who describes imperial policies of Russification as far from uniform and dependent on local specificities.\(^{23}\) This conclusion is important in terms of understanding imperial policies in the context of Kazan.

Logically developing out of the bureaucratic reforms of Nicholas I and the crisis over defeat in the Crimean War were the Great Reforms (1855-1881), studied in the edited volumes by Ben Eklof, et al.,\(^{24}\) and Terence Emmons and Wayne S. Vucinich.\(^{25}\) These works, along with many written by scholars in Russia on various aspects of the Great Reforms and the institutions of self-government in Kazan province (zemstvo and the reformed city dumas) provided both the broad, universal outlines of the reform period as well as the local specifics regarding how the institutions functioned in the province, who was involved in the institutions, and how the province itself was affected by and affected the political, social and economic changes of the era. These works – both general and specific in nature – provide a multi-dimensional view of the province in the second half of the nineteenth century, within which I situated my study of local elections. Through the detailed descriptions of elections provided in the complaints of voters and the critiques of the activities of the local zemstvos and city dumas described in the published secondary sources, not only does a view of the electoral history of Kazan province emerge, but so too does a richer picture of the Great Reform period. I therefore aim to contribute to these more detailed analyses of the Great Reforms in Kazan province and to challenge the often overly-positive assessment that emerges of these institutions. This is consistent with the continuous scholarly re-evaluation of the era as superbly described by Andrei A. Iartsev in his

article which opens with a useful historiographical essay and challenges overly positive assessments of the work of the zemstvos, for example.\footnote{Andrei A. Iartsev, “Organy zemskogo samoupravleniia i mestnaia administratsiia v 1864-1904 gg. (na materialakh severo-zapadnykh gubernii Rossii),” \textit{Acta Slavica Iaponica}, 20 (2003).}

The landmark study of the long 1905 revolution by Abraham Ascher narrates in exceptional detail and clarity the multiple years of revolution,\footnote{Abraham Ascher, \textit{The Revolution of 1905: Russia in Disarray} (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988) and Abraham Ascher, \textit{The Revolution of 1905: Authority Restored} (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992).} culminating in the October Manifesto and the elections to the State Duma. A recently-published collection of articles on the 1905 revolution in the Volga region provides more locally-specific analysis of the revolution based on newly-available archival materials, and in particular focuses on the local activities of the new political parties legally permitted in 1905.\footnote{E. A. Molev, A. V. Medvedev, and F. A. Seleznev, eds., \textit{Pervaia russkaia revoliutsiia v Povolzhe: voprosy istorii, istoriografii i istochnikovedeniia. Materialy Vserossiiskoi nauchnoi konferentsii 21 oktiabria 2005 года} (Nizhni Novgorod: NNGU, 2006).} These parties transitioned into full campaigning for the State Duma elections after the October Manifesto, advocating throughout the province for their ideas and for the votes for the first national elections. Works such as this one are essential to providing local views of events that have long been described on a national level.

For its detail, comprehensive approach, and copious statistics as well as keen analysis, the best book outlining the elections for the first State Duma remains \textit{The Formation of Political Parties and the First National Elections in Russia} by Terence Emmons.\footnote{Terence Emmons, \textit{The Formation of Political Parties and the First National Elections in Russia} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).} Emmons, however, did not have access to local archives and there was unable to view the elections from the vantage point of detailed documentary evidence about the elections for the Duma in relation to other concurrent local elections – a dimension I add here. Diliara Usmanova’s well-researched works on Kazan’s delegates to the four State Dumas and the Muslim fraction connect the concerns and
interests of the Muslim population of the province with the larger history of the Duma experiment. This research connects to mine by providing a view of the national stage that the local concerns had reached. The State Duma elections have been extensively studied (by Emmons, Usmanova, and many others), and therefore, I focus instead on the local elections that occurred throughout the period for four State Dumas and which have less frequently been the subject of electoral analysis in the early twentieth century. This approach illuminates a thus-far absent glimpse of the influence of the national elections and party politics on local voters’ sentiment and on the overall evolution of the local political culture.

Also of particular importance to my work were several studies conducted by scholars of Kazan, Islam, and the Muslim populations of the empire. Specifically influential were Paul W. Werth’s study of confessional policies in the Volga-Kama Region, Robert Geraci’s study of national identity in Kazan, and Allen J. Frank’s study of Muslim institutions in imperial Russia. These works allowed me to examine various aspects of how the local diversity of Kazan province reflected larger historical trends in the Russian Empire, particularly religious and ethnic issues. This dissertation takes the same approach, that of a local perspective addressing ethnic and religious issues, yet focuses, specifically and originally, on the phenomenon of elections examined through the case study of Kazan province. As with these works, my study underscores the complexity of governance in the multi-ethnic, multi-confessional empire, in which centrally-introduced reforms from above take on local characteristics through an iterative process of adaptation, modification and active response based on local needs and local

30 D. M. Usmanova, Deputaty ot Kazanskoi gubernii v Gosudarstvennoi Dume Rossii, (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 2006), and D. M. Usmanova, Musul’manskaia fraktsiia i problemy “svobody sovesti” v Gosudarstvennoi Dume Rossii (1906-1917) (Kazan: Master Lain, 1999).
31 Werth, At the Margins of Orthodoxy.
33 Allen J. Frank, Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia: The Islamic World of Novouzensk District and the Kazakh Inner Horde, 1780-1910 (Boston: Brill, 2001).
conditions. Far from passive recipients of imposed change, the non-Russian areas of the empire with large Muslim populations learned to coexist with imperial structures, often finding a means of benefitting the local communities to the greatest extent possible. I, therefore, situate my work more closely with that of Robert Crews, who found adaptation to and co-opting of Russia’s institutions by Muslim populations of the empire to be a common approach to addressing their specific concerns in the imperial context.34 This was true of the electoral experiences of Kazan province as seen through the complaints that allowed for local modification of electoral practices and even for the creation of parallel elected institutions.

The works of scholars in Russia, particularly those who have focused on local history, and often-neglected by Western historians, have formed a fruitful source base for my study. Providing considerable insight into the functioning of local communities, and local institutions, these works detail the rich texture of daily social, political and economic life without which the local elections of Kazan province have little context. Further, many of these scholars, drawing on Tatar-language sources, represent a bridge between the archival documents and published primary sources written in Tatar and the Russian-language scholarship of local history. They therefore offer access to materials otherwise difficult to incorporate. While often more descriptive than analytical in nature, these works served to enhance my reading of the local landscape, through which I was then able to analyze the specific electoral cases presented in official complaints.

In particular, Ramil’ Khairutdinov’s study of the Tatar ratusha (town hall) and his study of state villages provided considerable insight into both urban and rural politics of the province’s

34 Robert Crews, For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009)
Tatar population.\textsuperscript{35} The overall urban landscape of Kazan and other cities on the Volga is presented eloquently by A. N. Zorin, et al.\textsuperscript{36} The work of Zorin and his colleagues, for example, brings out the economic activity that motivated the actions of many elected officials who were part of families that, by the close of the nineteenth century, considerably influenced local economic and political life of the province and its growing cities. These works gave dimension and diversity to the local landscape that may have otherwise remained without the necessary perspective to understand why and how elections functioned as they did in Kazan province among such a diverse group of peoples.

Finally, I aim to situate my study of Russia’s imperial electoral history in a much broader, comparative context by suggesting initial outlines for more extensive research on historical and contemporary electoral culture. To date, there is a relatively small number of comparative works on the global history of elections. The most far reaching contemporary work is aptly titled \textit{Elections Before Democracy}, that contains insightful chapters on the electoral experiences of Latin America and Europe.\textsuperscript{37} With the exception of a much earlier comprehensive work by Charles Seymour and Donald Paige Frary,\textsuperscript{38} the history of elections largely resides outside the bounds of comparison in works focused on national or subnational elections such as those in Europe, Latin America, and the United States. An even smaller number of works include elections held in the Ottoman and Austrian Empires, and there are very few works on historical elections in other parts of the world such as Asia or Africa. Among the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{35} R. Khairutdinov, \textit{Upravlenie gosudarstvennoi derevnei Kazanskoj gubernii (konets XVIII - pervaja tret’ XIX v.)} (Kazan: Izdatel’stvo Instituta istorii AN RT, 2002).
\item \textsuperscript{38} Charles Seymour, and Donald Paige Frary, \textit{How the World Votes: The Story of Democratic Development in Elections} (Springfield, MA: C.A. Nichols, 1918).
\end{itemize}
most helpful of the national-level studies is that by Margaret Lavinia Anderson on Germany’s experience with practicing democracy in which she argues that while the elections in nineteenth century Germany did not make Germany democratic, they did provide useful practice that was drawn upon in the later development of democracy. More detailed, regional-, national-, or subnational-level studies such as Anderson’s would also provide a much-welcomed basis for future comparative study. The Russian Empire has not been included in these comparative works, nor have these works been seriously integrated into work on of Russia’s electoral history. My study seeks to provide initial groundwork in the form of a detailed case study for future research on comparative electoral studies. Given the focus on either western European experiences or that of colonial independence movements, comparative studies involving Russian experience would benefit from reconceptualizing the research questions posed thus far to include those of governing a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional empire (such as that of the Ottoman or Hungarian Empire), how local elections contributed to the evolution of electoral culture in the absence of national elections, or how elections occurred over time in unusual and unpredicted places.

Based on current scholarship taken as a whole, Russia is largely understood to be governed from the imperial center by tsars who had considerable power and authority over the empire, leaving little room for local initiative or for local elections to fill local administrative positions. Yet, as the primary sources examined throughout this dissertation indicate, particularly in conjunction with the memoirs, newspapers and the secondary sources analyzed, elections of all types did occur in expected and unexpected places. The foundation of this electoral experience can be traced back to the Manifesto of December 14, 1766, which outlined

the procedures to be followed to elect deputies from around the empire to attend Catherine the Great’s Legislative Commission. These electoral procedures were followed for the institutions established by her provincial reforms, which themselves were built upon the provincial reforms of Peter the Great. By examining a source previously unexamined, that of electoral complaints filed by voters who participated in Kazan’s local elections, the evolution of Russia’s local electoral culture from these eighteenth century roots emerges. This culture provided the foundation for the new electoral experiences and political sentiments that developed as a result of the significant changes introduced by the Great Reforms, and which continued throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and the first 15 years of the twentieth century when national elections were introduced. The electoral experiences, examined through the example of Kazan province, can provide not only the basis for further study of other regions of the Russian Empire, for example, a comparison with the western and Baltic provinces, but also for comparative analysis with other areas of the world where elections occurred before democracy.

**Plan of this Study**

Chapter 1 outlines how the essential elements of Russia’s imperial electoral experience were established, and how they were adapted to the local realities of Kazan province. First, by reinterpreting published materials on the Legislative Commission, I detail how the centrally-initiated electoral processes were established and how they were reflected in Kazan province’s participation in the Commission itself. Second, I present a portrait of Kazan province in the eighteenth century based on the instructions (*nakazy*) sent with the elected deputies to the Commission from the diverse province. Third, I outline in brief the provincial reforms of Catherine the Great – and their antecedents in the provincial reforms of Peter the Great – to
establish the context in which local elected institutions developed and functioned in Kazan province. Based on this outline, I aim to demonstrate how the electoral practices followed for those institutions continued the procedures established for the Legislative Commission, thereby shaping not only the institutional landscape of local administration, but also the electoral practices that filled those institutions with officials who conducted the local administration of the province. Finally, I endeavor to bring these elements together to provide an in-depth analysis of how Catherine’s centralizing reforms shaped one essential, locally-elected administrative institution reflective of the diversity of the province - that of the Tatarskaia ratusha.

In Chapter 2, I first describe how and why the local bureaucracy expanded in the first half of the nineteenth century, increasing the quantity of locally elected offices. In so doing, I contribute to recent scholarship that questions the standard image of the age of Nicholas I as excessively bureaucratic and therefore centrally-directed and static. Second, I outline the landscape of these locally elected offices and who was eligible to participate in the elections for those offices both as voters and as candidates, and demonstrate that these local institutions played a primary role in local administration on a daily basis. Finally, I show how elections themselves were an increasing means of filling the expanding positions necessary for the functioning of Kazan province. During the first half of the nineteenth century, through the concurrent expansion of the bureaucracy that brought more elected offices, and the gradual professionalization of officials and the practices used to elect them, increasingly the electoral process itself involved the local population in the administration of their province.

Chapter 3 aims to demonstrate a link between the electoral experiences of the Great Reform period and the procedures and practices of preceding decades that provided roots for electoral culture in the new era; a connection that has thus far been insufficiently explored by
historians. This prior experience provided existing voters considerable understanding of the basic elements of elections, including filing official complaints. The introduction of these new institutions following the emancipation of the serfs expanded the franchise, incorporating approximately 22 million peasants as well as others. As a result of these tremendous changes, initiated from above, not only did elements of the electoral procedure change, but perhaps even more revealing, the sentiments and thoughts of those who participated in elections for these new institutions evolved considerably from those expressed earlier in the nineteenth century.

Archival cases of complaints, the memoirs of an elected zemstvo representative, and local newspapers, suggest that these new sentiments were part of an evolving, emergent political culture. Specifically, rights of participation, representation, jurisdictional matters, religious and ethnic qualifications for participation, and increasing knowledge and familiarity with electoral procedures and practices all were expressed through official complaints filed by those involved in Kazan’s local elections. Through the lens of memoirs, I examine several areas of critical activity by the zemstvos and the city dumas, in particular primary education and the incorporation of Kazan into the imperial railroad network, and the connection between the elections to these institutions and their activities. Who was elected and why did they chose to serve? If they chose not to serve, why not and how was this addressed? Finally, the local press of Kazan, in particular, the Kazanskii birzhevoi listok and Volzhskii vestnik, provided a rather critical assessment of some of the activities of local zemstvos and a warmer summary of a long-serving elected official. Brought together against the backdrop of this diverse province, electoral experiences, elected officials, and the activities they undertook formed a multidimensional picture of how existing electoral practices, while forming a critical foundation, changed during a
fundamentally different period to allow for the expression of new voter sentiments representing an evolving political culture.

In Chapter 4, the local elections of the Great Reform period continue as the subject of examination, yet although the majority of historians of the Great Reform era focus on the zemstvos and the reformed city duma, I focus here on the elections that continued to occur in the institutions that existed prior to the introduction of the Reforms – the estate assemblies, the Russian Orthodox Church, and other local positions. This chapter attempts to explore how the electoral process continued in the era of political, economic and social change in Kazan province. While many of the elements of the electoral practice remained the same, the sentiments of voters following 1864 evolved considerably. Concern about rights of participation, matters of jurisdiction, the right not to serve, and the legitimacy of the electoral process were issues of importance to them as they themselves expressed in their own words through their complaints. Elections were also the legitimate means of political participation, and therefore who participated and why was of great interest. Procedures were not always strictly followed, however, when a perceived societal need or desire would not technically allow for the election of the favored candidate, usually due to religious affiliation. Ambiguities and contradictions caused not only confusion but frustration among local voters and officials, and often led to the resolution of a dispute by local officials and institutions, with the imperial institutions deferring to the local decisions. Those local decisions were influenced by the changes of the Great Reform era, and by the evolving political sentiments of new voters as well as of existing voters.

In Chapter 5, I examine local elections for a host of official positions recorded in archival documents from 1900 to 1916 in an effort to analyze the interactions between the national elections of deputies to the State Dumas and the local elections. The rights of participation and
representation, and the ability to not only follow election procedures properly, but also to ensure that those procedures elected someone who could properly represent the voters, were the primary concerns of the voters of the early twentieth century. Further, voters sought valid elections free of corruption and conflicts of interest. These interests were stated more directly than in previous decades in electoral complaints as well as in the electoral proceedings themselves. Further, this reflected a desire to have the right to participate or not to participate in local elections that would properly elect representatives to address their individual and collective interests. Initially addressed in complaints of the Great Reform era, these sentiments reflected an evolving electoral culture that suggests the considerable impact of the changes brought by the Reforms and the experience of Russia’s first national elections.

The Conclusion takes initial steps toward introducing Russia’s electoral experience into the broader comparative analysis of electoral history around the world. It raises questions of how one might study elections before democracy, particularly in countries viewed as especially unlikely contexts for elections. This further raises the question – pertinent to contemporary as well as historical study – of links between elections and democratic development, and even the extent to which this question itself clarifies or obscures the role of elections. Further, Russia’s experience illuminates how elections fit into imperial governance on the local and national levels: how elections happen in unexpected places. I introduce several questions intended to initiate consideration of previously unexplored questions of comparative electoral history such as the role of “elections within empires” (versus in colonies). Subsequent scholarship would benefit from the incorporation of Russia’s evolutionary electoral experience into a comparative framework.
In sum, when studied on a local level, the wide range of elections that occurred over many generations in imperial Russia reveal a great deal: 1) how people of various religious, ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds participated in the governance of Kazan province through elected institutions; 2) how elections have frequently served as a mechanism for negotiating life amidst such diversity of people, balancing the demands of the central imperial government with the realities of the local context; and 3) how local elections created experiences and practices that contributed to evolving notions of rights, participation, and representation as expressed in the words of voters themselves.

Local elections in Kazan province, conducted over the course of more than a hundred years, formed an electoral culture that reflected local political life as is evident in the complaints and inquires filed by those who were interested in and concerned about the proper conduct of those elections. The habits of practice formed through the conduct of a growing number of local elections in a host of organizations and institutions contributed to and also represented dynamic changes of the mid-nineteenth century that ended serfdom and reformed provincial administration, ushering in an era of greater self-government, more direct representation of individuals and interests, and a more deliberate expression of political notions. These electoral roots provided an important foundation for elections in this new context as was seen in voters’ calls for full participation in the political decisions of the Russian Empire through elected delegates to a partially representative parliament, the State Duma. When this call was finally heeded in response to the 1905 revolution, the roots of practical electoral experience held by Russia’s diverse population was already there, laid inadvertently by the processes initially implemented by a central government in need of more legal reform and efficient local
administration. This experience, its origins, development and motivations, and the sentiments expressed by voters themselves, are the subject of the following chapters.
CHAPTER I

ENLIGHTENMENT-INSPIRED ELECTIONS:
THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION, PROVINCIAL REFORM, AND THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF ENDURING ELECTORAL PROCEDURES

The provincial reforms of Catherine the Great as well as her Manifesto regarding the
election of deputies to the Enlightenment-inspired Legislative Commission together to a
considerable extent provided the foundation for Russia’s electoral history. By setting out the
detailed procedures for the election of deputies to the Legislative Commission, and by creating
several new locally-elected institutions and estate-based (soslovie) elected bodies, Catherine the
Great not only reshaped the internal boundaries of the empire’s provinces, she outlined new
electoral procedures that provided the roots for subsequent procedures throughout the nineteenth
century, and into the beginning of the twentieth century.

This chapter aims to explore two aspects of Catherine the Great’s reign in ways
previously underinvestigated. The first of these aspects is that of the December 14, 1766
Manifesto outlining the procedures that were used to elect deputies to the 1767 Legislative
Commission. The second of these aspects is how her provincial reforms, implemented from
above, resulted in an altered local electoral landscape in a single province, that of diverse Kazan.
This analysis provides a new lens through which to view the foundation of imperial Russia’s
electoral history, often overlooked by historians: the establishment of detailed electoral
procedures, and the creation of new local elected institutions that were adapted by voters and
elected officials alike to address local concerns, which in Kazan province included a unique
combination of ethnic, religious, economic, and political issues.
I begin by reinterpreting published materials on the Legislative Commission, detailing how the centrally-initiated electoral processes were established and how they were reflected in Kazan province’s participation in the Commission itself. Next, by examining the Manifesto of 1766 in detail, I aim to demonstrate how the procedures outlined therein became the basis for subsequent local electoral practices that continued in modified form through the end of the empire. I then provide a portrait of ethnically and religiously diverse Kazan province that emerges from a brief summary of the instructions (nakazy) sent by the elected deputies from Kazan to the Commission. This portrait establishes a picture of the province that underwent several types of reorganization through Catherine the Great’s provincial reforms.

I then return to the period of Peter the Great to offer a short sketch of his provincial reforms to show the link between these efforts and the subsequent efforts of Catherine the Great, both of which led to the establishment of local elected institutions. After providing this sketch, I outline Catherine’s highly-centralized reforms that reshaped the social as well as political maps of the empire. Although centrally-initiated, these reforms affected parts of the empire differently, as is seen through the example of Kazan province. Adapting these reforms to the diverse local conditions, locally-specific elected institutions emerged to address the specific political and social realities of the province.

In the concluding section of this chapter, I bring together the two primary aspects under investigation: the new electoral procedures outlined in the Manifesto of 1766 that were applied to subsequent local elections with a new, local elected institution of the Tatarskaia ratusha (town hall), established in Kazan as a direct result of the eighteenth century provincial reforms as well as earlier imperial policies of religious conversion. Utilizing a large portion of the limited materials available in the National Archives of the Republic of Tatarstan regarding the
Tatarskaia ratusha, as well as other sources, I endeavor to provide an in-depth analysis of how this essential, locally-elected administrative institution functioned in the broader context of local governance. As the institution responsible for the administration of the Novaia and Staraia Tatarskaia sloboda, both created through the relocation of Kazan’s Tatar communities in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, the Tatarskaia ratusha was a unique example of how local governance in a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional province of the empire adapted to and interacted with other institutions of local governance. By focusing specifically on the Tatarskaia ratusha, I attempt to demonstrate how the electoral practices established for the empire-wide Legislative Commission were implemented through a locally-elected institution that was part of Catherine the Great’s provincial reforms of the second half of the eighteenth century.

Although examined by scholars for its Enlightenment influences, its efforts at legislative codification, its resemblance (or lack thereof) to European parliaments, and other factors, few if any have examined the Legislative Commission as an electoral experiment. Nor have they linked these electoral foundations to the elected institutions introduced through the provincial reforms introduced nearly 20 years later. By reinterpreting secondary sources and drawing on archival documents, I seek to address these previously unexplored aspects of Russia’s early imperial electoral history.

**Laying the Foundations of Electoral Practices:**

**The Manifesto of December 14, 1766**

Inheriting incomplete attempts to update and systematize the laws of the Russian Empire, last accomplished with the Law Code of 1649 (*Ulozhenie*), Catherine the Great resumed the work of codification begun by Peter the Great (attempted in 1700 and 1714), and continued by
empresses Anna and Elizabeth. Catherine’s attempt, however, represented a break from the previous attempts. Deputies were to be elected from each district and town and sent to Moscow to participate in the Commission with the task of preparing the new law code that was ultimately to be approved by Catherine herself. Representation on the Commission was to be based on region and estate as outlined in the Manifesto of December 14, 1766. The procedures outlined for the election of these deputies and marshals to the Legislative Commission were a significant undertaking, and, while not specifically intended to do so, they came to shape the way local elections would be practiced until the end of the Russian Empire.

The Legislative Commission has been frequently studied by a host of historians, and the instruction written as part of the Commission, which took Catherine two years to prepare, have long been utilized by scholars. However, none have looked at the electoral procedures established for the Commission through the prism of the direct connection between the electoral procedures established for the Commission and all subsequent electoral procedures that continued to be followed. My analysis in this chapter draws upon these known sources in new ways and aims to demonstrate this connection as well as to underscore the importance of the Manifesto from this long overlooked perspective.

Perhaps the most comprehensive work in English on Catherine the Great’s reign was completed by Isabel de Madariaga, in particular, her thorough biography of the Empress, Russia

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41 The *zemskie sobory* of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, while neither entirely representative nor fully elective, did provide a precedent for the Legislative Commission in the notion of summoning participants from all regions to advise on various issues deemed essential to the governance of the empire. Again, the people sent to participate in the *zemskie sobory* did not fully represent their regions as not all perspectives were considered or conveyed, nor were the sobory themselves fully participatory in decision-making by the state. Moreover, in the early seventeenth century, immediately following the establishment of the Romanov dynasty, the state itself had limited governing capacity, especially beyond the core territories.


in the Age of Catherine the Great." de Madariaga critiques the Legislative Commission by way of comparison with the notion of a “modern representative body or parliament.” Further, she states that

To begin with, the very use of the words elections and electors perpetuates a misunderstanding about the nature of the political representation in Russian assemblies of the land or legislative commissions. … A deputy was to be chosen or selected, according to the Manifesto of 14 December 1766. There were no candidates; all those qualified to choose a deputy could also be chosen. … Moreover, since a deputy who wished to resign could simply hand over his mandate to someone of his own choice, without consulting those who had elected him, he was clearly in no way regarded as responsible to his electors.

Therefore, she concludes that the Commission was not representative but rather consultative.

While de Madariaga criticizes the Commission for not being truly representative or parliamentary, this view does not take into full account the importance of the impact of the electoral processes established for the Commission. Whether or not the procedures functioned in a fully representative fashion, or were even designed to do so, does not discount the fact that these very procedures served as the foundation for elections that were increasingly representative across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries into the early twentieth century. Despite the fact that the Legislative Commission did not resemble a parliament, nor were the elections held for deputies to attend the Commission broadly representative, the procedures themselves were codified as those that would generally be followed for local elections for more than a century, and that would become the foundation upon which greater political representation was sought and gained through the electoral process.

Hans Rogger’s study of eighteenth century Russia presents Catherine’s Grand Commission through the analytical lens of national consciousness and Catherine’s belief that

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44 de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*. See in particular Part II on the Legislative Commission.  
45 Ibid., 140.  
46 Ibid.
Russia was indeed a European state. “She proclaimed this conviction in the first chapter of her ‘Instruction’ to the Grand Commission on the drafting of laws.” The Legislative Commission established roots of electoral procedure that were locally implemented not only in Kazan, but also in other areas of the empire as well. It is this latter point that has been under studied.

Several scholars have also used the primary documents from the Legislative Commission, in particular, the instructions sent with the deputies, as sources for their research. Janet Hartley incorporated the experiences about people from all walks of life included in the instructions throughout her study of Russia from 1762 to 1825, especially those that expressed concerns about the burdens of recruiting practices, and those that conveyed the everyday mores of the peasants. Likewise, in his analysis of the ruling class in eighteenth century Russia, John LeDonne uses the instructions to provide an understanding of the concerns expressed by the nobility and the mercantile in matters such as trade rights and rights for ownership of peasants. Further, he examines the instructions to analyze inheritance laws as they affected the ruling classes.

Similarly, Zenon E. Kohut draws upon the instructions from the Ukrainian deputies in his research on Ukrainian autonomy in the second half of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth. In doing so, he also notes the importance of electoral procedure; however, he does so from the perspective of understanding how the estates in Ukrainian society operated and how various personalities participated in the election of deputies to the Commission. He also

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50 Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy*, 128-131. This was an early example of how local elections were adapted to local realities. Such adaptation occurred throughout the centuries in Kazan province as well.
notes the extent to which there was opposition expressed during those elections.\textsuperscript{51} Finally, Kohut finds that even as early as the election of deputies to the Legislative Commission, those who were responsible for conducting the elections at the local level made logically-informed decisions about how to resolve ambiguities and uncertainties in stated electoral procedure. For example, he observed that, “Since Catherine’s manifesto did not provide any guidelines for the holding of Cossack elections, (Governor-General) Rumiantsev decided to apply the regulations of a social group in Russia that he considered to be analogous, the *odnodvortsy*.”\textsuperscript{52}

Catherine’s Legislative Commission has received an array of criticism as well as praise, and has been analyzed through multiple research lenses. In particular, the instructions drafted for the Commission have been utilized in many ways by scholars interested in the widest range of historical questions. None, however, has examined how the electoral procedures set out in the Manifesto and used to elect deputies to the Commission became the lasting procedures upon which nearly all subsequent electoral practices were based. Therefore, while the Commission itself and the associated instructions are well known to historians, the connection between the electoral procedures outlined in the Manifesto of 1766 and subsequent elections has not been considered. The following pages endeavor to do just that.

**The Foundational Document for Electoral Practices**

The Manifesto of December 14, 1766 played a larger role in the electoral history of Russia than has been previously recognized. The Manifesto established who was to participate

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 134.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 141. The term *odnodvortsy* (literally “one household” most likely is derived from the practice of allocating state lands by household rather than by individual. By the early eighteenth century, *odnodvortsy* were state peasants who patrolled the frontier in the southern part of the empire. In Kazan province, the *odnodvortsy* descended from sixteenth century minor servitors sent to the eastern and southern parts of the empire. They guarded the borders of the Volga and of Penza in return for land.
and outlined the detailed procedures that were to be followed to elect those from across the empire who would take part in the Legislative Commission. Although not necessarily intended or anticipated, these procedures were followed with little variation in subsequent elections through the end of the empire. Because these same procedures were generally followed in the numerous electoral cases examined throughout subsequent chapters, a detailed description and analysis is necessary.

The Manifesto first stated who was to be included in the Legislative Commission: representatives of the government and representatives of the people. Representatives of the government were to include one each from the Senate, the Synod, all the Colleges, and the main chanceries of the central government. While not direct representatives of the people in a modern sense, deputies were elected by the people of each estate and from each district regardless of population density.  

More specifically, the electoral procedures outlined in the Manifesto grouped the population of the Russian Empire into several overlapping categories: geographical (town, county), socio-economic (noble, peasant; those having served in the military or civil ranks, those having no access to service), and ethno-religious (non-Russian, non-Orthodox). These categories were based as much on legal and procedural precedent and perceived political and economic dominance or subordinance as on the demographic reality of the empire. This is seen, for example, in the portrait of eighteenth century Kazan that emerges from the instructions the deputies from the province sent to the Commission. Notwithstanding the oversimplification, there was nonetheless salience to these categories as seen in appeals for the legal codification of the rights of inclusion in and exclusion from them. In other words, members of the established estates sought to legally solidify their rights gained through those estates, preventing others from

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gaining those benefits. This principle of exclusivity of estates was carried through in the practice of elections. With few, yet important exceptions, the division of voters by estate continued, as instituted through the Charter to the Nobility and Charter to the Towns until the elections of the Great Reform era.

Territory was the other principle used to determine the jurisdiction of voters who would elect participants in the Commission. At the time of the issuance of the Manifesto, the Russian Empire consisted of 20 *gubernii*, each subdivided into provinces, and these provinces were further divided into districts (*uezdy*). Each town was to elect one deputy from among those who owned a home in that town. The nobility was to elect one deputy from each district (again, those eligible had to own an estate in that district). *Odnodvortsy*, soldier-farmers, state peasants, and non-Russian populations (baptized or unbaptized) were also to elect one deputy per group, per province for a total of four deputies from each province. Cossack deputies were to be determined in number by their senior commanders.\(^54\) These categories of elected participants had precedent. In 1728 and 1730, those elected, five men per province excluding Livonia, Estonia, and Siberia, were sent to Moscow from the merchant and noble estates, elected by the nobility.\(^55\) In 1761, two nobles per district were to be sent to Moscow. The 1767 Commission, therefore, expanded the categories of people invited to participate by including those from a broader social spectrum and from smaller administrative units.

The exact electoral procedures were outlined in the Manifesto, to be read out in each district of the province for three consecutive Sundays; no provisions were outlined for how the

\(^{54}\) For further discussion see V. I. Semevskii, *Krest’iane v tsarstvovanie Imperatritsy Ekateriny II. Tom I and II* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia M. M. Stasiulevicha, 1901, 1903) and A. V. Florovskii, *Iz istorii ekaterininskoi zakonodatel’noi komissii (vopros o krestnom prave)* (Odessa: Tipografiia "Tekhnik," 1910).

\(^{55}\) *PSZ* I, vol. 8, 5287 and *PSZ* I, vol. 8, 5567.
Manifesto was to be read to non-Orthodox and non-Christian populations of the empire.\textsuperscript{56} Governors were to coordinate the time, place and supervision of the elections, which were to be held separately for each estate.\textsuperscript{57} All deputies were to be at least 25 years of age, and each was to receive annual compensation according to estate (400 roubles per nobleman, 122 roubles per townsman \textit{[gorodovoi]}, and 37 roubles for other deputies). Deputies were freed for life from the death penalty, torture, and corporal punishment, regardless of their actions; from the day of their election, deputies were no longer subject to the confiscation of their lands with the exception of that due to indebtedness.\textsuperscript{58} Given that the election of deputies occurred on the basis of estate in three stages (subdistrict, district, county), we should examine the electoral procedures for each of the estates in turn.

Prior to the actual election of deputies, the eligibility of voters was to be determined. In the case of the nobility, eligibility for election – either as a marshal or as a deputy – was based on the possession of a local estate and a record free of criminal and immoral behavior. Any title or rank was accepted, and service status could be either active or inactive (retired). A minimum age requirement for marshals, who served a two-year term, was set at 35; for deputies of any estate, the Manifesto repeated, the age requirement was set at 25.\textsuperscript{59}

The electoral process among the nobility began with the election of the marshal. Upon arrival at the location of the elections, each participant was to announce himself. Names of those arriving were recorded in order of their arrival, with the exception of those living in the city where the elections were held; they were to yield to those from out of town in a manner which

\textsuperscript{56} Given Catherine the Great’s policies of religious tolerance, it is interesting to note that there was no mention of other religious establishments or officiators included in the Manifesto.
\textsuperscript{57} Governor-appointed supervisors were to oversee the initial stages of elections until a marshal could be elected. Governors were given ultimate supervisory roles, however, in ensuring the lawful, peaceful and successful outcome of elections and were to subsequently convey local needs to the Commission itself when they were in Moscow. PSZ I, vol. 17, 12.801.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
they themselves were to determine based on their ranks. Once those wishing to participate had been added to the list, the elections could proceed.60

The one overseeing the elections first gave each eligible person present a ball (shar) so called from the verb ballotirovat’sia meaning to cast a ballot.61 The name of the first nobleman on the list was called (the order of names having been determined by the above noted process), and the nobles who had gathered at the appointed time and place stood one by one and approached a ballot box, divided in two and covered with a wool cloth. The right side of the box was to be clearly labeled, “elected,” and the left side, “not elected.” Each person was to put his ball into the side of the box of his choice for the first candidate was called by the election overseer. Those balls placed in the “elected” side were called “white” and those placed in the “not elected” side were called “black.” When a person’s own name was called, he could place his ball into a box, abstain from casting his vote, or leave the room. When all of the balls for the first candidate on the list had been duly placed into one side or the other, the election overseer stood and before everyone removed the cloth from the box, and first took out the balls from the side labeled “elected,” counted them, and then removed those from the side labeled “not elected,” and counted them. The number of balls from each side of the box was recorded beside the person’s name on the ballot list. Then the entire process was repeated for the next person on the list, and so on until all of the names had been called and all of the votes had been counted and recorded. The one receiving the most belye shary (white “yes” votes) was elected as the marshal and given the title pochtennyi (honorable) if he did not have another title.62 In the event of a tie, the process was to repeat itself, voting for only the tied candidates. This process was to occur in

60 Ibid.
61 This formulation of the word(s) is found in all electoral documents for nearly all positions throughout the nineteenth century, including for elections to the State Duma in the early twentieth century.
62 If the marshal was to leave his post after his two year term or die in service, a new marshal was to be elected following the same procedures.
a quiet, orderly fashion and the supervisor was to attest that the elections were conducted in this manner; elections were to be completed in one day but if necessary in no more than three. Absentee voting via post was allowed if a nobleman or a noblewoman (who managed her own villages) was not able to attend the elections, and took the form of narrative support for those favored.63

The overall process then moved on to the election of the deputies from the local nobility to the Commission itself. After having been elected, the marshal was to receive the list of eligible local nobility who had arrived in the city as well as the written narratives from the chief of the nobility (nachal’nik). The chief did not oversee the next stage of voting and was not eligible to be a candidate. The marshal had to wait three days during which he determined and announced the time and place of the elections for the deputies. The nobles were to gather early in the morning at the place designated by the marshal, and the chief was to go to church and let the nobles know that he had arrived. Having listened to the liturgy and prayers, the chief was to read the Manifesto, describe the Legislative Commission, and then read the election instructions. The instructions included a description of the necessary characteristics of those to be elected to serve on the Legislative Commission. They were to be capable, responsible, honorable and rational. After the Manifesto was read, they were then all to be led from the church to the appointed place of elections; no provisions were stated for reading the instructions in other houses of worship such as mosques, or in other secular institutions.64

The marshal was also responsible for supervising the election of the deputies.65 As with the election of the marshal, all who were to participate received a ball. Then, having the list of those who had arrived and those who had sent in their votes, he read the first name and that

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63 PSZ I, vol. 17, 12.801.
64 Ibid.
65 If the marshal himself was elected deputy, he was to be replaced by election.
person placed his ball into the box to be followed one-by-one by the others gathered according to the procedures used to elect the marshal. The marshal then counted the balls, also as had been done for the previous elections. The only difference was that this time, nobles not present could be elected. If those not present were elected, they were to be informed by the marshal in writing. Given that nobles often had estates in more than one district, it was possible that he may be elected from more than one district. If this were to occur, he was not to have more than one vote on the Legislative Commission. Each day the elections were to be conducted quietly and peacefully, and were to last no more than six days; at the start of each day of elections, the nobles were to go directly from their home to the place where the elections were held. No more than five nobles were to be chosen to draft the instructions for the deputies to carry to the Commission. The Manifesto left the procedures for their selection open, and could involve the naming of five people by consensus of those present, by election (unspecified procedures), or if the marshal witnessed a disagreement, he could apply the above mentioned electoral procedures.

Once these elections had been successfully completed, the marshal was to inform the Senate.

Despite this electoral apparatus developed for the Commission intended to broaden participation, not all nobles took interest in these proceedings or chose to participate. Those who chose not to participate were not permitted to be elected as deputies themselves. In part low turnout may have been due to the small number of nobles qualified to participate in certain parts of the empire, as in Kazan. By some estimates, no more than a quarter of eligible nobles (according to the estate requirement) voted. This was consistent with other aspects of noble

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66 The practice of electing in absentia would continue throughout the nineteenth century. However, by the end of the century, this practice was openly criticized in written complaints by voters.
67 This may have left those who voted for the delegate from the other districts not represented.
68 PSZ I, vol. 17, 12.801.
69 For an initial discussion of the perceived lack of interest among the nobility, see Dukes, Catherine the Great, 68-69.
participation in similar official activities, including earlier attempts at legislative reform. Given that the noble population represented a relatively small percentage of the overall population, and that other segments of the population did participate in elections, the elections themselves were surprisingly well attended.

Instructions regarding the election of deputies from the towns followed those regarding election of noble deputies. While this section of the Manifesto calls into question Catherine’s understanding of townspeople as a separate estate, they received the largest number of deputies to the Commission, which was a marked departure from previous practice during the earlier attempts at similar legislative commissions. Perhaps the most fundamental change reflected in these electoral instructions was the selection of the towns themselves as the unit of jurisdiction. Growing in importance for the imperial government as a cause of as well as a result of local reforms, towns as distinct spaces of economic and political activity acquired more prominence through the practice of electing their own deputies.

First, however, the definition of a town itself had to be determined. For the purposes of the elections, those settlements having at least 100 houses were allowed to participate as towns, those having 50 houses or less and wishing to participate could apply to do so. Second, the eligibility for a town deputy had to be determined, and was set as those qualified to be elected the head of the town (*gorodskoi golova*): one who had his own home, was not bankrupt, had no fines, was not under investigation, was kind, and not engaged in suspect behavior. Electors had to own a home, or a home and business, or a home and a small (handicraft) business, or a home

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71 Isabel de Madriaga notes that “It is now generally accepted by historians that Catherine was consciously endeavoring to develop the town as a territorial unit and to weld its population together into one single estate.” de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, 142.

72 Although Richard Pipes argues that towns suffered as a result of the Charter of the Towns in 1785, the electoral procedures, established in 1766, continued to be a means of participation in local administration and governance by city residents. Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime* (New York: Penguin Books, 1974), 181-183.
and a factory in that town. As noted above, the same benefits were to accrue to elected deputies from the towns as to those from the nobility.

The town chief (*nachal’nik*) was responsible for determining the time and the place of the elections for deputies from that town. On the designated day, all those qualified were to gather. The chief of the magistrate or of the *ratusha* or the police acquired lists of those in the town who had homes. These lists were further categorized by those who were married and were not married, and those with and without children, and widowers. Once gathered, those eligible were read the Manifesto and were to elect a chief from amongst themselves who was not less than 30 years old. Those who appeared on the lists were to sit on specially prepared benches at the designated place and were then given a ball. The townsmen then followed the same procedure described above to select their chief, who would serve for two years.\(^73\)

Once the chief was elected, he was to wait three days before announcing the time and the place of the new elections for deputies; this process mirrored that for the election of the deputies of the nobility. The procedures for the day of the elections were also the same, including the gathering of the eligible townsmen in church, and being led by the chief. Having arrived after the church service at the place of the elections, the same process was followed for the election of the deputies who would represent the towns at the Commission. Those absent could be elected, provided they were over 25 years of age and were not in the government. Following the elections of the deputies, a committee of no more than five was selected to draft the instructions for the deputies. The same guidelines for their selection were applied as those for the similar committee to the noble deputies. Following the successful completion of these three sets of elections, the chief was to inform the Senate.\(^74\)

\(^73\) PSZ I, vol. 17, 12.801.

\(^74\) Ibid.
The final group of deputies, one from each province, was to be elected from a very broad section of the population of the Russian Empire: *odnodvortsy*, soldier-farmers, those who were part of the army reserves, non-Russian populations, Cossacks, and those peasants who were either state peasants or semi-free. These elections were to occur in a multi-staged process: first, elections of village representatives were held for those who would elect district representatives. The election of the district representatives was the second step, and they would then, third, elect the provincial representative.

In order to elect the deputy from each province, each district was to first elect a representative (*poverennyi* [trusted one]) in the following manner. In every inhabited region noted by the governor, after receiving the Manifesto someone appointed would announce the date of the elections for the district representative. On the appointed date, village (*pogost*) representatives who were to take part in the election of the district representative were to gather at the appointed place. These village representatives were to be elected “according to their own practices,” (*po ikh obikhnoeniiam*); each house and “land” (*zemliia*) could participate. They were to elect someone not less than 20 years old who had an actual home or land in that village, who was married with children. The person was to have “good behavior,” and was not have been punished by law or be under investigation for wrong-doing. Once elected, the village representative was to be given a letter from the village, signed by the priest and by no less than one family from the village. These representatives were then to go to the appointed place at the appointed time to participate in the elections for the district representative. Upon arrival, the

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75 Each village, however, retained the right to either send or not send a representative to the election of the district representative.
76 PSZ I, vol. 17, 12.801 - see Section D, pt. 4 and 6.
77 This standard language was repeated throughout the Manifesto and in most sequent electoral documents, particularly through the first half of the nineteenth century.
78 A sample letter was included in the Manifesto, and those unable to sign their names were allowed to indicate their support in a way that was trusted. No provisions were stated for other religious officials to sign.
letter was to be presented to the governor or to the chief at which time his name was to be added
to the list in the order of his arrival at the place of election.

Once all of the village representatives had arrived, the Manifesto was to be read by the
chief. Each person was then given a ball or a lot ("razdat’ vsiakomu po shariku ili po
zhereb’iu"). Having elected the district representative (whose qualifications were to match
those outlined for the village representative), he was to be given a letter from the villages
attesting to his election following the sample provided in the Manifesto. The district
representatives were then sent on further to the place appointed by the governor for the election
of the provincial representative, and the village electors were to return to their homes. Following
the same procedures as before, the district representative was to present his letter to the governor
upon arrival and the governor would then add his name to the list of electors according to the
time of his arrival. On the appointed day of the election, the district representatives were to meet
at church, hear the liturgy, the reading of the Manifesto, and a declaration of service following
the example provided in the Manifesto. This declaration was read for the other electors as well.
The chief then was to lead the electors to the place of the election.

Having arrived, again, each was given a ball or a lot, and the voting began with the first
name on the list. Once the balls were distributed, the election was to proceed in the following
fashion: the representatives were to sit on specially prepared benches in the order in which their
names appeared on the list. Once the chief had confirmed this, he read the first name. The
district representatives then stood one by one and placed their balls into the box placed on the
table; the box was to be divided in two halves as described above. As before, when one’s own
name was called, he could choose whether to vote, to abstain or to leave. The same procedures
were followed for counting the “elect” and “not elect” votes until all of the names had been

79 PSZ I, vol. 17, 12.801.
called. This process was to be conducted quietly and calmly. Having elected the province
deputy, that person was given a letter attesting to his acceptance of the position (*polnomochija*),
following the sample provided. The deputy was then sent to the Commission, and the others
were sent home.\footnote{Ibid.}

Additional instructions were provided to the governors. Specifically, they were to
provide copies of the Manifesto to each church in each town and village to be read out three
Sundays in a row. The governors were also to distribute the Manifesto among the nobility, who
were to distribute it further. The governors, or appointed chiefs, were to supervise as many
elections as possible and ensure their proper and orderly conduct. They were to prepare the
places where the elections were to be held, which could include the home of the chancellery, the
*magistrat* or the *ratusha*, or some other place. The governors or chiefs were to prepare the
proper benches, the voting balls and the ballot boxes themselves. The entire electoral process for
the whole empire was to take six months, although if the deputies could arrive in Moscow
sooner, that was preferred.

The final instructions to the governors outlined what they should do if something
unpredicted was to arise. They were not to correspond with those at a higher level, but were
rather to decide and determine for themselves what was best based on what they viewed as an
orderly and beneficial solution and in carrying out this solution; they were to use “their own
will.”\footnote{Ibid.}

This delegation to local authority represented more than expediency of problem-solving;
it was recognition of local differences and the perceived benefit in allowing whatever resulting
challenges arose to be solved at the local level. The relative autonomy given to governors was

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\footnote{Ibid.}
consistent with provisions in the electoral procedures outlined in the Manifesto, including allowances for local administrative specificities (jurisdictional title, landscape) and local interest in participation itself. Further, the number of overall deputies was not fixed in advance, which allowed for flexibility reflecting the complex realities of the empire; overall 564 deputies attended, of which 536 were elected. This instruction regarding local resolution of problems indicates the degree to which the imperial government relied on local officials to administer local affairs. As the complexity of these affairs increased, so too did the need to turn to locally-elected officials to manage them. The central government had very limited capacity to appoint these officials – elections were essential for the center and preferred by those in the provinces.

While the overall representation of the population generated through the indirect and disproportionate electoral procedures was far from comprehensive, the procedures detailed here gradually established a foundation around which greater and greater participation would expand in subsequent decades and into the twentieth century. Both the importance of the foundational electoral procedures and the locally-specific application of those procedures for the Legislative Commission are suggested in the experience of Kazan province to which we now turn.

**Provinces Representing Themselves:
Kazan Deputies to the Legislative Commission**

Who were the people of Kazan province from whom Catherine the Great’s Commission was to hear? What were the concerns of those many peoples who lived in the province? Whom did they elect to attend the Commission? What portrait emerges of the province based on the instructions they sent to the Commission? From the following picture, one can glimpse the local

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ethnic, religious, economic and political complexities, which formed the landscape which would be affected by the provincial reforms of Catherine the Great some 20 years following the Legislative Commission.

The people of eighteenth century Kazan province were nobles, peasants, merchants, townspeople; Russians, Tatars, Finns; Orthodox, Muslim, and Old Believers: a total population of 1,488,000 males according to the 1763 revision. They lived in Kazan’s six administrative units (Viatka [Khlynov], Perm, Sviiazhsk, Kazan, Penza, and Simbirsk). State and church peasants were more predominant in Kazan than vast noble estates; serfdom had barely been introduced in some areas. The province reached from the industrial zones of Cherdyn’ to the black-earth regions of Samara. Kazan, the only large town in the province, had a population of approximately 10,000 in the 1770s, of which approximately 1,500 – 2,000 were Tatar. Kazan was the governmental and commercial center of the province as well as the primary military fortification connecting Siberia with European Russia. Together, those who took part in the elections for deputies to the Commission elected 62 men from across nearly the entire spectrum of local society and sent them nearly 500 miles to Moscow. From their instructions we can begin to understand the local context of Kazan province in which electoral processes occurred, and further, how that local context influenced the development of those processes themselves.

The 62 elected deputies of Kazan province to the Commission roughly reflected the population distribution of the province by social and ethnic group. Taking each of these groups of deputies in turn, following the order outlined in the Manifesto, I provide an overview of the

83 V. M. Kabuzan, Narodonaselenie Rossii v XVIII - pervoi polovine XIX v. (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1963), 160-161.
84 Kazan was the residence of the governor-general of the province who was at that time A. Kvashnin-Samarin, a little known nobleman.
types of people chosen from the province to participate in the Commission. The first group, the smallest in population in Kazan, constituting no more than 1%, was the nobility. This was somewhat consistent with the proportion of nobles in the overall population of the Russian Empire – 3.6% or 419,000 males in 1763. Concentrated in the southern black earth (chernozem) region closest to Moscow, the nobility of Penza district held the largest proportion of serfs, however, the city of Penza itself was not large. In the district of Kazan, there were only 859 landowners listed in the registers in the early 1770s, some of whom were not nobles. A small group of nobles, largely in Perm, were factory owners. For the most part, these noblemen were similar to their counterparts in other parts of the empire in that they were of modest means.

An examination of the participation of noble deputies to the Commission illuminates many of the issues associated with elected office in general in the eighteenth century, including low turnout, little pay for participants, time away from commercial and other obligations, and considerable personal expense. In examining who was elected from among the nobility to the Legislative Commission from Kazan, a broader context is illustrative. Given the relatively small proportion of the overall population and the disproportionate political influence they retained, it is not surprising that of the 564 deputies who attended from across the empire, 28.5%, or 161, were noblemen. Although not the largest group of deputies, they outweighed other groups in relation to overall population. More closely examined, the noble deputies tended to be of

86 Kabuzan, Narodonaselenie Rossii, 160-161.
87 Klokman, Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskaia istoriia, 187-188.
89 Following Anna Ivanovna’s reign, state-held factories were largely transferred to private hands, and in 1762, under Peter III, merchants were banned from buying factory serfs. In Perm, only 3 of 45 copper and iron works were state-owned. Sinton, “The Instructions from Kazan Guberniia,” 15.
90 “Materialy dlia istorii komissii o sochinenii proekta novago ulozheniia (1776-1774),” Prilozhenie k Russkomu vestniku, November 1861, 1-79. Also, see Kliuchevskii, A Course in Russian History, 107-108.
military rank, which may have been preferable for other nobles since retired military officers were relatively free of other service obligations and more available for service at the Commission.

The election of the nobles from Kazan province did not attract a large number of voters; of 859 nobles, only 45 chose to participate. This was most likely due to the perception that the responsibility of serving on the Commission would be a significant burden, and therefore being elected as a delegate was not desired and was actively avoided by most, not only in Kazan. Extended absences for service in Moscow inevitably meant a loss of work and were a considerable threat to one’s livelihood. This foreshadowed perceptions of locally elected office in the first half of the nineteenth century, and to a lesser extent in the second half. Moreover, the individual elected to the Commission was expected to bear all of the expenses and burdens of participation, except a small stipend. These costs were simply too much for the majority of those eligible, even if there was interest in the overall project, which there rarely was: local, daily concerns of life and livelihood were greater than the abstract concerns of law. The Kazan noble deputies numbered five in total, all of whom were from the civil service although one of the elected marshals of the nobility had served in the military. One of the deputies from the Kazan provincial nobility, P. V. Esipov, “was a rich man with over 425 souls, but the gentry who elected him were almost all men with less than 100, many with only 10 or 15.” The others included a kollezhskii assessor, a government prosecutor, and a government secretary.

As anticipated by the electoral procedures outlined in the Manifesto, determining how to classify a “town” in Kazan province was not a straightforward process. Moreover, smaller

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population centers could choose to participate or to not participate. Kazan, however, did have several important and growing towns that took part in the elections, and 9.5% of Kazan’s population belonged to a posad or town commune by 1769. Viatka, heavily wooded with evergreen trees, had a population concentrated largely in towns as agricultural production was very limited. Furthermore, the goods harvested from the forests and the mineral rich geology promoted the development of these towns into a commercial trading center with a larger population – Viatka had about 6,000 people, of which non-Russian, Finnish and Turkic peoples constituted approximately 30-40%. Perm province, with its smaller towns, was more industrial, and contained copper, iron and smelting works. The population of Finnish and Turkic peoples was only approximately 10-15%. Perm’s larger towns served as commercial centers, and Kungur, for example, had a very large population of merchants and petty bourgeoisie; perhaps as high as 80%. Likewise, Simbirsk, being a commercial center, was also home to a large number of merchants, some 2,200. The merchants of Simbirsk and Penza conducted trade between Persia and the Far East and European Russia, but mostly traded in local agricultural goods.

Of the 208 deputies to the Commission from the empire’s towns, half came from four provinces: Moscow, Novgorod, Voronezh, and Kazan. Merchants made up the vast majority of the towns’ deputies – this balance was further reflected in the local elected institutions of Kazan province’s towns as well. Across Kazan, 1,139 electors from towns gathered to participating in the election of local deputies to the Commission. Of these, 567 were merchants,

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95 Ibid.
96 Ibid., 11.
97 Ibid., 5.
98 Ibid., 16.
99 Ibid., 67.
349 were noted as classless (*bezklassovye*),\(^{100}\) 129 were civil servants, 71 were artisans, and 21 were soldiers and officers.\(^{101}\) Government officials of low rank participated in these elections in relatively large number; military officers also participated. Merchants, who had their own town administrative bodies, were accustomed to participating in similar processes, and were also dominant in many of the towns of the province, possibly accounting for their greater turnout at the elections. Fifteen of the deputies elected by the townsfolk of Kazan were merchants and one was a civil servant.\(^{102}\) Towns along the Volga, including those of Kazan, held their own land, mills, and rights to fishing and lumbering. The wealthy merchants largely had gained control of these lands by the middle of the eighteenth century.\(^{103}\)

Indicating that at least to a limited extent, peasants did participate in the elections for deputies to the Legislative Commission and sent instructions, the final category of deputies outlined in the Manifesto actually comprised several categories of people. This final group, the largest in terms of overall population, elected 41 deputies representing at least seven ethnic groups and several estates. By far, peasants made up the largest portion of the population, and of this group; the Russian free peasantry was the greatest in number.\(^{104}\) Five groups of peasants sent deputies to the Commission. The *odnodvortsy*, the former serving people, and the landmilitia all held land in return for service to the crown. The *odnodvortsy* elected five deputies. The settler soldiers (*voiskovye obyvateli*)/serving people (*sluzhilye liudi*), all from

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\(^{100}\) See below for a discussion of this issue. Sinton supposes that these “classless” people were actually state peasants, former free peasants and serfs, those who were engaged in the production of handicrafts but who were not part of the guild system, and others who lived in the town. Sinton, “The Instructions from Kazan Guberniia,” 115.

\(^{101}\) The names of the electors are listed at the end of the instructions. It is not clear how the other two electors were classified.

\(^{102}\) Sinton, “The Instructions from Kazan Guberniia,” appendix.


\(^{104}\) By the time of the elections for Commission deputies, the free peasantry was classed as “state peasants” regardless of origin.
Penza, descended from military units which once guarded the southern borders of the empire in the sixteenth century. The so-called landmilitia was mostly retired army officers and a few civil servants who had received a small plot of state land in return for their civil or military service. They were neither large in number nor concentrated in a specific area. They elected four deputies. The largest group of peasants from Kazan to send deputies to the Commission was that of peasants from the black earth area, the chernososhnye peasantry. The black earth peasants sent five deputies to the Commission. The final group of peasants that sent instructions to the Commission, although they were not listed separately among the province’s deputies, was the factory peasants from Perm and Viatka. Despite the participation of five deputies from the black earth region, most of the peasant population of the province, and indeed the empire as a whole, was not directly represented at the Commission.

Given the multi-ethnic, multi-national nature of Kazan province, it is essential to detail the composition of the population and the deputies in these terms as well. The primary ethnic groups in the province were the Tatar, Chuvash, Cheremis, Mordvinian, and Finnish populations, giving it the largest non-Russian population of the European provinces. Nearly all areas of the province had large groups of Turkic and Finnish peoples. The Cheremis people, the largest Finnish group, settled along the Volga and Viatka rivers. The Besermian, Vogulich, and Meshcheriaki were smaller Finnish groups and lived in the northern part of the province and were largely nomadic. The Turkic-speaking Tatars were the largest single group of non-Russian peoples and lived in nearly all parts of the province. Turkic Bashkirs also lived in the province.

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105 N. M. Druzhinin, Gosudarstvennye krest’iane i reforma P. D. Kiseleva, Tom I. Predposyldki i sushchnost’ reformy, (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo AN SSSR, 1946), 23-34, 38-52; and Semevskii, Krest’iane v tsarstvovanie Imperatritsy Ekateriny II, 726-803.

106 Once the free peasants of Muscovy, they were slowly incorporated into the Russian Empire with the growth of the state. They were especially numerous in Penza and Viatka; both provinces sent black-plowing deputies to the Commission. See Sinton, “The Instructions from Kazan Guberniia,” 21-22; and Semevskii, Krest’iane v tsarstvovanie Imperatritsy Ekateriny II, 593-632, 676-699.

107 Their exact population is not known.
Finally, the Chuvash people lived in large numbers primarily in Sviiazhsk region (commonly called Chuvashia), as well as in Kazan and Penza to a lesser extent. Sviiazhsk was also home to many Cheremises and Tatars. In 1763, of the 132,000 peasants in Chuvashia only 12,000 were serfs, 82% of the population of Chuvashia were non-Russian state peasants, whereas not even 1% were townspeople. In Kazan, however, private serfs made up about 35% of the Russian population, and approximately 30% of the 25,000 male population was non-Russian, mostly Tatar agriculturalists.

Non-Russian peasants and the imperial state had been linked for centuries, especially since the conquest of Kazan in 1552. Turkic and Finnish peoples of Kazan had initially been required to pay iasak (tribute in furs); from this name came that of the iasak peasant. During the reign of Peter the Great, this payment was a standard obligation of iasak peasants as it was similarly required of state peasants. Some Tatar peasants were also assigned to work for the admiralty in factories of the Urals. Their social standing was similar to that of the iasak peasants. As a result of growing state demands, the lands that had in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries been deemed “permanently belonging” to the native peoples of the territory of Kazan - to the Chuvash, Cheremis, and Tatar peoples - began to be confiscated by the Russian state in the eighteenth. Called iasak lands, their ownership by the native populations was not guaranteed and was overridden by special imperial decrees, granting large sections of agricultural soil to nobles and the church. Further, much of this land was given by the state to Russian subjects who in turn often leased it out. This process created a land shortage for native

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108 Dmitriev, Istoriia Chuvashii XVIII veka, 44, 49-50.
110 Dmitriev, Istoriia Chuvashii XVIII veka, 143-49.
111 Semevskii, Krest’iane v tsarstvovanie Imperatritsy Ekateriny II, 579-592.
populations. These non-Orthodox populations (*inovertsy*, and newly-baptized and *iasak* peasants) elected several deputies to transmit their grievances via their instructions to the Commission; three of the 27 ethnic groups in Kazan sent two deputies each in violation of electoral procedure.

Table IV: Number of *Inovertsy* and Newly-baptized and *Iasak* Peasant Deputies from Kazan Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Inovertsy</em></th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>9 (4 guardians)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheremis</td>
<td>2 (2 guardians)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuvash</td>
<td>1 (1 guardian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Votiak</td>
<td>1 (1 guardian)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newly-baptized and <em>iasak</em> peasants</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Iasak</em> peasants</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheremis</td>
<td>1 (1 guardian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuvash</td>
<td>3 (2 guardians)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mordvinian</td>
<td>2 (1 guardian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>1 (1 guardian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Votiak</td>
<td>2 (2 guardians)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once elected, the deputies of the Legislative Commission from Kazan set about compiling their instructions, which were to assist the government in “know(ing) better the needs and the deficiencies” of the people. In this way, the government “could see to it that the people would be happy and satisfied.” Analysis of the instructions carried to Moscow by Kazan’s diverse deputies reveals that they were overwhelmingly based on local concerns, some were of a regional nature and some reflected concerns specific to a particular group, all crystallizing around social and political tensions. They also provide astute observations about the condition of the province, including an essential understanding of the context in which Catherine the

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112 Dmitriev, *Istoriiia Chuvashii XVIII veka*, 63-74. In addition, numerous taxes were assessed on the native populations, increasing their overall burden still further.
113 Guardians (*opekuny*) were provided for in the Manifesto.
114 PSZ I, vol. 17, 12.801.
Great’s provincial reforms were implemented. Further, the extent to which that context influenced electoral practices in the second half of the eighteenth century can also been seen in part from the instructions, therefore the primary issues they raise are summarized here.

Perhaps the most oft-cited and most urgently-expressed problem was that of land. Land and property ownership were the primary qualifications for voting rights and for eligibility for elected office. The nobility wished to clarify and confirm their land rights, and as a corollary, the legal and judicial rules and procedures associated with those rights. Moreover, as an instruction from Penza notes, a general survey of land was desired for the purpose of clearly demarcating noble lands thereby limiting the acquisition of land by the most powerful nobles. This reflects the urgent concerns about the procedures associated with the sale and inheritance of land – and as seen later – the right to vote in local estate assembly elections was often inherited with land. For example, the Penza nobility, living more than 300 miles from the capital of Kazan where all of the records were kept, complained of difficulties in dealing with corrupt officials and communicating over such long distances.

In Penza district there are no cadasters, but all inhabitants, gentry as well as other classes, hold land according to records of wills and testaments which contain descriptions of natural boundaries (hills, creeks); circumference boundaries are not measured and often the landmarks are indistinguishable due to careless description. In these territories, the settled people now include various landowners, gentry as well as state peasant, sometimes owning from five to twenty hamlets and villages.\(^\text{115}\)

The pressure on the land also manifested itself in the increasing need to feed the growing population of the province’s towns. A new survey was therefore also sought by town dwellers to

\[^{115}\text{Sbornik imperatorskago russkago istoricheskago obshchestva (SIRIO), 68 (1889): 21-22.}\]
reallocate the dwindling available land.\textsuperscript{116} The fires of 1751 and 1767 in Penza were blamed on the lack of land that forced people to build their houses too close together.\textsuperscript{117} The pressure on the land inevitably caused petty quarrels between individuals or groups of individuals in desperate need of more land. This pressure would only intensify into the nineteenth century and often became an issue in complaints about elections.\textsuperscript{118}

As there was pressure on the land itself, so too was there pressure on the resources it produced. None was in greater demand than lumber. Particularly in the southern parts of the province, the expansive forests had already begun to disappear. Supplies of wood for houses, fires, and other daily needs were insufficient for all people of the province, regardless of estate. This led to the poaching of state forest reserves, which could land the violator a steep fine.\textsuperscript{119} The lack of publicly-available lands also caused considerable resentment against those who retained privately-held forest lands; in certain cases (Kungur) this resentment was cast in ethnic terms as many non-Russians retained this valuable land.\textsuperscript{120} Conversely, the non-Russian populations who had once owned this land were frustrated by the creation of government forest preserves and the acquisition of large sections of land for factories.\textsuperscript{121} For many native peoples, the forests were considered their own and Russian intrusion was not welcomed. Peasants who worked the land were also concerned with its insufficiency, and each of the instructions carried

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 107; Syzran instruction, ibid., 606-608; Penza instruction, ibid., 474; Kungur instruction, ibid., 525; Kazan instruction, ibid., 520; Cheboksary instruction, ibid., 585-586; Tsivil’sk instruction, ibid., 500; Iaransk instruction, ibid., 560; Solikamsk instruction, ibid., 541; Khlynov instruction, ibid., 584.
\textsuperscript{117} Penza instruction, ibid., 475.
\textsuperscript{118} Countless requests and demands for more land in the towns fill the archives of the Kazan city administration, for example. Documents, for example, in f. 114, 98, and 22 at NA RT.
\textsuperscript{120} Samara instruction, ibid., 464; Tsivil’sk instruction, ibid., 501; Saransk instruction, ibid., 618; Kungur instruction, ibid., 526; Iaransk instruction, ibid., 557. At times, this resentment may have also influenced electoral complaints as seen in subsequent chapters.
\textsuperscript{121} Simbirsk and Syzran instruction, ibid., 348; Kazan (Votiaks) instruction, ibid., 369; Sviiazhsk \textit{iasak} Tatars instruction, ibid., 400; Sviiazhsk \textit{iasak} peasants instruction, ibid., 412-413; Ostiak instruction, ibid., 447-449; Simbirsk (Tatar) instruction, ibid., 305; Tsivil’sk newly-baptized Chuvash instruction, ibid., 427, 433; and, Kungur (Cheremis) instruction, ibid., 366.
by the peasant deputies addressed this point. Population growth outstripped the reallocation of land, causing a pressure on the land itself as well as causing the peasants to fall into greater tax arrears. Poor soil, poor weather, and other hardships associated with their life close to the land animated many of the 37 peasant instructions.

Further, land needed to be worked, and nobles expressed their concern about controlling and containing the serfs whom they owned. Serfs fleeing commonly went west or to the eastern and southern steppes where they frequently formed robber gangs, which prompted concern as expressed in the instructions from Kazan among other provinces. Likewise, a reduction was sought in the demands made on the peasant population for service in the army and other government positions (e.g. service as couriers [iamshchiki]). This took valuable labor away from the local nobles in particular, but also from the local economy more broadly. Nearly half of the peasant instructions also mentioned the recruiting requirements as well. Their primary concern was with the requirement for the commune (mir) to continue to pay taxes for those who were serving in the army. This specific concern was less urgent for Kazan province.

Another aspect of the nobles’ economic concern was the right to sell liquor freely, and that of legal free trade that the mercantury enjoyed. Poor infrastructure and communications also hampered the productivity of the nobility, and taxes (marginally) hindered their profits. Tax collection itself was an ever-present concern, as expressed in the instructions of Penza and Sviiazhsk that focused more on how the taxes were collected than on their sum; the tax collection

122 Saransk district instruction, ibid., 115, 160; Town of Saransk instruction, ibid., 158; Town of Tsivil’sk instruction, ibid., 178-179; Iaransk district instruction, ibid., 198; Town of Mokshan instruction, ibid., 167; Kazan district instruction, ibid., 186. The heavy burden of various taxes was vividly conveyed in the peasant instructions.
123 It should be remembered that chapter eleven of the Great Instruction forbade specific discussion of serfdom.
125 Sviiazhsk instruction, ibid., 39-41; Saransk instruction, ibid., 4; Penza instruction, ibid., 17-18; Kazan instruction, ibid., 28-29; Simbirsk instruction, ibid., 11.
methods were considered cruel and unreasonable.\textsuperscript{126} Moreover, given that residents of towns had to collect local taxes and manage the accounting of other taxes (salt tax, for example), they expressed frustration at the burden this imposed, taking assessors away for long periods of time threatening to ruin their families and businesses. Merchants, again, the overall majority of deputies from towns, expressed interest in reducing their service burdens and the regulation and provision of firm legal foundation to their corporate rights, even if they sought these rights on an individual basis. Moreover, they were concerned with the establishment of economic rights that would allow them to retain their exclusive right to trade as defined in 1755. Fearing the encroachment of competition from the nobility and peasants, they wanted the right to keep others out, including other merchants from other locations.\textsuperscript{127} In a rare appendix to only one of the town instructions from Kazan province, two raznochintsy argued,\textsuperscript{128} in contrast to the merchants, that they, peasants and Tatars, should be allowed to trade on the same terms as the merchants.\textsuperscript{129} Further, as with the broader merchantry across the empire, the merchantry of Kazan wanted the right to own serfs. Due to their need for additional household help and their inability to keep hired labor, merchants expressed the need to be able to own serfs, and further cited the use of serfs by state peasants and non-Russians (inorodtsy) as support for their claims.\textsuperscript{130}

Among the most relevant of issues discussed in the instructions were those related to local self-government and local administration. Overall, several instructions from across the

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 22, 41.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 107; Tsivil’sk instruction, ibid., 501-503; Koz’modem’iansk instruction, ibid., 486-488; Iaransk instruction, ibid., 559-560; Solikamsk instruction, ibid., 539; Sviiazhsk instruction, ibid., 567; Syzran instruction, ibid., 612; Kungur instruction, ibid., 527-528.
\textsuperscript{128} The term raznochintsy literally means “people of various ranks.” This term was officially used in the Code of Laws in the seventeenth century but by the eighteenth century its official use was abolished. The term remained in popular use, however, and by the nineteenth century came to describe people of non-noble background who were educated and as such were excluded from taxation.
\textsuperscript{129} Kazan instruction, \textit{SIRIO}, 68 (1889): 517.
\textsuperscript{130} Penza instruction, ibid., 468; Simbirsk instruction, ibid., 554; Syzran instruction, ibid., 609; Kungur instruction, ibid., 525; Solikamsk instruction, ibid., 539; Sviiazhsk instruction, ibid., 566; Cheboksary instruction, ibid., 593; Saransk instruction, ibid., 618.
empire expressed the desire for elected local police officials and judges. The provincial reforms of Catherine the Great established local courts with members elected from each estate. These courts and their elected officials were to address many of the issues articulated in the instructions from Kazan. Elected officials were considered preferential to appointed officials because they were more accountable.\textsuperscript{131} The judicial system was also of primary concern as it was inefficient and corrupt. Instructions from Simbirsk, Saransk, and Sviiazhsk all dealt with these concerns.\textsuperscript{132} Further, the nobles of Penza proposed the election of two or three nobles from each village \textit{(stantsiiia)} who could serve as communal mediators and/or mediators for minor agricultural quarrels.\textsuperscript{133} In this way, the long distances to the capital for court proceedings would be avoided, and they would be able to resolve their disputes among themselves much more efficiently.

Judicial problems were not only of concern to the nobles. The pressures of inadequate land allotments and of the poll tax caused bitter disputes among the peasants, to which they sought resolution through a better judicial system. The existing system of peasant justice, sometimes involving meetings of the \textit{mir}, and at other times involving the elected elders of the \textit{mir}, was no longer sufficient, and they sought a more effective impartial judicial system including elected local officials from the \textit{mir}.\textsuperscript{134}

The \textit{inoverts} wished to see the establishment of their own legal system and/or to be provided with broader access to the Russian court system. The justice system of the province was liked by almost no one, however, for the non-Russian population it appears to have been particularly difficult to navigate. Given this, they often sought the assistance of lawyers who

\textsuperscript{131} Petitions from Voronezh and Rostov also argued this point as elected aids were desired to check on and watch over the corrupt, lazy or drunk appointed \textit{voevody}. Ibid., 22-23; and ibid., 355-356 and 266-267, 329.  
\textsuperscript{132} Sinton, “The Instructions from Kazan Guberniia,” 100.  
\textsuperscript{133} Penza instruction. \textit{SIRIO}, 68 (1889): 6.  
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 115; Khlynov district instruction, ibid., 228-229; Kazan district instruction, ibid., 187.
were not only expensive, but were ineffective in arguing their case against Russian parties.\textsuperscript{135} They, too, wanted faster, cheaper, more efficient resolution to legal matters in courts closer to home. They also felt injustice through the acquisition of their lands by Russians and for factory use, causing a loss of livelihoods without any means of a fair legal fight in the courts.\textsuperscript{136}

Inter-ethnic relations were expressed differently by Russian and non-Russian drafters of the province’s instructions. Specifically, the preferential treatment provided to those who converted to Orthodoxy frustrated the nobility, merchants, and peasantry alike, especially when it came to the granting of land, the dispensation of justice through other (non-Russian) local court systems, and the waiving of taxes and military obligations.\textsuperscript{137} As noted above, the demands for more land created tensions between the Russian and non-Russian peoples. The Kungur merchants claimed that the pressure on the land was due to Tatars who had taken the land from the local merchants.\textsuperscript{138} The newly-baptized, non-Russian population also frustrated the merchants, when, the merchants claimed, the newly baptized would dump goods on the markets thereby dropping prices.\textsuperscript{139} The non-Russian populations of the province expressed concern about the inclusion of the young, old and infirm in the poll tax, and all instructions mentioned the need to change this requirement.\textsuperscript{140} More specific to the non-Russian populations, however, was the horse tax introduced under Empress Elizabeth because many of them bred

\textsuperscript{135} Koz’modem’iansk, newly-baptized Chuvash instruction, ibid., 435-436; Kazan \textit{iask} peasants instruction, ibid., 386-387; Sviiazsk \textit{iask} Tatar instruction, ibid., 393, 395; Kazan \textit{iask} Chuvash instruction, ibid., 380; Tsivil’sk newly-baptized Chuvash instruction, ibid., 426; Kazan \textit{iask} Tatar instruction, ibid., 374-375.

\textsuperscript{136} Penza-Saransk newly-baptized Chuvash and Mordvinian instruction, ibid., 421; Simbirsk instruction, ibid., 353; Simbirsk-Syzran \textit{iask} peasants instruction, ibid., 346-347; Penza instruction, ibid., 420; Cheboksary newly-baptized Chuvash instruction, ibid., 425-426.

\textsuperscript{137} Saransk instruction, ibid., 4; Penza instruction, ibid., 20; Kazan instruction, ibid., 30; Sviiazhsk instruction, ibid., 36, 40-41.

\textsuperscript{138} Kungur instruction, ibid., 523.

\textsuperscript{139} Tsivil’sk instruction, ibid., 503.

\textsuperscript{140} For example see Penza and Saransk (Tatar) instruction, ibid., 334; Kazan \textit{iask} Cheremis instruction, ibid., 392; Tsivil’sk newly-baptized Chuvash instruction, ibid., 430; Tsarevokokshaish newly-christened Cheremis instruction, ibid., 440-441.
horses at a considerable profit (7% sales tax on horses sold at fairs).\textsuperscript{141} The overall strain on the environmental and human resources of the province were expressed in various tensions, at times within estates, at times between estates, at times between those of a particular town or region and those not, and at times between those of differing ethnic groups. The tensions expressed through the instructions were largely those of a practical nature. In this way, although expressed through a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional lens, the concerns of Kazan’s population did not fundamentally differ from those of the population of the empire as a whole.

One cannot dismiss, however, the religious aspects of life in the multi-confessional province, particularly given the anti-Muslim conversion policies of the previous decades of the eighteenth century. The instruction of the iasak Tatars from Kungur district stated that the mullahs who served the 10 mosques of the district were treated with disrespect and the mosques themselves had been desecrated.\textsuperscript{142} Others complained of being denied permission and documents to travel on the hajj to Mecca. Of still greater concern, however, was the divide between the newly-baptized and the non-Christian portions of the non-Russian population. Because the newly-baptized were freed for a time from taxes, supplying of recruits, and billeting of soldiers, the remaining community was required to pick up these responsibilities. This left them with a heavy burden. The \textit{Kontora novokreshchenyk del} (Bureau for the newly-baptized) attempted to interfere with daily life and was therefore a further frustration to the inoverty (non-Orthodox).

We and our neighboring non-Christians, Mordvinians, Chuvashes, Cheremises, and Votiaks, borrow each other’s labor and implements… (but) the Bureau for the newly-baptized… has placed a great prohibition on this.\textsuperscript{143}

\textsuperscript{141} For complaints about the horse tax, see: ibid., 115; Kazan instruction, ibid., 325; Simbirsk-Syzran instruction, ibid., 346; Kungur Tatar instruction, ibid., 364; Koz'modem'iansk newly-christened Chuvash instruction, ibid., 436.

\textsuperscript{142} Kungur iasak Tatar instruction, ibid., 358-359; Kazan instruction, ibid., 318-320; Penza-Saransk mirzas (nobility) and Tatar instructions, ibid., 335-337; and Kazan iasak Tatar instruction, ibid., 372.

\textsuperscript{143} Kazan mirzas instruction, ibid., 321-322.
The local communities were, not surprisingly, disrupted by the effects of conversion policies and this was expressed through many of the instructions. Some, after converting, took exceptional liberties in breaking the law and using their status to acquire economic advantage over others in their communities. Further, because technically Russians were not allowed to purchase land from inovertsy, they instead purchased land in the name of a person who had been newly-baptized, thereby further squeezing the non-baptized populations onto smaller portions of land while still being required to maintain the same tax burden.\textsuperscript{144} This was not satisfactory to the newly-baptized either as the instructions noted that some felt tricked by Russian landlords who ostensibly bought land in exchange for protection; others were confused or frustrated with their compensation and new manner of life.\textsuperscript{145} While cast at times as personal grievances or land disputes, the local communities were disrupted by the policies of conversion, and in particular by the incentives provided for baptism among non-Orthodox communities.\textsuperscript{146} This divided the community along intra- and inter-religious lines, while exacerbating the core problems they all faced: a lack of land, excessively burdensome taxes, the desire for more room to maneuver economically, and the need for a better functioning judicial system. The provincial reforms that would follow the Commission some 20 years later sought to address these concerns, and, in response to the local specificities of the province, established a separate administrative system for the Tatar population of Kazan.

\textsuperscript{145} Simbirsk newly-baptized people instruction, ibid., 355; Tsivil’sk newly-baptized Chuvash instruction, ibid., 433-434; Penza instruction, ibid., 420-421; Penza-Saransk (Chuvash and Mordvinian) instruction, ibid., 423; Sviiazhsk newly-baptized Tatar and Chuvash instruction, ibid., 406.
\textsuperscript{146} Sviiazhsk \textit{iasak} Chuvash instruction, ibid., 405-408; Kazan \textit{sloboda mirzas} instruction, ibid., 311-312.
Having elected deputies and composed instructions, Kazan was ready to send its deputies to Moscow.\textsuperscript{147} Once again, consistent with other parts of the empire, there was a sense of disinterest demonstrated by the lack of participation in the Commission. Many deputies arrived in Moscow late, several were replaced, and less than half remained through the entire Commission.\textsuperscript{148} As stated above, participation in the Legislative Commission was not an attractive proposition to many given the burdens of time and money that were involved. Therefore, the elections did not attract a large number of interested people. Viatka and Kungur, for example, did not send any noble deputies at all to the Commission; likewise, merchants were more eager to participate in elections than to be elected due to their desire to conduct their business affairs rather than travel to Moscow for an extended period of time. During the Commission itself, the deputies from Kazan did not appear to actively participate in the proceedings.

Assessments of Catherine’s instruction to the Legislative Commission vary widely, most focusing on the influence of Enlightenment ideas and philosophers and the degree to which her instruction to the Legislative Commission was original, sincere, or realistic for Russia. But whether or not the hundreds of deputies sent to Moscow with their even more numerous locally-composed instructions contributed to the legislative agenda of the Empress, the electoral procedures developed and implemented to elect those local deputies who were sent by at least a segment of the population of the empire – regardless of their imperfections – established the foundation of practice for subsequent elections. Catherine’s experiment, from this perspective, was successful. Low turnout at elections, whether due to poor roads, an inconvenient time of year, perceived burdens, or outright disinterest, does not suggest an indictment of the processes

\textsuperscript{147} The Commission opened in Moscow on July 30, 1767, and moved to St. Petersburg in early 1768.
themselves, but perhaps of the already onerous service duties placed on local officials and residents, and an overall apathy toward the Commission itself given its many failed precursors and its perceived irrelevance to local daily life.

Through the election of deputies as well as through the composition of the instructions, the local perspective did predominate, and local interests were aggregated around estate, around sub-regions, and around political and economic concerns. In fact, in many of the instructions, the central government itself, to say nothing of a notion of “empire,” was nonexistent. The local perspective was the only one visible to those who had scarcely seen anything but their local surroundings.

Among the local interests Kazan’s instructions expressed was, importantly, the notion that locally-elected officials would be better at managing the administration of the province and would be more accountable, as was seen in several proposals to elect local judges and other officials. Both the practice of elections and their legitimacy as essential to effective local governance and were brought to life through the exercise of the Legislative Commission. These procedures would be repeated as the local administration of the empire’s regions and cities would again undergo reform by Catherine the Great, establishing more elective positions and broadening the responsibilities of those positions for the provision of local welfare needs, and necessarily acquired the local specificities required for improved organization of local life.

**INITIAL FOUNDATIONS OF LOCAL ELECTED INSTITUTIONS:**

**PETER THE GREAT’S PROVINCIAL REFORMS**

While often determined by historians to have been a failure for their inability to resolve many practical problems of local governance, the provincial reforms of Peter the Great shaped
the institutional landscape of local administration across the empire, and in Kazan in particular. These reforms established local elected institutions that formed the basic administrative structure of the provinces that were subsequently modified by Catherine the Great.

At the end of the seventeenth century, Peter the Great turned more urgently to reforming, and ultimately dismantling, the Muscovite system of governance and reassembling it in a manner that would initiate nearly a century of local reform and reorganization. Of initial primary concern to the Petrine government was the need for increased revenue. The first wave of reorganization began with an edict of January 30, 1699, focusing on local tax collection. Borrowing heavily from European models, the reorganization of the territories of central Russia initially resulted in a process of decentralization accompanied by the appointment of officials to serve across the imperial territory, most of whom had worked in either the army or in the civil administration in Moscow. The Chamber of Burgomasters (burmisterskaia palata) was established via this edict, and from 1700 it was called the ratusha and was comprised of local merchants (gosti and gostinnye sotni) and townsmen (posadskie), artisans of the urban tax-paying community (chernye sotni), tradespeople, and entrepreneurs. Burgomasters (burmistry), elected every year in number sufficient to the need, were vested with tax collection responsibilities taken from the voevody. The decree stated only who was to elect the burgomasters, namely the merchants, townsmen and artisans, not how they were to do so, underscoring the foundational nature of the Manifesto of 1766 in its very detailed description of how the elections to the Commission were to occur. LeDonne notes that the reform resulted in the “mobilization of the merchantry,” who were often “squeeze(ed) … into bankruptcy [by the

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149 PSZ I, vol. 3, 1674.
voevody] before the end of their tour of duty.”

The new, elected burgomasters were untrained and seemed to quickly lose the trust placed in them as corruption crept into this new system.

The system of kormlenie (feeding), whereby local officials fed themselves by taking a portion of the funds collected before sending the balance to the central government, diverted significant amounts of local contributions from government coffers. The difficulty of finding sufficiently educated and dedicated officials, coupled with the continued problem of kormlenie, contributed to the development of local administration that was (arguably) more effective in terms of tax collection but was not yet governing fully. LeDonne concludes, “A new symmetry, unknown in Muscovite Russia, had been achieved between a poorly coordinated central government and a poorly coordinated provincial government, to the greater detriment of both.” Many have argued that these efforts were unsuccessful due to the lack of compatibility between Russia and its western counterparts from which the models of local reform were taken. Others attribute these failings to the overall ignorance of those who resided in the provinces. Corruption and overall lack of government coordination are also cited as

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150 LeDonne, Absolutism and the Ruling Class, 33.
151 Lindsey Hughes, Russia in the Age of Peter the Great (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 115.
152 Ibid., 114.
153 Ibid., 121.
154 LeDonne, Absolutism and the Ruling Class, 80.
155 For the most detailed analysis of these divergences, see Claes Peterson, Peter the Great’s Administrative and Judicial Reforms: Swedish Antecedents and the Process of Reception (Stockholm: A.-B. Nordiska Bokhandeln, 1979). Many historians find fault with Peter’s reforms due to the fact that they were of foreign origin and as such were not compatible with Russian realities. A. Lentin notes that “While borrowing his complex administrative apparatus from Sweden, Peter spent less on it than the Swedes had spent on one province of Livonia.” Antony Lentin, Russia in the Eighteenth Century, from Peter the Great to Catherine the Great (1696-1796) (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1973), 18. Marc Raeff also reaches a similar conclusion: “Obviously, Peter had no clear or firm notion of what to do with respect to local affairs. Foreign models and theories were even less suited for imitation in the provinces than had been the case with the imperial institutions. As a result, Peter experimented a great deal, and still did not succeed in devising an effective and lasting framework.” Marc Raeff, Imperial Russia 1682-1825: The Coming of Age of Modern Russia (New York: Knopf, 1971), 74.
156 Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, and Mark D. Steinberg, History of Russia, 7th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 214.
predominant factors in the lackluster results of Peter’s provincial reforms. The factors, indeed, were multiple.

In her analysis of provincial and local government, Hartley is among those who largely conclude that “despite the amount of legislation devoted to local administration… Russia was under- rather than over-governed throughout the imperial period.” Although she designates the reign of Peter I as the first period of “intensive and significant legislative activity” regarding local government, during which urban administration was reformed, these efforts were hampered by the fact that “government legislation could bear little relation to reality.” Peter’s government had turned to elections at the local level to fill local administrative posts because, as Hartley noted, “it lacked the trained manpower and the financial resources to fill these posts with a professional bureaucracy appointed from the center.” However, these reforms created new territorial jurisdictions, new elected institutions and in this respect were not the failures that many conclude.

Peter’s provincial reforms established the institution of the *ratusha* that was influential in the local political landscape of Kazan. Not simply a bureaucratic structure imposed by the central government, the *ratusha* was comprised of people who were influenced by other factors they experienced locally, and who made decisions on divisions of power and responsibility within their communities based on these factors. Local elected institutions became an important

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160 Ibid., 449.

161 Ibid., 452.

162 Ibid., 451.

163 For common perceptions of these failures, see Lentin, *Russia in the Eighteenth Century*, 17, and Raef, *Imperial Russia*, 74-76.
part of how the province was governed, and at times, how it was divided. The institution itself and the electoral processes that reoccurred in the context of this and subsequent institutions shaped not only the administrative realities of Kazan province, but also the electoral and political practices of the many diverse peoples who lived in the province.

**Catherine the Great’s Local Reforms:**

**Provincial Reorganization and Local Administration**

The Legislative Commission was inspired by the Enlightenment ideas, with which Catherine the Great was much engaged. Yet to be fully explored by scholars, however, are the connections between these Enlightenment ideas and Catherine the Great’s provincial reforms. The electoral aspects of these reforms may provide a beneficial means of exploring these links.

This exploration could beneficially begin with a distinction between “citizens” and “subjects,” the former were ruled, the latter were governed. To what extent was Catherine’s expansion of local elections in newly-established institutions as a means of imperial governance a step toward recognizing her “subjects” as “citizens”? On one hand, the limited franchise that excluded the majority of the population and categorized those who were allowed to participate into unequal categories, suggested that at best, her provincial reforms, and even the elections for the enlightened Legislative Commission, were a rather limited step forward. However, on the other hand by clearly outlining electoral procedures that would serve as the roots for electoral practices in an era of expanded participation and self-government in the era of the Great Reforms, and establishing locally-elected institutions for the purposes of local administration, Catherine expanded the number of locally elected positions and the franchise itself. She also expanded,

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164 Catherine’s interest can be seen, for example, in her lengthy correspondence with Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire: A. Lentin, trans., with commentary, notes and introd., *Voltaire and Catherine the Great; selected correspondence* (Cambridge, England, Oriental Research Partners, 1974).
however tentatively, the possibility for the connections to be made between electoral procedures to be followed and individual as well as group rights to participate in or to abstain from those elections. The electoral history of the Russian Empire continued to evolve from these early beginnings in Catherine’s elections to the Legislative Commission and in her provincial reforms. Yet, this evolutionary pace was noted even in those states recognized as advanced; Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau also noted this evolutionary process in Britain where elections had existed longer than they had in imperial Russia.\textsuperscript{165} Whether through individual case studies, or – as suggested in the conclusion of this dissertation – through comparative studies, the connection between the Enlightenment and elections would be a useful point of scholarly departure.

Nearly a century before the introduction of the Great Reforms, the establishment of new local elected institutions by Catherine the Great expanded the number of locally elected positions and in conjunction, expanded the opportunity for a wide spectrum of Kazan’s diverse population to be involved in local elections, whether for the new local court system established in the provinces, in the estate assemblies created through the Charters to the Nobility and to the Towns, or through the other elected institutions of local administration both continued (ratusha) and introduced (duma) by her reforms. How did this new local judicial and administrative system operate with elected and appointed officials? How did elections contribute to this system?

If not effective in developing a new legal code, the more than a thousand instructions brought to the Legislative Commission from around the empire to Moscow were effective in articulating, in the words of local communities, the needs and concerns of the peoples of the vast and diverse empire. Whether directly responsive to these sentiments or to the sense of urgent

\textsuperscript{165} For a discussion of British elections as viewed by Rousseau and other Enlightenment theorists, see Martin Fitzpatrick et al., eds., \textit{The Enlightenment World} (New York: Routledge, 2004), 227.
need for order following the Pugachev rebellion in 1773 that was centered around Kazan, the series of provincial reforms implemented by Catherine the Great directly affected Kazan and its diverse population as did that population affect the local application of her reforms in return. What emerged in the last quarter of the eighteenth century was a territory at once uniquely composed of various peoples with their own means of governance, essential to the civil and military administration of the empire as a whole. The administrative edifice of Kazan was reflective of the nature of the province itself. As with the other provinces of the Russian Empire, it had undergone multiple stages of reorganization and reform under Peter the Great, yet it had vested that scaffolding with local needs, local solutions, and local people. What was the evolving administrative architecture of Kazan province? How did the landscape of Kazan change as a result of and in reaction to local needs and imperial demands? What role did elections play in the administration of the newly-reshaped province?

Consistent with her Enlightenment ideals and with her concern for the practical challenges of managing her expanding empire, particularly in light of the deadly Pugachev rebellion, Catherine introduced a series of reforms to reorganize the territorial basis and the administrative structure of the empire’s provinces. The success of the Pugachev rebellion underscored for Catherine the ineffectiveness of the local administration she inherited. Drawing on the instructions to the Legislative Commission and the work of the Commission itself, Catherine sought to address some of the deputies’ primary concerns.

As early as 1764, Catherine had begun to lay the groundwork for what would become her reform of the provinces by requiring governors of each province to propose the reorganization of their own province so that each district would have approximately 30,000 inhabitants, thereby
evening out tax revenues. Further, maps and lists of towns were to be provided because there was precious little information available to the central government. Kazan’s submission by governor P. S. Meshchersky in 1774 included a proposal for jurisdictional separation of local administrative, financial, and judicial functions. He also suggested territorial subdivision into districts, and further into commissariats (komissariaty). With this locally-provided information as a basis, the Statute for the administration of the provinces was published on November 7, 1775. This statute began by reducing the size of the empire’s primary administrative unit established by Peter the Great’s reforms, creating 50 provinces of the existing 20. The boundaries that had initially been based on geographic and other local demarcations were now based on population. Provinces were to be headed by a governor or governor-general, assisted by an administrative board, who was to be responsible for executive, police, and managerial institutions.

At the district (uezd) level, the Lower Land Court (nizhnii zemskii sud) was led by a land captain (namestnik) and held executive and police functions. It implemented edicts of the provincial departments, supervised commerce, attempted to prevent epidemics, oversaw the repair of roads and bridges as well as the behavior and the political reliability of its residents, and assisted the courts in initial investigations. Administration of finances was handled by the Fiscal Chamber, to which the local (province and district) treasuries were subordinated, and was responsible for revenue collection, contracts, and construction.

Catherine’s reform of the local court system was complex and based on a multi-tiered system, with each tier leading ultimately to the provincial procurator, who was then linked to the

166 The administrative unit of province (provintsiia), established by Peter the Great’s reforms as a middle territorial unit, was eliminated.
167 SIRIO, 68 (1889): 179.
governor or governor-general. Below the Senate, to which an appeal could be sent, were the central civil and criminal courts located in the capital of the province. Below the civil and criminal courts at the provincial level, the upper land court (*verkhii zemskii sud*) was established for the nobles, and the magistrate court was established for the merchants and the townspeople. An upper tribunal court was established for the free rural inhabitants (state peasants). The heads of these courts at the provincial level were appointed, but they also had members who were elected by their corresponding estate and who served as assessors or advisors to the judge. Below these province-level courts was a second layer of courts at the district level roughly parallel to those above them: the district land court for the nobles, a district magistrate court for the merchants and the townspeople, and a lower tribunal court for the free (state) peasants and other rural inhabitants. To the provincial magistrate court, two judges were appointed and six assessors were elected. To the town magistrate court, two judges and the four assessors were elected by the townspeople, thereby including the merchants and *meshchane* in the election of judges and assessors. A ratman or a burgomaster and two assessors were elected in smaller towns. Lower summary courts (*nizhniaia rasprava*) were established in districts where the free population reached 30% of the total of 10,000 to 30,000 inhabitants; higher summary courts were established (*verkhniaia rasprava*) for the *odnodvortsy*, state, court, economic and assigned peasants. To these courts judges were appointed (from among those who held a rank), and eight to ten assessors were elected by the peasants under the jurisdiction of these courts, from their own, from the nobility, or from the *raznochintsy*. Elections for these positions comprised a considerable portion of the local elections through the nineteenth century and were often the subject of complaints or disputes recorded in archival documents of Kazan province.
Finally, the Lower Land Court at the district level was established in the countryside, and was headed by a land commissar (zemskii ispravnik); it had two assessors elected by the local nobility and two assessors elected by the state peasants. The primary task of this court was policing of the countryside and execution of decisions of the upper courts and the board of local government. The land commissar was to carry out a wide variety of tasks including dealing with epidemics, roads, bridges, forests, and fires.

A Court of Conscience (sovestnii sud) was also established at the provincial level, with members elected by the estates. This court addressed cases involving all estates (or matters where more than one estate was involved), and dealt with matters affecting the sick, insane, orphans, accidents, superstition, sexual offences, and other similar matters.\footnote{Little is known about this court in particular, and, as de Madriaga notes, many historians assume that it ceased to exist during the reign of Paul, although they may have been restored under the reign of Alexander I. de Madriaga, \textit{Catherine the Great}, 74-75.} Boards of social welfare (priakz obshchestvennogo prizreniiia) were also created to care for the social welfare of the local population. Consisting of the governor, two assessors from the upper land court of the nobility, the district magistrate court, and the district tribunal, the boards were to establish schools, houses for the poor, correctional facilities, charities and other needed assistance.

The total number of officials working in local administration increased from 12,712 in 1774, to 22,000 in 1781, and to 27,000 in 1796. More than a third of these officials were elected.\footnote{Robert E. Jones, “Catherine the Great and the Provincial Reform of 1775: A Question of Motivation,” \textit{Canadian Slavic Studies} 4, no. 3 (1970): 511.} As a result, these new local institutions and the elections that determined many of those who served in those institutions contributed to the growing electoral experiences of the peoples of Kazan province. Although the challenges of illiteracy, lack of training, and insufficient pay put pressure on the local administration, its expansion in terms of institutions as
well as in terms of electoral experiences cannot be underestimated – they formed the basis upon which subsequent local electoral processes continued.

As the instructions to the Legislative Commission brought by the deputies from around the Russian Empire indicated, there was a desire by many sectors of the population to clarify and codify their rights and privileges as a corporate group, although they often expressed these desires from an individual perspective. Nobles sought the clarification of their rights as individual noblemen, not as a collective nobility. This was echoed by the desire for the codification of commercial rights for the merchantry, and of land-ownership rights for the non-Russian populations of Kazan. To a certain extent, these desires were addressed through the organization of local administration and courts along largely corporate lines. This initial step was followed a decade later, with the publication of the twin charters to the Nobility and to the Towns.

While life in Kazan province reflected a fluid social and economic reality, the local institutions created by the Charters to the Nobility and to the Towns on April 21, 1785, were in principle clear in their categorization of people, their interests and their representatives, and were able to make some strides toward addressing the local concerns of the diverse population. Following the expressed wish of the nobility, merchantry and certain inoverty, as well as Catherine’s desire to better order the provinces and to solidify her position vis-à-vis the nobility, the Charters to the Nobility and to the Towns established both the rights of individuals in each social category as well as those (limited) rights of the estates as a corporate whole.

In the first of the charters, the Charter to the Nobility, many of the de facto rights of this estate were established de jure, and their right to form an estate assembly served as the basis of their more active involvement in the new provincial administrative bodies established in

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Catherine’s provincial reforms described above. The Charter to the Towns built upon the new administrative structure and further developed an extensive system of limited urban self-government. The elections to these institutions represented a considerable portion of the all elections occurred at the local level, and the electoral procedures of these institutions were of concern to the local communities of Kazan.¹⁷²

The basis of the Charter to the Nobility lay in the Manifesto that set out the instructions for the election of marshals of the nobility to oversee and conduct the elections for deputies to the Legislative Commission. As individuals, nobles’ rank, estate, honor, and trial by equals were secured; their rank was considered hereditary, and they were not to suffer corporal punishment. Primarily, the Charter served to codify long-established practice. Other existing rights were also confirmed: freedom from state service, the right to travel, and the right to enter service abroad. No taxes were assessed on nobles personally and they were not required to billet soldiers.

The province, as the primary territorial unit across the empire, also became the basic organizing unit for noble assemblies. The nobility was allowed under the Charter to form assemblies, opened but not attended by the governor. They would meet every three years to elect officials for the various local administrative and judicial posts outlined above. Eligibility to participate in elections or to be elected required registration in the provincial noble registers and service at a commissioned rank. Nobles were to elect only those who met these requirements, had an income of at least 100 roubles from land, and those who were at least 25 years of age. The governor confirmed those elected. The noble assemblies were to serve as keepers of registers of nobles in each province. Further, each district elected nobles to take on this

¹⁷² For a full description of Catherine’s provincial reforms, see de Madariaga, Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great, especially chapters 18 and 19.
responsibility together with the provincial marshal of the nobility, who was also elected. The Charter to the Nobility outlined how the elected local nobles were to determine those registered.

Far more complex than the companion Charter to the Nobility, the Charter to the Towns further extended the reorganization begun with the provincial reform, and addressed the individual and collective rights of those who lived in towns, the regulation of the guilds (similar to the division of the nobility), and the reorganization of urban self-government. Again drawing on previously-prepared materials and a synthesis of the materials presented to the Legislative Commission, the Charter was importantly to the Towns, not to the townspeople. The body holding the rights and privileges, then, was the town itself: towns themselves were not to be assessed taxes, new residents were to declare that they would abide by the laws of the town, and a town’s nobles were subject to its taxes. Towns (as opposed to individuals) could establish schools and other organizations that would be used by the public.

A town’s residents were granted some corporate rights consistent with the granting of corporate rights of the nobility. Towns were granted the right to form an assembly similar to the noble assembly that would elect officials to the various posts established by the provincial reforms, send requests to the governor (only), and keep a house with archives, a secretary and a seal; they could also collect voluntary contributions. Citizens of the town were to be registered, and, once registered, they were members of the town assembly. Only those with an annual income of more than 50 roubles and at least 25 years of age could participate in the assembly, however.\textsuperscript{173} The parallels with the provisions made for the noble estate continued in the requirement for registration of residents owning a house, building, or land and/or were in a merchant or craft guild, or other accepted activities. Those elected by registered city residents kept these registers.

\textsuperscript{173} Exceptions were made to these qualifications for small towns.
As individual residents, town dwellers were also vested with rights. These rights were the primary basis for determining voter eligibility and ability to be elected. Interpreting and acting upon these rights were essential to many in Kazan province who either wished to participate in local elections through estate or urban assemblies, or to avoid service. Although based on those rights extended through the Charter to the Nobility, the individual rights described in the Charter to the Towns lacked similar clarity, for the population of those in the towns - particularly those like Kazan - was anything but simple or consistent across the towns of the empire.\textsuperscript{174} According to the Charter, a town dweller belonged to a second or middle estate, meshchane (someone who was not a merchant, noble, or any other category). Meshchane were not to be deprived of their property, had a right to a trial before their peers, and other legal rights consistent with those of nobles. Further delineation of the rights of town residents was based on the financial categorization of the residents themselves.

As institutions of limited self-government, the newly-established estate and urban bodies were separated into three levels. The first was the broadest in terms of participation by those elected from across the spectrum of the population: the town duma.\textsuperscript{175} The members, elected from each of the six categories of registered town residents through the town assembly, in turn elected (in their categories) both the duma assembly members and its executive body. Next, the town duma as a whole elected a six-member duma (shestiglasnaia duma), one member per category, which in turn elected the town chief (gorodskoi golova). The duma was to ensure the town’s welfare, assist with trade, and to preserve the peace. Craft guilds were also subject to

\textsuperscript{174} Urban self-government, as outlined in the Charter to the Towns, was not established based fully on the principle of estate. While this may appear as a departure from the trend indicated in the other parts of the Charters and perhaps seemingly inconsistent with several demands articulated in the instructions, it does accord with the notion that all (registered) residents of the town should be allowed to participate, and furthermore, that at their core, the primary concerns of these residents are not those necessarily of estate, but of economic and political interests expressed locally.

regulations outlined in the Charter to the Towns: production was to be regulated in each artisanal category by internally elected officials who were also part of the town duma, and this determined voter eligibility in this estate. The town duma, then, elected a head of the craft guilds who was part of the six-member duma linking the craftsmen with the town executors.

While the Charter to the Nobility and the Charter to the Towns, along with the provincial reforms of the previous decade, were extended across the empire, Catherine’s policies of imperial governance allowed for considerable tolerance of and flexibility toward local differences. Kazan province was one of the most ethnically, religiously and linguistically diverse of the empire, and this was reflected in the way that it was governed. While retaining the institutions described above, common to nearly all provinces of the empire, Kazan was also administered by institutions reflective of its local population and specific to its historical and demographic realities. Together, these elected institutions combined to administer and govern the province until further provincial reforms were introduced in the mid-nineteenth century.

**LOCAL INSTITUTIONS ADAPT:**

**THE EXAMPLE OF THE TATARSKAIA RATUSHA**

In Kazan, the Tatarskaia ratusha played a prominent and unique role in local administration, particularly that of the Staraia and Novaia Tatarskaia sloboda, that is of the Tatar population of the city of Kazan. Based on the local institutions introduced through Peter the Great’s provincial reforms, the Kazan Tatarskaia ratusha was established in 1781 as part of Catherine the Great’s provincial reforms. The ratusha was jurisdictionally responsible for

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administration of the *Staraia* and *Novaia Tatarskaia sloboda*, the first of which was formed in the sixteenth century when Kazan was incorporated into the Russian Empire when the Tatar population was moved to what was then the outskirts of the city proper, the second of which was formed when fires in 1742 and 1749 caused further relocation, although aggressive conversion policies also contributed to the second wave of relocation. On the territory of the *Staraia Tatarskaia sloboda*, the *Novokreshchenskaia sloboda* was formed for those Muslims who had converted to Orthodoxy. The *Tatarskaia ratusha*, as the administrative institution responsible for the Tatar population of the city of Kazan, was an example of the adaptability of local self-governance in the context of the multi-ethnic, multi-confessional province.

The *ratusha* represented the entire system of administration, following Russian law, for the *Staraia* and *Novaia Tatarskaia sloboda*, including the sirotskii (orphans) and slovesnii (oral) sudy (courts), and the merchant and meshchanskie elders. The organizational structure of the *Tatarskaia ratusha* was similar to that of the city duma. It had a council (prisutstvie) that served as the decision-making body that consisted of the head (golova), two burgomasters, four ratmany, an elder, and two jurors of the oral court who were elected by Tatar merchants and meshchanstvo every three years following the procedures outlined above. The *ratusha* also had a secretariat (kantseliariia) that processed correspondence, and other service people. Because the Tatar population of Kazan was administered by the *ratusha*, which was a parallel institution to other city institions, it served as the primary intermediary between the Tatar community and the

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177 See Khairutdinov, *Upravlenie gosudarstvennoi derevnei*, 106.
178 The extent to which the *Novokreshchenskaia sloboda* was fully integrated into the administration of the *Tatarskaia ratusha* is not easy to determine based on available sources.
179 This adaptation was, some have argued, allowed not only due to the flexible, tolerant practices of Catherine the Great, but also because of the loyalty and reliability shown by the majority of the Tatar community. See B. I. Ismailov, “Kazanskaia Tatarskaia ratusha: 1781-1855” (dissertatsiia na soiskanie uchenoi stepeii kandidata istoricheskikh nauk, Institut istorii im. Sh. Mardzhan AN RT, 2009); and B. I. Ismailov, “Deiatel’nost’ Kazanskoi tatarskoi ratushi: dialog Rossiiskikh zakonov i musul’manskih traditsii,” *Izvestiia Rossiiskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta im. A. I. Gertsena. Aspirantskie tetradi: Nauchnyi zhurnal*, 77, no. 36 (2008): 90.
other city and provincial authorities, including the city duma, the city treasury, and the governor’s office. It provided official status within the city for Tatar merchants and meshchane. This status allowed for the consolidation of merchant capital and for advancement among the Tatar merchants as the ratusha served to advocate for their legal and commercial interests.

Sessions of the ratusha opened daily at 8:00 am and continued until 2:00 pm except for religious or national holidays. Attendance was mandatory, except when a permitted absence was granted under exceptional circumstances. The attendance of each member was noted in an individual table. Likewise, the discussions and business of the ratusha were compiled monthly. Trade and commerce were the most frequently discussed topics in the late eighteenth century and Russian was the working language, although archival documentation in Tatar indicates that both languages were used. The ratusha was also responsible for the distribution of passports issued for trade business and for the issuance of other trade documents and financial records such as those pertaining to bankruptcy. The ratusha maintained lists of recruits and other service tasks. Financial support for the ratusha, however, came entirely from the Tatar community. Those who wished for its patronage applied to the ratusha and contributed a specified amount. Overall, few Tatar families contributed, and the problem of insufficient funds was frequent.

Of those very few archival documents located in Kazan that did survive the city’s many fires and other misfortunes, several were from the Tatarskaia ratusha. Collectively, they attest to the functioning of the electoral procedures as outlined above and to the dynamics of the

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181 Unlike other local institutions, officials of the Kazan Tatarskaia ratusha took an oath based on Islam rather than Orthodoxy. The following is an example of an oath taken by a voter at the Tatarskaia ratusha in 1787: “I promise and bow before God and the Koran as a sign that in the coming elections to the ratusha I will elect those of my brethren of the sloboda those who will prove themselves true servants of His Imperial Majesty. If I act otherwise in the elections, then let me be subjected to universal scorn and God’s condemnation. In conclusion of this my vow, I kiss the Koran.” Khairutdinov, Upravlenie gosudarstvennoi derevnei, 109.
Staraia and Novaia Tatarskaia sloboda in the overall political landscape of Kazan in the late eighteenth century. Despite not insignificant challenges with conducting business in Russian, the documents, approximating 65 cases specifically relating to elections, are telling if inconsistent in their presentation as some documents were only a few lines long and others were longer and more elaborate.

In accordance with the procedures for all town ratushi, the leaders were elected or reelected every three years. The candidates were drawn from registered merchants and meshchanstvo and elected by the greatest number of votes cast. The first elections of 1784 were declared on November 4 by the governor general and held on December 10.\(^{182}\) The specific election procedures were outlined in lengthy instructions referencing the procedures set out in the Manifesto on the elections for the Legislative Commission in 1767.\(^{183}\) Of those who participated in the voting, 132 were residents of the Staraia Tatarskaia sloboda and 106 were residents of the Novaia Tatarskaia sloboda.\(^{184}\) Further analysis of the voter lists compiled in November 1784 reveals that the average age of voters from the Staraia Tatarskaia sloboda was 46,\(^{185}\) whereas the average age of those from the Novaia Tatarskaia sloboda was 42, with the majority of the voters in their 30s, and one even below the minimum age – he was 29.\(^{186}\)

They elected the gorodskoi golova (Iakup Sultanaleev), two burgomasters (Mukhametrakhim Khal’fin and Musa Asanov), four ratmany (Murtaza Kil’mametov, Ismagil Apanaev, Abdrashit Seinov and Murtaza Rakhmankulov), an elder (starosta), two court assessors (Rakhmatulla Subkhankulov and Il’ias Beliaev), and other officials. These other officials included the local police official (politseiskii sotnik) (Abdulla Yakupov), the elder of the

\(^{182}\) NA RT, f. 22, op. 2, d. 194, l. 1, 4-5, 6, 6ob.
\(^{183}\) NA RT, f. 22, op. 2, d. 219, l. 2-6.
\(^{184}\) Khairutdinov, Upravlenie gosudarstvennoi derevnei, 108.
\(^{185}\) NA RT, f. 22, op. 2, d. 219, l. 10-14.
\(^{186}\) Ibid., l. 16-19.
ratusha (Musa Gaisin) and two others (mirskie vybornie [elected representatives from the local communities]) (Abdulkarim Immametov and Murtaza Galeev).\textsuperscript{187} The qualifications for those elected were the same as for all other positions: a minimum age of 30 years, honesty and good behavior. These officials vowed to “bow before god and the Koran” and if elected by their sloboda peers, to be a “faithful slave of the Emperor,” or if otherwise to be placed before all to see and “before the court of god;” the oath was completed with a kiss on the Koran.\textsuperscript{188} The governor then confirmed the elections.\textsuperscript{189}

Election results were duly reported from the elections in 1786 and 1787, frequently using the term ballotirovat’, as seen in the Manifesto.\textsuperscript{190} Similarly, the results of March 1788 elections for judicial officials were reported to the ratusha, but were rudimentary in their presentation, listing only those who were elected and the basic information about the procedures followed during the election.\textsuperscript{191} There were problems, however: M. Galisin, who was elected in March 1788, had not yet received his proper paperwork from the ratusha.\textsuperscript{192} Likewise, a series of correspondence reported the results of various local elections of August 1789 within the Staraia and Novaia Tatarskaia sloboda relevant to the Tatarskaia ratusha.\textsuperscript{193} Despite a few examples listed above, the oaths of service from these early elections did not often contain reference to the Koran.\textsuperscript{194} Most of the letters confirming the acceptance of an elected position contained

\textsuperscript{187} Ibid., l. 10-19.
\textsuperscript{188} NA RT, f. 22, op. 2, d. 429, l. 1-18.
\textsuperscript{189} There is very little archival information about these early elected officials.
\textsuperscript{190} For elections from 1786, see NA RT, f. 22, op. 2, d. 370, l. 1-1ob, and for elections from 1787, see NA RT, f. 22, op. 2, d. 370, l. 2, 2ob., 3, 4, 5-6, 7, 7ob.
\textsuperscript{191} NA RT, f. 22, op. 2, d. 448, l. 1-1ob., 2, 3; f. 22, op. 2, d. 469, l. 1-1ob, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8.
\textsuperscript{192} NA RT, f. 22, op. 2, d. 448, l. 4. This name was not fully legible.
\textsuperscript{193} NA RT, f. 22, op. 2, d. 516, l. 1, 3-3ob., 7, 8, 9, 11.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., l. 10-10ob.
signatures in Tatar and were visibly written by those who had a limited command of written Russian. 195

Just a few years later, the professionalism of the documents – their legibility and consistency – had improved tremendously. The records from the 1793 elections, therefore, reveal a greater understanding of the electoral procedures outlined in the Manifesto. 196 The elections for the Kazan Tatarskaia ratusha were held at the House of the noble assembly (Dvorianstki dom) on December 15, 1793, and were witnessed by a local priest. 197 The required lists of those eligible to participate were noted as having been received from the governor. Further, the exact electoral procedures were outlined in detail, again following the 1766 example. 198 The list of those from the Staraia Tatarskaia sloboda who wished to be noted as eligible voters numbered 107. 199 Results of the 1793 local elections were reported to the governor with their ballot lists included. These lists reveal that for most positions, 97 votes were cast (either “izbrann” (elected) or “neizbrann,” (not elected) [sic]). 200 The elections were conducted separately for those from the Staraia and Novaia Tatarskaia sloboda, and one burgomaster was elected per sloboda.

The average age of those elected in these particular elections as well as those involved in the 1784 elections challenges the common understanding of provincial officials as older, retired men who had time to serve. Many men at the height of their career chose to vote and to be elected for office for a variety of reasons including career advancement, influence, and reasons of self interest. The burgomaster representing the Staraia Tatarskaia sloboda was 36 years old

195 NA RT, f. 22, op. 2, d. 516, l. 14; f. 22, op. 2, d. 196, l. 1, 3-4, 6, 6ob.
196 This appeared to be the exclusive basis for electoral procedures in Kazan province.
197 No reference to a mullah being present was made.
198 NA RT, f. 22, op. 2, d. 735, l. 2-7.
199 Ibid., l. 10-11.
200 Ibid., l. 13.
(of six candidates averaging 41 years of age), and the burgomaster representing the Novaia Tatarskaia sloboda was 50 years of (of five candidates also averaging 41 years of age).\textsuperscript{201}

Similarly, the elections for the ratmany were divided by sloboda. The two ratmany from the Staraia Tatarskaia sloboda were 40 and 50 years of age (of five candidates averaging 42 years of age); the two ratmany from the Novaia Tatarskaia sloboda were 46 and 45 years of age (of six candidates averaging 41 years of age).\textsuperscript{202} The elder elected by the Staraia Tatarskaia sloboda was just 29 years of age (of six candidates averaging 40 years of age); this was in violation of the stated age requirement.\textsuperscript{203} It may be true that some were elected by their peers as a means of distracting them from their businesses, but this cannot explain the overall tendency toward younger participants, involving hundreds of eligible men. Were more narrative documents available from this period, they might reveal more about this dynamic, but simply given the ages of the men involved in the Tatarskaia ratusha and other local institutions, one gets sense of the activity involved in of local governance.

The requisite documents submitted following the 1793 elections also indicated a trend toward standardization of language and toward improved training and literacy.\textsuperscript{204} In one document, the procedures were also linked to the Charter to the Towns of November 7, 1775, which demonstrates a better sense of Russian law than is evident in earlier documents where almost no laws, statutes or precedents are included.\textsuperscript{205} Beyond practices and procedures, at least one set of correspondence demonstrates a more assertive approach to serving as elder: Shafta

\textsuperscript{201} Ibid., l. 14.
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid., l. 15.
\textsuperscript{203} Ibid., l. 16.
\textsuperscript{204} NA RT, f. 22, op. 2, d. 735, l. 24, 25-25ob., 26-26ob.; f. 22, op. 2, d. 715, l. 1, 2, 3, 4.
\textsuperscript{205} NA RT, f. 22, op. 2, d. 735, l. 30.
Muinov, elder of the Tatarskaia sloboda, wrote a lengthy letter expressing his concern about the financial situation in the sloboda.207

The ratusha also had limited religious functions as well as those secular, although the primary local Muslim society (obshchestvo) was responsible for the majority of religious and other private matters associated with religious versus secular law.208 From 1788, members of the Musul’manskoie dukhovnoe sobranie were elected to the Tatarskaia ratusha. By decree of September 1, 1793, the Senate allowed the administration of the governor of Kazan to conduct elections of mullahs to be representatives to the ratusha assembly. The governor’s administration required the lower land court to select the mullahs and to send them to the ratusha for the election of three representatives. The governor’s administration sent nine mullah deputies from various districts of the province, and in addition, two members chosen by the residents of the Kazan Tatarskaia sloboda were also sent.

In 1797, another election in the ratusha was held for the next three years during which Mukhamediamin Muksinov was elected, and Abdulvagap Abdulzalilov209 was elected from the Novaia Tatarskaia sloboda. Mullah Sapkul Kupshchev was also elected. All three candidates were elected by an overwhelming majority of votes.

These examples of local elections for the Tatarskaia ratusha from the Staraia and Novaia Tatarskaia sloboda in the closing years of the eighteenth century indicate the extent to which the electoral procedures outlined in the Manifesto of 1766 for the election of deputies to the Legislative Commission had become ingrained through the local elections for the local administrative bodies established through the century’s provincial reforms. Likewise, these

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206 This name was not fully legible.
207 NA RT, f. 22, op. 2, d. 401, l. 1-2 and related, 2 ob. – 3 ob.
209 This name was not fully legible and is the correct spelling cannot be verified.
bodies, as well as the elections to those bodies were adapted to the local realities in Kazan province, where the Tatar population largely had its own administrative institutions separate from those of the Russian population, and which were dominated by the powerful Tatar merchantry. Further, as the professionalism and legibility of the electoral documents associated with these local elections indicate, as the practices and processes were repeated, they became even more well-known by those who were conducting the elections.

**Conclusion**

Assessments of Catherine’s reign and of Catherine herself aside, her Enlightenment-inspired Legislative Commission and her series of provincial reforms established the foundation for an expanded and more participatory local government, in large measure through local elections. While far from fully representative, both the establishment of electoral procedures and the creation of a broad range of administrative and judicial posts, to which a number of officials were elected, expanded the practice of elections and began to routinize electoral processes. The electoral precursors, established to elect delegates to the Legislative Commission, became the foundation for subsequent electoral practices that were followed – with modifications – throughout the century reaching to the most local of levels. The electoral procedures outlined in Catherine the Great’s Manifesto regarding elections to the Legislative Commission served as the foundation for subsequent electoral procedures. Building on the local landscape of institutions established by Peter the Great, Catherine the Great again reformed the provinces in an effort to gain more efficient and effective local governance and better basic administration of the provinces. The creation of new local elective bodies through the Charters to the Nobility and to the Towns continued the process of expanding local elected positions. The elections to Kazan’s
Tatarskaia ratusha in the latter years of the eighteenth century suggested that these processes had become locally adopted in the context of the multi-ethnic province.
CHAPTER II

ELECTORAL PROCESSES AND THE PROVINCIAL ELECTORAL NETWORK: BUREAUCRACY AND ELECTED POSITIONS EXPAND

While bureaucracy and elections may at first glance appear to be inconsistent or even contradictory, they were in fact mutually reinforcing, particularly in the context of the expanding local administration in the nineteenth century across the Russian Empire. As the quantity of administrative offices expanded to accommodate the needs of local governance and imperial bureaucracy, elections increasingly became the means of filling those offices. In other words, with the proliferation of bureaucracy came the proliferation of elected positions, further contributing to the expanding collective experience in conducting, disputing, and validating these elections.

Elected officials served in the province’s urban institutions of self-government, estate institutions, judicial courts, and other administrative positions that supported those institutions and the province as a whole. Likewise, local elected officials also served in the Orthodox Church. Functioning alongside other governmental-imperial offices, such as those which were appointed rather than elected, most notably that of the governor, locally-elected officials, the institutions of self-governance in which they served, and the people of Kazan more generally, formed the foundation of local administration that significantly facilitated the day-to-day functioning of the multi-ethnic, multi-confessional province.

In this chapter I will first describe how and why the local bureaucracy expanded in the first half of the nineteenth century, significantly increasing locally elected offices. In so doing, I aim to contribute to a growing body of literature that questions the standard image of the age of Nicholas I as excessively bureaucratic and therefore centrally-directed and static. As Tatiana A.
Kapustina states in the opening of her chapter reconsidering the “singular, straightforward character,” of Nicholas I, “It would be difficult to find a more odious figure in Russian history than Nicholas I. Historians unanimously consider his reign a period of deepest reaction.”\textsuperscript{210} The once-dominant portrait of Nicholas I’s reign as stagnant, conservative and reactionary, in which an expanding bureaucracy was filled with characters such as Gogol’s Akaky Akakievich,\textsuperscript{211} has been steadily changing due to a host of new historical analysis. Kapustina’s is an example of this new scholarship in which she sketches a biography of Nicholas I against the outlines of the major political and economic events of his lifetime, concluding that the life of the empire did not parallel his own more conservative life.

In addition, other historians have reconsidered Nicholas’s reign, exploring specific aspects of life in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, such as traditions of gift-giving, and analyzing the broader questions of the overall character of Nichols’s epoch. Geoffrey Hoskings’s study of patronage notes that in the early nineteenth century, “the tsars began trying to enforce a conception of public service,” but their efforts were largely unsuccessful due to the lack of an elected legislature or an effective code of laws.\textsuperscript{212} Local elections of the early nineteenth century were also hampered by a lack of an effective legal code, as was often expressed in the official complaints filed by voters. Hoskings notes that in the absence of a context in which the spirit of public service could develop, patronage networks continued, and over the course of the century, such networks based on geography and institutional position

became more important. These observations are also consistent with those seen in the electoral complaints.\textsuperscript{213}

In celebration of the 200\textth anniversary of Nicholas I, the Russian Academy of Sciences published a collected volume based on a conference held in late 1996. V. A. Shishkin opens the volume with a key observation that perhaps explains the historiographical revisions now coming forth: “the contradictory nature of the Nicholaevan period was undoubtable. Therefore, socio-political history, questions of the development of education, science and technology, and the basis of the reform create a wide field of scholarly study.”\textsuperscript{214} In light of this, Shishkin notes that it is time to “reconsider all additional facts, analyze historical phenomena and events deeply and in a well-argued fashion so that the resulting picture is multifaceted and adequate, and so that all the complexities of the history of Russia at that time are reflected.”\textsuperscript{215} The volume follows the approach advocated by Shishkin and provides articles on topics ranging from the development of mathematics education and botany, to improvements in military education and training. The volume closes with the following statement: “The sources show Emperor Nicholas I with all of his complexities and facets, and it is an image with all of his positive and negative characteristics; he was a living person.”\textsuperscript{216} Likewise, adding to this picture, the view that emerges of the electoral experiences of Kazan shows that the provinces were also alive, with positive and negative characteristics.

As local archives are now open to researchers from around the world and as those researchers have opened new topics for historical exploration, many scholars in Russia have

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\item[\textsuperscript{213}] Ibid., 313.
\item[\textsuperscript{215}] Ibid.
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contributed to this new historiography of Nicholas’s reign. In particular, the recent work by A. N. Biktasheva about governors in the first half of the nineteenth century (based on the case of Kazan province) finds that, “the administrative reality in the Russian Empire was much more complex than was viewed from St. Petersburg.”\(^{217}\) The complex world that she describes was one in which the position of governor had few hard and fixed parameters. As a result, jurisdictions of political, social and economic activity were not always clear and shifted frequently.\(^{218}\) In short, governing the empire’s province was as much about dealing with the informal realities of the office than the formal conduct of official duties – even those associated with oversight of the police.\(^{219}\)

Further, the manner in which ethnic and religious realities of the diverse empire were navigated on the local level underscores the more complex view of Nicholas I’s reign. Andreas Kappeler challenges the view often held by western historiography of Nicholas’s Russification policies as consistent and “designed to achieve complete administrative, social and cultural uniformity in the Russian Empire and to transform it into an ethnically uniform nation state.”\(^{220}\) Kappeler notes that the “policy of cultural integration was not always the same everywhere. Whereas in the west and in the south an attempt was made to introduce the Russian language gradually into the administration, the judiciary and the educational system, Russian policy towards the ethnic groups of the middle Volga, the Urals, the steppe and Siberia was concerned to encourage native languages with the aim of ensuring the entrenchment of the Orthodox Church.”\(^{221}\) This more complex picture of the policies toward the non-Russian nationalities is

\(^{217}\) Biktasheva, “Kazanskoe gubernatorstvo,” 42.
\(^{218}\) Ibid., 39
\(^{219}\) Ibid., 39-40.
\(^{220}\) Kappeler, The Russian Empire, 273.
\(^{221}\) Ibid., 274.
consistent with the evolving image of Nicholas I’s reign and of the picture of interethnic and interconfessional relations that emerges from the archival cases examined in this dissertation.

As Martina Winkler concludes in her article reviewing recent literature on the rulers and the ruled in imperial Russia, “Modern bureaucratic structures and procedures clashed with such traditional forms of communication [face-to-face] and simply could not hold sway. When viewed from a cultural perspective, bureaucracy emerges as a field of intense struggle for modernization and power, and the state appears remarkably weak.”

Similarly, in the first half of the nineteenth century, far from stifling local activity, the bureaucracy that expanded through elected offices contributed to a dynamic local administrative life. Elections themselves – “their structures and procedures” – were forums for a similarly intense struggle of local economic and political interests, from those of personal gain to public welfare, all of which reflected life in Kazan province that was not static.

Second, in this chapter I will endeavor to outline the landscape of these local elected offices and who was eligible to participate in the elections for those offices, both as voters and as candidates, and demonstrate that these local institutions played a primary role in local administration on a daily basis. To place this discussion in context, I will also explore instances when locally-elected officials and the population of Kazan province challenged centrally-appointed governors, demonstrating the limits of their authority on the local level.

Finally, through detailed analysis of archival documents from the second quarter of the nineteenth century, I will show how, despite the challenges associated with elected office (at times low turnout, lack of interest, and an insufficient number of qualified candidates), elections themselves were an increasingly significant means of filling the expanding positions necessary

for the functioning of Kazan province. In conclusion, during the first half of the nineteenth century, through the concurrent expansion of the bureaucracy which brought more elected offices, and the gradual professionalization of officials and the practices used to elect them, increasingly the electoral process itself involved a growing portion of the local population in the administration of their province.

**FORM AND SUBSTANCE:**

**WITH EXPANDED BUREAUCRACY CAME MORE ELECTIONS**

Like his predecessors, Nicholas I sought to more efficiently and effectively govern an empire that continued to escape the grasp of the imperial government in St. Petersburg. Although his personal desire to manage the empire as a military commander led him to attempt greater understanding of the vast and diverse territory than had been gained before, Nicholas I explicitly avoided the tendency toward fundamental administrative or provincial reform. Rather, by improving the existing bureaucracy, he believed, greater efficiency and effectiveness in governance could be achieved. While his personal efforts and those of thousands of bureaucrats in central and provincial administrative offices were less successful in reaching these goals than they had hoped, Nicholas did succeed in contributing to the electoral history of the empire through the expansion of the number of elected positions. As during the reign of Alexander I before him, during Nicholas’s reign efforts continued to improve the literacy and general knowledge of those who filled the bureaucratic positions and to therefore increase their professionalism, this also improved the conduct and consistency of elections.

Local and provincial reforms in the eighteenth century had created Russia’s local administrative infrastructure as the imperial state attempted to better access much-needed funds,
contain peasant uprisings, and respond to the urgent need for some improvement of local administrative and judicial functions. In the first several years of his reign, Nicholas determined that in order to address the problems of the empire, much more would need to be known about what was going on in the provinces, therefore more continual observation and surveillance would be needed. This required a greater degree of centralization and an extension of central control into the countryside; this in turn required numerous trained civil servants that would implement central policies. By the 1830s and 1840s, the number of local representatives of the three principal ministries (justice, finance, and interior) had more than doubled, and by the end of Nicholas’s reign, they had increased by as much as eight-fold. In Kazan, over the first several decades of the century, the number of officials likewise grew: by the 1830s, officials from all estates (soslovie) serving in various administrative institutions of the province numbered approximately 2,000. Overall across the empire, the average annual increase in the number of those classified as “nobles and officials” was 1.9% between 1796 and 1825, and 2.1% between 1825 and 1857; the proportion of nobles and officials rose in the second quarter of the nineteenth century from 4.2% to 6.0%, which was the largest increase for the entire period from 1740 to 1860.

While representing a significant increase over the course of more than a century, the size of the governing infrastructure of the empire remained insufficient relative to the needs of the local communities and the imperial government. There were approximately 1.3 officials per 1,000 inhabitants in Russia as compared with 4.1 per 1,000 in England, and 4.8 per 1,000 in

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223 Lincoln, Nicholas I, 92 and 166.
225 Khairutdinov, Upravlenie gosudarstvennoi derevnei, 75.
France.\textsuperscript{227} Given the geographical vastness and low population density, few of Russia’s population encountered this sparse bureaucracy. As Janet Hartley notes, “Russia was seriously under-manned at all levels.”\textsuperscript{228} Over the course of Nicholas I’s reign, however, these ratios changed greatly as a perceived need for greater information about and greater control over the provinces necessitated the demand for more bureaucrats supported by more clerks, copyists and assistants, swelling the number of those who officially served in the ranks of government, and were part of what became known as the “Nicholas system.”\textsuperscript{229} How and why did the electoral practices established through previous provincial reform efforts continue? How did these elections function? What did those elections themselves indicate about who conducted the elections and about those elected? What were the primary factors that influenced the practice of elections in such a diverse province? I contend that, perhaps ironically, Nicholas’s expanding bureaucracy actually aided electoral practices in expanding the offices to which people were elected, therefore expanding the experience with elections to more people in more local positions.

\textsuperscript{227}Starr, Decentralization, 312.

\textsuperscript{228}Hartley, “Provincial and local government,” 455.

\textsuperscript{229}Bruce Lincoln described the ‘Nicholas system’ as follows: “Nicholas’s solution to the many problems which his Empire faced was to create the ‘Nicholas system,’ in which absolute monarchy in its most extreme form became the sanctioning political principle. Trusting neither the nobility nor public opinion, he sought to deal with all of Russia’s problems himself or, like an efficient military commander, through the offices of his adjutants, his ministers. The Nicholas system was not, of course, an innovation in Russia. Rather, it was the culmination of the Empire’s entire political experience since at least the beginning of the eighteenth century, cloaked in religious precepts dating from a much earlier time to endow it with the highest possible legitimacy. Nearly all of the institutional elements which Nicholas introduced into his system had earlier antecedents. But it was Nicholas who brought them together into a unified system - into what would be Imperial Russia’s last attempt to govern on the basis of an absolutist police state with no concessions to any individual elements of society.” Lincoln, Nicholas I, 77-78.
WHO ELECTED WHOM?

THE ELECTED OFFICES OF KAZAN PROVINCE

In Kazan province, institutions of local self-governance and justice as well as estate-based institutions were established by Catherine the Great’s reforms of 1775 and 1785, as they were throughout the majority of the empire; in addition, there were locally-specific institutions inherited from the reforms of Peter the Great – namely the Tatarskaia ratusha – that allowed for local administration reflective of the parallel yet coexisting populations of Kazan. These institutions largely remained the governing institutions of the province until the Great Reforms of the 1860s and 1870s. Collectively, along with the institutions of the imperial government in the province, they formed the structure of daily governance and administration that addressed all manner of issues – big and small – for the diverse population of the province for nearly a century. Each of these four groups of institutions – institutions of local self-government, estate institutions, judicial institutions, and imperial institutions – played a vital role in the elections of Kazan province and together formed a complete electoral cycle. Outlining the actions of each of these institutions in turn as well as the interactions among and between them allows us to more clearly see the functioning of these electoral practices as a network that became ingrained in local life of the province.

Institutions of Self-Government

Through the provincial reforms of the 1770s and 1780s, several institutions of self-government (uchrezhdeniia samoupravleniia) were established to address the basic needs of the local population as well as the needs of the state. Each of these institutions was comprised of elected members, and these members subsequently elected people from amongst themselves to
participate in other local bodies. Members of the Kazanskaia gorod skaia obshchaia i shestiglasnaia duma – the Kazan province general and six-member duma – were elected by the gorodskoe sobranie (the town assembly), which consisted of all official groups of the city. Members of the town assembly elected the gorodskoi golova, burgomasters (burgomasters) and ratmany to the city magistrate, an elder, members of the local courts, and representatives to other general and estate institutions. The town assembly also elected members to the general duma, which consisted of the gorodskoi golova and participants elected from each of the six official groups of city dwellers. Because the general duma met only once every three years, they elected a six-member duma to conduct the regular affairs of the city (khoziaistvo). The six-member duma consisted of the gorodskoi golova and one elected member from each of the six official groups of city dwellers. Another critical function of the city dumas, which intersected with the electoral process, was the issuance of confirmation of trading rights to merchants and peasants. This confirmation was at times necessary to confirm eligibility to vote in city and/or estate elections as well as to be considered a candidate. Finally, as seen below, the city duma confirmed the elections from the mechanskhoe and craftsman assemblies.

The Tatarskaia ratusha played a unique role in the city administration by electing officials from the Novaia and Staraia Tatarskaia sloboda to a variety of local administrative positions, as well as keeping the lists of those who were registered residents and eligible voters and/or candidates in those local elections. Specifically, the elected officials who were part of the Tatarskaia ratusha were burgomasters, ratmany, assessors to the slovesnye sudy (oral courts), and neighborhood police officers. In other cities of the province, ratushi were established in

230 Men over 25 years of age and who had an annual income of not less than 50 roubles were allowed to vote and to be elected.
231 They often engaged in small-scale trade and buying and selling activities.
1728 along with city magistrates to conduct the judicial-administrative affairs of the city and did not exclusively represent one ethnic or religious community of the city. In 1785, the administrative functions of these city ratushi were transferred to the city dumas, and the ratushi across the empire were disbanded altogether in 1866, as they were duplicative of the functions performed in the dumas and the provincial court system; the Tatarskaia ratusha was disbanded in 1855.

As the following archival cases regarding elections to the city’s institutions of self-government demonstrate, electoral practices, including complaining about improper elections, were followed by a wide range of Kazan’s diverse population who participated in elections for an equally broad set of positions. Given the local realities, however, not all elected positions were filled by an equally diverse set of candidates; some positions were more often held by Russians, others by Tatars, others by Old Believers, and others were determined along estate lines, such as the nobility and merchantry. What remained rather constant across all of these institutions were the basic electoral procedures as outlined in the previous century.

_Electing and Governing in an Ethnically and Religiously Diverse City: Kazan’s Gorodskie Golovy_

The Manifesto outlining the electoral procedures for deputies to Catherine the Great’s Legislative Commission not only determined how the deputies themselves would be elected, but it also established a new position to oversee these elections for eligible city residents: the gorodskoi golova. From 1767 on, a gorodskoi golova was elected by the city assembly to be the head of the city, and with the 1785 publication of the Decree on the Rights and Privileges of the Cities of the Russian Empire, he also became the leader of the city administration (gorodskoe samoupravlenie). This position, while confirmed by the governor, held considerable authority
over nearly all local administrative offices and while constrained by finances and personnel resources, this authority was essential to the functioning of the city.

A study of those who were elected to serve as the gorodskoi golova throughout the second quarter of the century indicates that the majority was Russian, somewhat young, merchants, and tended to serve for no more than one term. They also tended to have some other type of service experience. The first to serve in this period was 35-year old Kipriian Ivanovich Kotelov, who served from 1824 to 1826 when he died in office. He was a merchant of the second guild and had previously served as a ratman and burgomaster in the opening decade of the nineteenth century. He was succeeded by 40-year old Vasilii Semenovich Potekhin (served from 1827 to 1829), who had previously served as a ratman and an assessor in the civil court. He was also a merchant of the second guild who sold merchandise for men. An even younger merchant of the third guild, Nikifor Osipovich Chizhov, succeeded him at age 30 in 1830. Prior to that he had served as a Kazan city duma member.

Thirty-seven year old merchant of the second guild, Gerasim Semenovich Mel’nikov, served from 1833 to 1835. In a letter of May 8, 1833, declining a request from the Kazan district marshal of the nobility to serve on the district smallpox committee, he outlined his daily routine, providing insight into his numerous tasks:

according to the duties of a gorodskoi golova, I daily attend the city six-member duma and the city orphans court, where in addition to my present service duties, in particular in the city duma, I have and will have uninterrupted business of paving the streets, and dealings with other offices, and reporting to the duma; not even to mention correspondence with the city duma and the orphans court on a variety of issues, which requires constant attention, and in particular, [correspondence] on the collection of excise and taxes due to the city from items

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232 This section based on archival documents published in A. M. Dimitrieva et al., eds., Dostoiny pamiati potomkov (Gorodskie golovy Kazani 1767-1917 gg.). Sbornik dokumentov i materialov (Kazan: Gasyr, 2002).
233 NA RT, f. 114, op. 1, d. 28, l. 21ob.
234 Ibid., l. 25.
235 Ibid., l. 28ob.
identified in the statues of the city of Kazan, confirmed by higher authorities on Oct. 22, 1825. Therefore, with all of these numerous duties associated with the position of gorodskoi golova, I cannot devote any time to participating in the smallpox committee and therefore, wouldn’t it be better for you, Your Excellency, to petition the Kazan military governor to select someone else to participate in the smallpox committee from the Kazan merchant society who would not be as busy?^{236}

This letter substantiates the overall impression that elected officials were not only responsible for daily administration of the city and the province, they were severely under-staffed in their efforts to do so. In attempting to manage under these conditions, they coordinated with nearly all other institutions of the city and province. Following Mel’nikov, 30-year old Mikhail Stepanovich Verin (served 1836-1838) headed the city’s administration. He was also a member of the Kazan merchanty of the second guild.^{237}

From 1839 to 1841, Aleksandr Leont’evich Krupenikov served as gorodskoi golova. His term of service is of note because the person originally elected to serve, Ososov, was gravely ill and unable to serve. Therefore, Krupenikov was chosen to succeed Ososov according to the procedures outlined in article 981, volume 3 of the Compendium of Laws pertaining to elected service, stipulating that since Krupenikov had been the only other candidate on the ballot list, he was to automatically assume the position. However, without an alternative candidate to replace Krupenikov in the event of illness, elections needed to be held for that alternative slot. Therefore the Kazan city duma set about to hold “new balloting, and a new ballot list (ballotirovannyi spisok) was to be presented to the governor immediately.”^{238}

^{236} NA RT, f. 114, op. 1, d. 999, l. 4-4ob.
^{237} NA RT, f. 114, op. 1, d. 28, 33ob and f. 3, op. 2, d. 524, l. 343.
^{238} NA RT, f. 114, op. 1, d. 1330, l. 613-613ob.
Finally, nearly 250 voters elected Anisim Kirillovich Mestnikov as the head of the city in 1848 to serve until 1850. He was 56 years old, nearly the youngest of the five candidates but older than many other previous city heads, all of whom were Russian.\footnote{NA RT, f. 114, op. 1, d. 2040, l. 20. As with many of those who served, he had a long career in the civil service, both in elected and non-elected office. His service record (formuliar\text{ni}y spisok) is at NA RT, f. 114, op. 1, d. 2243, l. 433-438.}

Local Institutions Adapted in Kazan Province: Tatarskaia Ratusha, City Magistrate

Kazan’s Tatar population was politically active, largely through structures other than the gorodskoi golova but that were part of the local administration. As a result of an internal conflict over influence that continued among various Tatar groups from the end of the eighteenth century, the Tatar community was divided in its political representation between two institutions: the Tatarskaia ratusha and the magistrate. In April 1834, the Kazan City Russian Assembly (KazanskoĐ gorodskoĐ russkoe obshchestvo), at a meeting of the city magistrate, made a decision to appeal to the central government to remove all of the names of those registered at the Tatarskaia ratusha who were also registered with the magistrate. This action was proposed not only due to the confusion that double registration caused, it was proposed in large part due to the perception that these institutions were not functioning efficiently. The Russian deputies were frustrated with what they perceived as the unwillingness of Tatars to perform their required functions. “Many merchants and meshchane of the Tatar soslovie, named to one or another public position (obshchestvennai\text{a} dolzhnost’) and as caretakers distract themselves from taking on the responsibilities and put them off onto the Tatarskaia ratusha, and in doing so, no one remains on duty from the Tatar soslovie, not in the city magistrate nor in the duma.”\footnote{NA RT, f. 114, op. 1, d. 1115, l. 1-10b.} In response to the request of the Kazan City Russian Assembly, in September 1834 the Governing
Senate determined that all of the functions associated with the Tatars residing in the city magistrate – civil (grazhdanske) and criminal (ugolovnye) – were to be transferred from the Tatarskaia ratusha. In addition, the importance of maintaining equal numbers of Russian and Tatar merchants during elections was especially emphasized as a means of representing the interests of the merchantry as a whole in the duma and the ratusha. On October 27, 1854, the State Council decreed that the Tatarskaia ratusha should cease operations at the end of the recruiting session, and henceforth one third of the seats in the city duma were to be allocated to Tatars at the expense of peasant seats. One additional burgomaster and two ratmany were allocated in the magistrate to Tatars.

On May 8, 1858, the Kazan province board heard a report from the city magistrate about the need for elections for the position of burgomaster from among the Muslim population and three ratman from among the merchants, two of whom were to be Russian and one of whom was to be a Muslim (magometanin). The report was signed by the Kazan city duma and elections were to be organized immediately. This report is of particular interest because of the term used to characterize Muslim candidates: magometanin. This is an uncommon occurrence, as most frequently the term used was “Tatar,” leaving the issue of religion implicit not explicit.

Although by the end of the 1850s, the merchantry composed 3% of Kazan’s population, a two-fold growth in a half-decade, they retained a particularly strong hand over the city’s administration. Consistent with other cities, they represented their own interests. The balance of ethnic interests, however, tended to be expressed through different institutions rather than
within institutions. Inclusivity based on ethnic representation and/or estate was not seen in the office of the gorodskoi golova in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. This position was dominated by merchants of Russian ethnicity, and in a visible manner, was linked to the interests of those from whom they were elected. However, this was only part of the local urban landscape. The bureaucratic struggles of the underfinanced city administration run by the gorodskoi golova co-existed with the city duma, the magistrate and, until they concluded their outstanding business in 1855, the Tatarskaia ratusha, which represented a considerable number of the city’s residents. Administration should be, therefore, considered not only within but also across elected institutions.

_Serving the City in Multiple Capacities: Too Few Officials, Too Many Responsibilities_

As the responsibilities of local institutions expanded, the burden of fulfilling these responsibilities fell to a relatively small number of people who were sufficiently qualified and educated. At times, these officials bore multiple responsibilities, as was the case with Kazan University Professor Franz (Fedor) Ivanovich Erdman. On March 12, 1842, Erdman was elected as a member of the building committee (stroitel’nyi komitet) of the city of Kazan by the Kazan assembly of the nobility. The building committee had the responsibility for revising and approving plans for building and construction in the city. Given that Professor Erdman had significant responsibilities at the university, the Kazan educational district of the Ministry of Education wrote a letter on his behalf to the marshal of the nobility stating that he could not possibly be a member of the committee.246

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245 This would change in the latter half of the century.
246 NA RT, f. 350, op. 1, d. 359, l. 24.
A subsequent letter from the Kazan educational district of the Ministry of Education a few days later reiterated that Erdman indeed would not be suitable to serve on the building committee as the morning hours, during which the committee met, were especially busy for professors of the university. These hours were “devoted to reading lectures to students, for being at the departments and participating in various university committees, and Erdman (was) a dean (dekan) and a member of the administration, so the morning time is completely busy.”

Professor Erdman was relieved of his duties on the building committee and was not expected to serve; he fulfilled his duties at the university, leaving the work of the building committee to others. There were, however, very few to whom to leave the work, particularly in the 1840s. Elections were not always the means of finding the most qualified to serve as they were, like Erdman, not always obligated to serve even if elected. This posed a challenge to those who were responsible for fulfilling the election mandates, as well as for those who were to do the increasing load of work brought by the expanding bureaucracy. The estate institutions were to provide elected officials to serve on many of these committees and in many of these positions.

**Estate Institutions**

The second group of local elected institutions integral to the electoral network and to the local administration was the estate institutions. Initially established with the Charter to the Nobility in 1785, the noble assembly not only elected members to lead the assembly itself, it also elected members to participate in other administrative and judicial institutions, such as the duma and the local courts. It also elected officials to serve on various provincial committees (as seen below), such as those which determined construction plans for the cities. Further, given that one of its primary responsibilities was to keep the official records of the nobility, including land and

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247 Ibid., l. 25-25ob.
serf holdings as well as service records, the records of the noble assembly were critical in determining voting and candidacy eligibility. This function played an important role in the diverse community of Kazan, as the government continued its policy of encouraging the Tatar nobility (murza) to convert to Orthodoxy by offering them official status as members of the nobility. As a matter of convenience, the elections for the noble assembly, which occurred every three years, were often timed to coincide with duma elections and other important provincial business. By law, the elections of this estate, and others, were procedurally opened and confirmed by the governor’s office, and were officially validated by the central authorities, although with few exceptions (an example of which is presented below) the governor’s office conducted these functions largely as bureaucratic procedures with little comment or objection.

While the noble assembly (dvorianskoe sobranie) has traditionally received considerable attention in the historiography of the Russian Empire, the assemblies of the other estates were equally, if not more prominent in Kazan province given the significant influence of the merchantry - both Russian and Tatar - and the craftsmen. The kupecheskie upravy (merchant boards) of Kazan province were established by the Charter to the Towns on April 21, 1785. The merchant councils consisted of those who were officially registered as merchants having met the qualifications of guild membership based on property and capital. They elected from amongst their membership an elder, judicial assessors, and other council officials to manage the affairs of the city’s merchantry. As with the other estate institutions, given the councils’ responsibility to record merchants’ property and capital, which were essential qualifications for eligibility to vote for and be elected to positions within and from the councils, they served a vital electoral function. Likewise, estate elections were the primary means by which a significant number of

\[248\] The exact implementation of these policies changed over time, particularly with the religious toleration followed by Catherine the Great. G. A. Dvoenosova, “Tatarskoe dvorianstvo Kazanskoi gubernii (2 p. XVII-XVIII vv.),” Gasyrlar avazy = Ekho vekov, no. 1/2 (1999): 26-32.
people participated in elections and gained experience with electoral practices, including the critical practice of contesting elections; they were also the means by which the expanding number of positions were filled.

In Kazan province, there was noticeable overlap between the institutions of the merchantry and the craftsmen. Also established in 1785, the board of the craftsmen – the *Kazanskaia remeslennaia uprava* – was not only responsible for keeping the official records of those who were registered in various sections of the council by particular craft (leather works, metal works, etc.), but they were also responsible for electing their own leadership (elder), and other administrative officials. Along with the other estate institutions of the province, they also elected judicial assessors and officials who participated in other city administrative institutions and committees. Unlike in many other provinces, the merchants and the craftsmen played a significant role in city and provincial administration, alongside and even at times eclipsing the nobility.

The final estate institution of Kazan province that played a prominent role in local elections and through those elections in administration and self-governance was that of the *gorodskie meshchanskie upravy* (city *meshchanskie* boards). As with the other estate institutions, the council kept records of those who were officially registered as *meshchane*, and lists of individual *meshchane* and families. The council also elected its leaders, such as the elder, and representatives to the local courts, to the city duma, and to administrative committees as permitted and required. As was important for Kazan province given its sizeable population of Old Believers, the *meshchanskie upravy* also kept records on schismatics, Old Believers, and conversions to Orthodoxy. As will be seen below, the official eligibility requirements of Old Believers to vote and to be elected to provincial administrative positions were frequently
overlooked due to the preferences of the local population, which often did not align with imperial legislation designed to exclude Old Believers and other schismatics from local administration.

As such, the *meshchanskie upravy*, together with the other estate institutions of self-government were in many respects the center of electoral activity in Kazan province: they recorded and confirmed which individuals and which families were eligible to officially belong to the legally-defined estates of the empire; they gathered those estates to elect leaders of their institutions based on the eligibility established through the process of recording and confirming membership in the estate and property/capital qualifications; from among their members, they also elected representatives who would serve in other institutions of local governance, administration and justice; and they interacted with the other estates by coordinating election dates, at times participating in multiple estate elections, and serving as intermediaries with those institutions that operated in parallel to other city and provincial institutions (such as the governor’s office that consented to and confirmed estate elections).

Mutually reinforcing, the formal procedures of conducting elections granted greater experience, and with the greater experience came more standardized, more professional conduct. This was particularly evident in the electoral practices of Kazan’s estate institutions. Electing their elders and their members of the courts and other required administrative positions on a regular basis, the assemblies chose people “from amongst themselves” to carry out the most routine, yet essential tasks of making their city work. A series of these local estate elections were held according to established procedure, and duly reported to the city duma. The elections conducted in 1839 and 1840, for which records remain in the archives, are specifically examined below.
Standard procedures for such elections were as follows: the Kazan city magistrate would send a decree (ukaz) about the need for elections to the elder of the given estate society (meshchanskoе obshestvo, for example), who would then read the decree to the members of the society assembled. The need for elections for the given position would then be confirmed and the assembly would draw up the list of the candidates and alternates. It is not clear how the list was determined in these early elections; individuals not present could also be added to the list. Following this, once the electoral assembly was opened, the oath was administered and the voting proceeded following the procedures outlined in the previous chapter (that is, the placing of voting balls into either the “elect” or “not elect” box for each candidate). The number of balls in each box was then counted and recorded. Once the balloting was complete and the winner determined, all those who voted signed the ballot list and a summary of the proceedings was prepared. This is specific evidence of the link between the 1766 Manifesto and the continued electoral practices. The Manifesto established the procedures used decades later for estate institutions on the local level. The summary concluded with the confirmation of elections by the elder; both the ballot list and the summary of proceedings were forwarded to the city duma for their approval of the elected candidates. Few instances were found in the archival documents reporting a case where the duma did not confirm these elections. Certain cases, however, were more difficult to decide than others, such as those involving the Old Believers.

*At the Margins?*

*Old Believers Officially Denied Access, but Actually Elected*

Kazan province was among the most diverse of the Russian Empire in terms of ethnicity, religion and language. Not only home to Muslim Tatars and Orthodox Russians, there were also sizeable communities of Old Believers as well. Studies of the religious diversity of Kazan
province have tended to focus on the two primary religious faiths – Russian Orthodox Christianity and Islam. Other religious faiths predominant in Kazan have received relatively little attention in historical studies, although members of those communities were well known to their contemporaries, and Old Believers were often well regarded and frequently elected to local administrative and leadership positions. Given their prominence in the province, as well as in local elections, it is important to provide a brief description of the nineteenth century Old Believer community in Kazan.

During the century, the population of Old Believers increased and expanded to new areas of the province (although they remained in fairly concentrated areas), forming new communities with their leaders often becoming prominent merchants, especially grain merchants (although they also traded other profitable goods). Centering around Kazan, Chistopol’, and the villages of Sviiazhsk, Tetiushi, Chistopol’, Spassk, Tsivil’sk, and Laishev districts, these Old Believer communities represented five sects: 249 popovtsy, 250 staropomortsy bezbrachniki, novopomortsy brachniki, 251 riabinovtsy, 252 and spasovtsy. 253 The popovtsy were the largest group of Old Believers and over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries numbered between 3,700 and 11,700; spasovtsy, according to various counts, numbered between 474 and 5,800 over the same period. 254 In the province’s cities with sizable populations of Old Believers – Kazan, 249 See I. R. Latypov, “Razvitie staroobriadcheskikh obshchin Kazanskoi gubernii v XIX - nachale XX vekov.” (avtoreferat dissertatsii na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni kandidata istoricheskikh nauk, Institut istorii im. Sh. Mardzhani AN RT, 2011), 18.
250 Edinovertsy (those who were recognized as a part of the Orthodox Church but maintained their traditional rites) are also included.
251 This is the general name for Old Believers who had a priesthood.
252 The staropomortsy bezbrachniki and novopomortsy brachniki were among the most radical of Old Believers, who strictly adhered to the ancient traditions of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. They differed in their beliefs regarding whether or not Christian marriages should be performed by priests or whether they should specifically not be performed by priests.
253 This Old Believer sect did not have a priesthood and differed from other Old Believers in that they refused to pray to icons that had any other figures other than the main figure.
254 Unlike other of the Old Believer sects, the spasovtsy were baptized and married in Orthodox churches.
Chistopol’, Sviiazhsk, Tetiushi, Laishev, Tsivil’sk, and Spassk – they made up 1-7% of the overall urban population.256

Although persecutions of Old Believers increased under Nicholas I in other parts of the empire,257 local officials in Kazan had found a means of negotiating the competing demands of state policies that pressured these communities, with the realities of tolerance and cooperation that had led to productive coexistence and interactions for decades.258 A specific instance arose in 1834 that illustrates this difficult navigation.

On May 3, 1834, the Kazan gorodskoi golova, Gerasim Mel’nikov, wrote a report to the province’s military governor, Stepan Stepanovich Strekalov, who had jurisdiction over civilian affairs. He reported on correspondence from the Kazan city assembly that stated that there were Old Believers among the Kazan merchantry and meshchanskoe estate and requested specific guidance as to whether or not Old Believers were allowed to be elected in all city elections of the societies except for the position of gradskii [sic] golova.259 The Kazan branch of the Ministry of Internal Affairs replied to the governor in secret correspondence of May 24, 1834, stating that:

1) the Old Believers conduct long-term trade and industry along with Christians without separating themselves in service as in trade, and their sect interferes very little, and the opposite. They, when serving with Christian citizens, may slowly turn to the right church, 2) many of the Old Believers, based on the significance of their capital, are in the first or second merchant guilds, and based on their titles

256 Ibid., 16.
258 Latypov argues that one of the strategies for negotiating the balance of imperial policies against Old Believers and local tolerance and accommodation was simply not calling out Old Belief and its sects as a specific religion. The archival cases presented in this dissertation support his argument as many of the electoral documents did not indicate a specific religion, even when required by regulation and when there was a specific space for this information on the election ballots.
259 NA RT, f. 1, op. 2, d. 63, l. 1.
may direct the society’s elections, and 3) some of the children of the Old Believers are Orthodox. 260

He continued that the rules of May 27, 1820 governing elected service, confirmed by the State Council on October 20, 1830, stated that residents of Orthodox faith were to be allowed to hold elected office, regardless of the size of their population in their communities. Old Believers were, however, allowed to hold those positions only when the number of Orthodox was extremely limited, and members of other sects were allowed to serve only if they were members of a sect that prayed to the Tsar, and in the case of extreme need (i.e. when there was no one of Orthodox faith or Old Belief who could hold that position). Based on this, the Kazan representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs distanced himself from his own advice and stated, “I do not find it possible to accept on myself the responsibility of allowing the election of schismatics to positions in the city of Kazan, moreover those of priestless sects.” 261 The Kazan marshal of the nobility replied to Governor Strekalov on October 26, 1834, having received secret correspondence from the Ministry of Internal Affairs explaining the rules regarding the election of schismatics to official city positions. He stated that he would convey these rules to the district marshals of the nobility so that they can follow them, in cooperation with the police. 262

The question of the election of Old Believers itself came to light because of a report from the marshal of the nobility from the Tetiushi district, in which he stated that there was an estate that once belonged to a Prince Volkhonskii that was then owned by statskaia sovetnitsa 263

260 Ibid.
261 Ibid., l. 3-4.
262 Ibid., l. 6. While no other evidence was found of the influence of the police on the elections in Kazan, their potential involvement in preventing the participation of Old Believers and other schismatics raises an important question about if and how the local police influenced the elections across the province.
263 Statskaia sovetnitsa was a rank of the Vth class (out of the total of XIV classes, with I class being the highest) on the Table of Ranks from 1722 to 1917.
Sverchkova in the village of Krasnaia Poliana with a population of up to 1,000 souls. One of Sverchkova’s serfs, Aleksei Prokofiev Mart’ianov, “the most hardened of schismatics (raskol’nik),” ran her estate. The district representative added his own observation “that leaving Mart’ianov in his position may have negative consequences as more schismatics have started to appear in the village of Krasnaia Poliana, which can be attributed to Mart’ianov.”

The district marshal of the nobility was to inform Sverchkova about the “incorrect” ways of her serf overseer Mart’ianov.

While officially disallowed from participating in elections for city positions, Old Believers did participate in elections and were even elected, although it is not clear at what frequency this occurred in the second quarter of the century due to official persecution under Nicholas I. However, given the explicit appearance of Old Believers on the ballot lists of later elections, and given evidence from the first half of the century that Muslim and Orthodox officials were elected by their estate assemblies without explicit categorization, it is quite possible that more Old Believers also served, even if not identified as such in election documents.

**Electing Elders for Kazan’s Estate Institutions:**

Representing the Group (1839 – 1840)

Among the inevitabilities of life, particularly in imperial Russia, was tax collection (at least for everyone not lucky enough to be a noble). In order to collect the taxes, each estate would elect people who would gather the taxes in an “honest and efficient manner.” On December 13, 1839, the Kazan craftsman [guild] (tsekhovoe) society was in session and, led by elder Kuz’ma Zykov, administered the oath to the candidates and then elected two tax collectors

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264 NA RT, f. 1, op. 2, d. 63, l. 7-8.
from among those gathered: Petr Smelov and Ivan Gur’ev Oloviannikov, “who (were) people of good behavior and who (had) earned the full trust of the society, who would serve impartially and without a conflict of interest, and who could handle the position without any obstacle.”

This election was confirmed by the more than 50 members of the society present who signed the declaration of election to the city duma. Several days later, on December 29, 1839, the society revisited the issue of tax and fee collection, and determined that it was necessary to also elect, pursuant to the appropriate statutes, one “trustworthy” assistant from the meshchanstvo society and one from the craftsmen society per 1,000 souls. To aid the elder in the collection of state taxes, Kazan craftsman Vasilii Tikhonov Bezborodov, who had good behavior and who was trusted and respected by the society, was elected. It was not clear who, if anyone, was elected from the meshchanstvo to assist the elder.

On December 29, 1839, the Kazan craftsman society again was in session, and “our elder” announced the election for the head of the craftsman for 1840 (tsekhovoi remeslennyi golova). “Having heard (the elder’s) announcement, the members of the society administered the oath to the named candidates and elected the remeslennyi golova (craftsman elder) via balloting. Kazan merchant Kirsan Petrov Maklovskoi, who (was) of good behavior and honest and who (was) able to manage the responsibilities of the Society, was elected.” The ballot list indicated that the election was close, with only a few votes separating the candidates. They were relatively young: 36, 42, 40, and 31 years of age, the youngest of whom won the close election in which 56 voters participated.

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265 NA RT, f. 114, op. 1, d. 1403, l. 6-6ob. This language was standard language repeated in all similar electoral documents with only the slightest of variation.
266 Ibid., l. 29.
267 Ibid., l. 18-18ob.
268 Ibid., l. 19-22.
On that same day, “our tsekhoi starosta” (elder of the craftsmen) of the Kazan craftsman society called for the election of a new elder for 1840, “from among our own society.” Following procedure, they administered the oath and proceeded to elect their elder via balloting. The ballot list for this election did not include the ages of the four candidates, but it was signed by all 56 voters who participated in the elections. Interestingly, among the voters was the remeslenyi elder, indicating an overlap in membership with the merchantry and in participation between the groups. Elected as elder was “our member Fedor Mineev” who was known in the society as someone who would be honest and good and who had never been noted as displaying deplorable behavior or shirking his responsibilities; and he (could) be given this responsibility to fulfill without a doubt and deserved the full trust of the society as a good citizen [grazhdanin] and is therefore confirmed by the undersigned (members of the society). Current elder, Zykov also signed the document confirming the elections and sent forward the proper paperwork to confirm the elections with the city duma.

On December 15, the Kazan meshchanskoe society elected their elder and his assistant who would serve for the one-year term in 1840. Their ballot list, submitted to the city duma, had four candidates for elder and five candidates for the elder’s assistant. The candidates for elder were 36, 46, 34, and 47 years old, and the 36-year old received the majority of the 66 votes. In an unexplained anomaly, there was no vote tally listed for the alternates; the results of the election, however, are known through the formal paperwork submitted by the estate elder to the city duma asking for formal confirmation of the elections: meshchalin Ivan Ivanov Bronnikov as elder and meshchalin Timofei Stepanov Dikarev as his alternate were elected. Assistants

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269 Ibid., l. 24
270 Ibid., l. 25.
271 Ibid., l. 24-24ob.
272 Ibid., l. 12.
elected were 1<sup>st</sup> Grigori Nikolaev Kolobov; 2<sup>nd</sup> Prokofii Ageev Nikoforov; 3<sup>rd</sup> Ivan Alekseev Petrov; 4<sup>th</sup> Evdokim Agafonov Nikulin; and 5<sup>th</sup> Ivan Nikiforov Perfil’ev. Perhaps surprising but not inconsistent with other elections in the first half of the nineteenth century as seen in those cases presented here, the candidates for elder were relatively young. Little other than the ages of these assistants is known from existing sources.

Once elected to the city’s various administrative positions, however, service proved difficult or undesirable for some, and formal requests for removal from office were sent to the Kazan city magistrate for decision. Kazan meshchanin Ivan Nikiforov Perfil’ev, elected by the meshchanskoе society of Kazan to serve as the assistant to the elder for 1840, argued that he was actually ineligible for the position because he did not have a home or conduct any kind of commerce in the city. He stated that he was around 60 years old, alone, and supported himself through manufacturing and trade (promyshlennost’ i torgi) in far-away provinces; moreover, he had for a long time lived in the city of Samara. Given this combination of circumstances, serving in the elected position of assistant to the elder would “bring him to ruin.” Furthermore, he was so ill that he had to have someone else sign his name on the request for him. His case was heard before the Kazan city magistrate on January 22, 1840, and he was indeed dismissed from this position because he did not have a home in Kazan. The city magistrate also heard several other similar cases that day, and as a result, four other people were dismissed for not having a home in Kazan, and one was dismissed due to illness. The replacements for those dismissed were determined by the number of votes received during the initial voting – the person with the next highest “elect” votes was elected.

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273 Ibid., l. 14-14ob.
274 Ibid., l. 35-35ob.
275 Ibid., l. 38-41ob.
As these elections, held in the urban merchant and meshchansko society in 1839 and 1840, demonstrate, the procedures themselves had taken on an increasingly routine character. From the calling of elections to the actual process of casting votes, recording the results, and filing official confirmation, each step was followed across the network of local institutions, replicating itself as each new election was called. The style of the language used to describe the elections also followed a standardized, formalized approach, yet carried a personalized feel lacking in subsequent documents: the elder was often referred to as “our elder,” and the candidates were to be elected, “from amongst us.” This style was more indicative of the earlier half of the century than of the second half, when strides toward professionalization largely stripped these references from official documents. Importantly, these terms established a link of representation, stating overtly that the person elected, as one of the society, represented the society.

The ability to object and to question the results of elections instilled in voters, candidates, and officials who dealt with their complaints a sense of active involvement in local processes that were routinely followed, often far beyond the ballot box. As the objections raised by Kazan meshchan Ivan Nikiforov Perfil’ev, elected by the meshchansko society of Kazan to serve as the assistant to the elder for 1840, demonstrate, service was not always sought or desired, and was not infrequently evaded. As seen by the dismissal of several others from their positions,

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276 It is equally significant to note the use of the term “grazhdanin” (citizen) in many of these electoral documents from the 1830s and 1840s. The use of term likely indicated both a legal classification as well as a statement about the estate relationship to the state – members of the estates were citizens and were represented by citizens. The way that the term “grazhdanin” is used in these electoral documents substantiates the argument made by Vladimir Gessen, late nineteenth century liberal juridical scholar, that individuals were subjects of legal public rights and obligations, rendering them citizens rather than simply subjects. V. M. Gessen, *Poddanstvo: ego ustavlenie i prekrashchenie, tom I* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia “Pravda,” 1909), 127-128. See Eric Lohr, “Grazhdanstvo i poddanstvo: Istoria kontseptsi” (paper presented at the “History of Concepts of Nationality and Empire” conference, Moscow, April 24, 2010) – in this unpublished paper Eric Lohr describes the common “stress on the 1917 divide between the era of poddanstvo and grazhdanstvo,” as misleading. This common emphasis on grazhdanstvo as applicable to the period after 1917, or perhaps after 1905, does not appear to be substantiated by the electoral documents examined here for the first half of the nineteenth century. I am grateful to Prof. Lohr for his sharing this paper with me.
Perfil’ev’s case was not uncommon. Property ownership requirements, often the basis for challenging eligibility for service, were a primary determinant of qualification for participation in elections and in serving in elected positions. Determining property qualifications as a means of subsequently determining eligibility posed a challenge to those who conducted elections in the first part of the nineteenth century. Frequently, ownership status was verified only after the elections, such that the second and third alternates and/or the second and third highest vote-getters actually served. Regular registers of eligible candidates and voters for estate and other administrative positions were consistently compiled only later in the century.

On this basis and others, irregularities were common, and as a result, so too were challenges to the elections. Therefore, participants in elections became accustomed to filing formal complaints about perceived electoral irregularities. This practice, along with the other electoral practices, over time provided a means of expressing perceptions about the role of elections and elected positions in the local landscape of Kazan. Throughout the nineteenth century – both before and after the introduction of the Great Reforms – the complaints filed by participants in the province’s elections were an essential aspect of the overall process of electing local officials.

*Needed: Noble to Fill Vacancy.*

_Electing to Keep Kazan’s Administration Functioning, 1842_

While the process of urban growth that occurred over the course of the nineteenth century was dynamic, the administrative tasks that at times precipitated and at other times stymied that growth was rarely as exciting. Commercial interests, family responsibilities, or even basic survival competed for the attentions of would-be elected officials. These and other competing
priorities threatened to leave several positions empty even as the tasks mounted. This was the case in 1842 when the nobility of Kazan failed to send a representative to the housing commission (kvartirnaia komissiia) to fill a position left vacant by the previous occupant who departed the city on business never to return.

As an essential military hub, Kazan province continually dealt with the problem of housing troops in private homes. Consistent with previous practices, the central administration passed the management of this task on to the local populations. This was done via housing commissions established in the major cities of the empire by decree of Alexander I in 1808. These commissions were to compile lists of homes and assign officers and troops to these homes for lodging. The commissions consisted of the police master and deputies from the nobility, merchantry, and the meshchanstvo, and in certain cases, representatives of other groups as well.

On July 2, 1842, the governor’s administration in Kazan sent the provincial marshal of the nobility a letter informing him that since February, the housing commission had been without a duly-elected member of the nobility as required by law. The previous member, Mel’gunov, had informed the governor that he was leaving for Moscow and Nizhnii Novgorod for two months on business, but he did not return.277 In response to the governor’s inquiry, the marshal of the nobility called for those nobles of Kazan who had a home in the city to gather on August 18 at 12:30 pm to elect a new member for the commission. Fifteen members of the Kazan nobility signed the call for elections.278 Perhaps not surprisingly, there was only one candidate on the ballot list, tituliarnyi sovetnik279 Vasilii Vasiliev Stepanov, who received all 27 votes.

277 NA RT, f. 350, op. 1, d. 373, l. 1.
278 Ibid., l. 2.
279 Tituliarnyi sovetnik was a civilian rank of the IXth class (out of the total of XIV classes, with I class being the highest) on the Table of Ranks from 1722 to 1917.
unanimously.\textsuperscript{280} This election was approved by the marshal of the nobility and sent on to the governor’s office for final confirmation.\textsuperscript{281} It is essential to note that while there was only one candidate listed on the ballot, all of the electoral practices were followed nonetheless.

This election for a basic administrative position was typical of those in the mid-nineteenth century and reflected the significant degree to which the electoral processes had become routinized. First, the formal process itself was followed, starting with the notification of the need for elections and followed by the official announcement of elections signed by those concerned. The formal process of balloting was followed, even though there was only one candidate; this was also confirmed by those present through their own signatures. Certification of the elections was then requested, thereby closing the proscribed electoral cycle.

The long-favored practice of imperial governance continued, whereby the central governing structure relied on the local population to elect people to administer the empire on the local level where the central government had no ability to appoint them directly, or where they believed it to be more beneficial to have a locally-elected official. The problem of housing troops was an example of the former, and Kazan’s nobles were pressed into service through the housing commission. This imperial governance practice was almost always actualized through local elections. Even for this relatively low-level position, the full cycle of formal electoral practice was followed, and in this particular election more than 50 people were involved in the process of calling, implementing, and certifying elections across several institutions.

\textsuperscript{280} NA RT, f. 350, op. 1, d. 1390, l. 4-4ob.
\textsuperscript{281} Ibid., l. 5-5ob.
Less Than Noble Practices:  
The Realities of an 1857 Election

Where there were elections, there were often electoral irregularities. Then as now, this was true even among the most “noble” of voters and candidates as seen in the January 1857 Kazan noble assembly elections. The Ministry of Internal Affairs in St. Petersburg received word via private channels (chastnym obrazom) that there were some problems (nekotorye besporiadki) with the elections, and asked that the chief (nachal’nik) of the province to provide more details.\(^282\) The chief’s report outlined the problems with the elections and he expressed great dismay at the non-noble behavior displayed during the elections.

(T)he Kazan elections had a string of inadequacies (riad neustroistv), arguments (ssor), gossip (spleten), improper affairs (sviazei), hostile behavior toward one another (vrazhdebnogo otnosheniia drug k drugu), etc. In a word, the current elections did not even resemble elections of the nobility, that noble class of people, among whom one should see truth, humility and sincere service to Tsar and Fatherland! Without regard to the oath, all was done more or less in plain sight, because of which many of the respectable and experienced bureaucrats and nobles were not elected, but rather vulgar people assumed those positions…\(^{283}\)

To try to counter this state of affairs, a few of the well-intentioned nobles stood their ground during the elections so as to not allow one of the members who had been implicated in an embezzlement scandal, former Kazan district judge and marshal of the nobility, Gortalov, to vote. However, in what seems to have led to a physical altercation, the relatives and acquaintances of Gortalov overpoweried those who tried to stop him from voting. Not only did he vote, he was even reelected as the Kazan district marshal of the nobility.\(^{284}\)

The nobles of Cheboksary district also participated in these elections and asked their respected former marshal, Boumgarten, to accept the position again. Although he had long

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\(^{282}\) Ibid., l. 1-1ob.  
\(^{283}\) Ibid., l. 2-3.  
\(^{284}\) Ibid.
declined, he eventually relented and agreed to stand for election. However, much to the dismay of the chief, he received nearly all “black balls” (“don’t elect” votes); Boumgarten was “offended quickly” and stormed out of the assembly.\footnote{Ibid. 285} Rather, in his place they elected the “young, immature, stupid Gauzenberg” and laughed at the vote.\footnote{Ibid. 286} The Sviiazhsk nobles, in support of the Cheboksary nobles also elected as district marshal of the nobility “a young boy (mal’chik), idiot Prince Gorataev, … during the vote laughing and calling out humorous phrases; in a word, it was a game, but not noble elections, as the government has decreed.”\footnote{Ibid. 287} The Tetiushi and Laishev districts also exhibited similar “non-noble” behavior.\footnote{Ibid. 288} But that was not all: the protocol keeper was reportedly bribed 15 roubles; “the whole affair was the most repulsive in nature,” according to the chief who drafted the report.\footnote{Ibid. 289} Clearly, not all elections upheld the standards assumed by the statutes that outlined the procedures and practices. The nobility, who were by some accounts to have had the greatest experience with elections in the pre-reform period, did not always exhibit the best practices. They were called to task as a result of the inquiry and the elections were rerun; no irregularities were reported from the rerun.

As the 1857 noble elections indicated, the experience with elections was at best mixed and at worst far from the ideal outlined in the statutes. This less than ideal experience, however, demonstrates the unevenness of the evolution of Russia’s experience with elections. Comparative electoral experience suggests that the problems with corruption and the lack of seriousness shown by Kazan’s nobility were not dissimilar to the experiences of other countries,
including some countries recognized as more advanced in their democratic development. Kazan’s voters and candidates continued their experience with elections – good and bad – throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. These mixed experiences in procedure and practice provided the roots of subsequent electoral culture in the Great Reform era.

**Judicial Institutions**

The third group of local institutions that was part of the provincial electoral network was the courts. The *Kazanskaia palata grazhdanskogo suda* and *Kazanskaia palata ugolovnogo suda* (the Kazan chambers of the civil and criminal courts, respectively), both established in 1801, served as the highest provincial appeals courts open to all estates for civil and criminal cases respectively. Members of the criminal court were appointed and included the chairman, two advisors (*sovetniki*) and two assessors. Members of the civil court included the chairman of the chamber, elected from among the local nobility at the provincial assembly and confirmed by the Ministry of Justice, the deputy chairman, members of the chamber, and two representatives of the nobility.

As noted above, the city assembly elected members to the city magistrate. Founded by Peter the Great in 1718, the magistrate held judicial, administrative, police, and tax-collection functions; although with the reforms of 1785, the administrative functions were transferred to the city duma. From that point, the magistrate’s primary functions were judicial, with jurisdiction over the civil and criminal cases relating to the merchantry and the *meshchanstvo*. The city magistrate also had jurisdiction over the city orphans court that was responsible for widows and young children without caretakers. The magistrate consisted of two representatives appointed by

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Eduardo Posada-Carbó states, “In the United States, with a relatively wide franchise since the early nineteenth century, the issue was not so much the expansion of the electorate as electoral corruption.” Posada-Carbó, *Elections before Democracy*, 1-2.
the Senate, and six representatives elected by the city merchantry and meshchanstvo, two burgomasters and four ratmany elected every three years. The magistrate not only had elected members, they were also responsible for processing the requests for absences from elected positions and for coordinating requests for dismissal from elected positions with the governor’s office. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the magistrate played a critical role in managing the basic functions of electoral practices and as such significantly facilitated the participation or absence of the merchants and the meshchane from the administration of the province’s cities. The uezdnye sudy (district courts), established through the provincial reforms of 1775, were the lowest courts (courts of first instance) of Kazan province’s districts for the nobility and state peasants, and were roughly analogous to the urban magistrates. The district courts were comprised of district judges and elected representatives of the nobility.

Three other courts were also a part of the network of local elected institutions that administered the province and conducted its daily affairs. The Kazan sovestnii sud, (conscience court) established by the reforms of 1775, was comprised of judges and six elected members, two each from the nobility, city dwellers (merchanty and meshchanstvo), and from the villages. These courts were responsible for civil affairs, public order and for criminal cases involving minors. The orphans courts of the province were also established by the reforms of 1775, and as noted above, were under the jurisdiction of the city magistrates for the widows and orphans of the merchanty and meshchanstvo (and from 1818 for orphans of the nobility as well). Members included two from the magistrate and the elected city elders. Given the diversity of the population of Kazan province, there were several orphans courts in Kazan: the Kazan Russian orphans court, the Kazan Tatar orphans court, and the Kazan land (zemskii) orphans court. The cities of Sviiazhsk, Spassk, and Chistopol’ also had city orphans courts. Finally, the oral courts –
the slovesnye sudy, established in 1754 under the jurisdiction of the magistrates and/or ratushi – also had elected members; one of the burgomasters served as the chairman and two others were elected from among the local merchantry. Slovesnye torgovye sudy (the oral trade courts) did not have a secretariat and no executive office; Kazan had two such courts, reflecting the largely parallel administrative-judicial systems of the city for the Tatar and Russian merchant communities: the Kazan Tatar trade court and the Kazan city trade court. While these jurisdictional distinctions and the electoral procedures created for the courts appeared clear on paper, the realities of life often did not follow such clear patterns.

When the Rules Don’t Match Reality:
Electoral Practices Evolve through Necessity

In November 1850, Kazan’s nobles were preparing for the regular round of new district and provincial elections to be held in mid-January of the new year. They were preparing the voter lists, and filing the appropriate paperwork with the governor’s office to gain permission for elections, and establishing the time, date, and location of the vote. In addition to the positions to which the nobles regularly elected representatives, the Kazan province marshal of the nobility added that they wished to hold elections at the same time for representatives for the sudebnaia palata (appeals court). This is where they encountered a practical problem and sought advice in finding a solution.

The person who had previously been elected for the six-year term was a representative from the nobility to the appeals court and had left the position; his replacement, kollezhskii asessor Pertsov,291 was confirmed in 1849. Pertsov was still in office, as was his alternate, kollezhskii asessor Lazarev. It was unclear to the local representatives of the nobility whether

291 Kollezhskii asessor was a civilian rank of the VIIIth class (out of the total of XIV classes, with I class being the highest) on the Table of Ranks from 1717 to 1917.
elections should be held for the representative to the Kazan appeals court in 1851 with the other positions, or whether the present office holders should remain until the next elections. In other words, should the current term be interrupted for a new six-year term, or should the current term be served out for all six years and then new elections held? In a letter to the Ministry of Justice, the Kazan marshal of the nobility suggested that, in his opinion, the latter case would be most consistent with the statutes on noble service.\(^{292}\) The reply from the Ministry of Justice recommended that, according to the statutes on service by the nobility in elected offices, a person serving not from the beginning of a term should stay in place until the next general election. Therefore, Pertsov and Lazarev should stay in their positions until the next elections in 1854.\(^{293}\) As agreed then, in January of 1854, the Kazan nobility, meeting in assembly, confirmed the election of a new representative to the court in place of Lazarev; Pertsov was reelected.

Having noted this experience, when the same situation arose in 1857 for the election of members of the appeals court, the Ministry of Justice recommended the same procedure, and the Kazan nobility followed this guidance again in January of 1858.\(^{294}\) In December 1858, this issue arose in other provinces of the empire, and there was some concern among the Kazan nobility that they were indeed following the proper procedure. The Senate clarified the procedures for such instances, and which declared that at least every three years there should be elections for candidates for six-year positions and officials couldn’t stay longer in their positions than six years without reelection. They could serve for no more than 10 years total.\(^{295}\)

The case of Pertsov and Lazarev illustrates the realistic situations that arose and the local approach, taken together with guidance from the central authorities, to resolving such matters.

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\(^{292}\) NA RT, f. 407, op. 1, d. 673, l. 1.
\(^{293}\) Ibid., l. 1-2ob.
\(^{294}\) Ibid., l. 13-14.
\(^{295}\) Ibid., l. 15-15ob.
The local officials offered their own opinion, which was often consistent with the advice rendered from St. Petersburg, indicating an increasing degree of sophistication regarding how to proceed with electoral practices. Likewise, their comparison of the experiences of other provinces with that of their own shows not only knowledge of habits and practices elsewhere, but also an attempt to use legal analogies and precedents to determine how to resolve their local situations. In the end, a fairly logical solution was indeed found to these election questions as was a rational basis for proceeding in the future. Over time, this level of sophistication would only increase as experience grew, but the fact that such experiences and reasoning were occurring in the first half of the nineteenth century demonstrates the extent of local electoral sophistication, long before the zemstvo and re-formed city duma elections were introduced by the Great Reforms.

*Trade, Business, and the Nizhnii Novgorod Fair: Elected Officials Have Other, More Urgent Matters*

As noted by the 1839 case of Perfil’ev and the 1842 case of Professor Erdman, there were always competing interests that pulled elected officials away from service. Arguably the most predominant interest in Kazan province was personal trade and commercial businesses. This was particularly true as merchants wished to attend the Nizhnii Novgorod fair, which was the main hub of trade activity in the Volga region, and indeed one of the most important commercial centers of the entire empire. Kazan’s merchants were heavily involved in trade through the fair, and many found it very difficult to stay in Kazan when their businesses demanded their personal attention elsewhere.

The Kazan city magistrate heard no end, it seemed, of requests for leaves of absence in 1858 from elected officials. The youngest member of the oral court, Kazan *meshchanin*
Mukhamet Sadik Akhmetov Kishitov, asked for two months off, which was granted, and his alternate, Khusain Balshev served in his place.\textsuperscript{296} On April 11, 1858, the ratman of the Kazan magistrate, Aleksandr Nikiforovich Svechnikov announced that due to the demands of his trade business, he needed a 28-day absence, which was granted.\textsuperscript{297} Tatar ratman Sosniakov and the alternate ratman Rakhmanov each wanted a two-month break to take care of their trade in June.\textsuperscript{298} In July, alternate ratman Andrei Dmitriev Petrov, due to his business needs, requested an “immediate absence from Kazan to go to the Nizhnii Novgorod fair.” His request was granted.\textsuperscript{299} Also in July, the most senior member of the Kazan oral trade court, Denis Mikhailov Kuterin, announced that for commercial reasons, he had to leave for three months. Not surprisingly, his request was also granted.\textsuperscript{300} Once the middle of July 1858 hit, the requests for leaves of absence came to the city magistrate almost as fast as they could be processed: merchant son Trofim Fomin asked for the proper paperwork to go to the Nizhnii Novgorod fair;\textsuperscript{301} alternate ratman merchant Pavel Arskii, needed to go to the fair for 28 days;\textsuperscript{302} Egor Egorovich Shashin needed a similar break.\textsuperscript{303} On August 19, 1858, three members of the duma – alternate burgomaster Andrei Sapugovitsev, ratman Aleksandr Sveshnikov [sic], and alternate ratman Gaismetdin Ranisenkulov – requested leaves to go to the fair due to “urgent business.”\textsuperscript{304} Following proper procedures, each of these requests for leaves of absence generated multiple official documents filed with several different local administrative offices.

\textsuperscript{296} NA RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 1045, l. 79.
\textsuperscript{297} Ibid., l. 91.
\textsuperscript{298} Ibid., l. 134-135.
\textsuperscript{299} Ibid., l. 112.
\textsuperscript{300} Ibid., l. 115.
\textsuperscript{301} Ibid., l. 129.
\textsuperscript{302} Ibid., l. 130.
\textsuperscript{303} Ibid., l. 132.
\textsuperscript{304} Ibid., l. 163.
In addition to these requests for leaves of absence, the Kazan city magistrate had to investigate and respond to several requests for dismissal due to other reasons, and to investigate inquires about the qualifications of those elected mostly based on property ownership. These requests were forwarded from the estate assemblies. On April 4, 1858, the deputies and society members of the Kazan Russian meshchanskoe society was in session and heard a request by Kazan meshchanin Aleksandr Zakharov to consider his dismissal from the position of member of the oral trade court for the first section of the city because he did not have any material means and because he had small children. They also heard an inquiry about the dismissal by the city magistrate of Kazan meshchanin Andrei Vavilov from the position of member of the oral trade court for the fourth section of the city because of his advanced age, young children, and his illness. Further, there was a request from Ivan Dmitriev Shirmanov to consider dismissing him from the position of member of the oral trade court for the fourth section of the city due to his age, and his being deaf, alone and sick. The meshchanskoe society agreed to the dismissal of those listed above from their positions. As a result, they had to hold additional elections to replace them. They administered the oath so as to begin the proceedings. They elected to the oral trade court from the first section, in the place of dismissed Zakharov, Kazan meshchanin Ivan Nikitin Filipushkin, and from the fourth section Iakov Semenov Kuznetsov, and as his alternate Stepan Grigor’ev Gurilev.\footnote{Ibid., l. 84.}

Trade and commercial interests were powerful reasons for elected officials to leave their positions for short breaks or permanently. The Nizhnii Novgorod fair, in particular, was a primary competitor to elected service. As seen in the 1840s, comprehensive registers of candidate’s eligibility largely did not exist, meaning that there were many elected who indeed were not able to serve, or at least so stated when they petitioned for dismissal. This required
inquiry by the magistrate. Together, the processes and procedures associated with managing the elections of the city itself were daunting and required considerable effort as well as knowledge of the election rules, yet they were followed regardless of the complexity of the election or the position for which the election was being held. In citing, when deemed necessary, the appropriate statute, local officials indicated their growing familiarity with the electoral processes. They also indicated their ability to struggle through the prolonged absences of elected officials, the inconsistencies with voter eligibility, and those who argued that they were just too old and infirm to serve.

Imperial Institutions

Although operating on the local level, judicial courts were part of the broader imperial judicial system, and as such, represented the fact that one of the primary efforts of the provincial reforms of the eighteenth century and the continued efforts to make these reforms more effective through the growth of the local bureaucracy under Nicholas I, was to make the overall governance of the empire more efficient. By establishing several locally-elected institutions with numerous elected positions, the imperial government at once addressed the fact that its capacity was too limited to effectively govern through direct control. In doing so, the imperial institutions also became involved in the larger electoral process that its own reforms had initiated. As such, the officials appointed by the central government as imperial representatives in the provinces, were also part of the system of local elections, and participated in the growing electoral practices.

The Kazanskoe gubernskoe pravlenie (Kazan province board), formed in 1792 as part of the local reforms of 1775, was the highest administrative-police organ of the province and was
headed by the governor. The cities of the province also had similar boards (*gorodnich’i pravleniia*), which were to coordinate governance with the governor’s office, to conduct certain administrative and policing functions, such as issuing passports and registering foreigners, to issue local building permits, and to keep records of local finances. The role that these institutions played in the electoral process was a largely passive one in that they could confirm, if requested, certain tax or property qualifications needed for voters and candidates. At the provincial level, the governor was to officially approve the dates and times of elections, the roster of eligible voters, and upon completion of the elections, confirm their results. The local and provincial police confirmed whether or not the candidates had been or were at the time of the elections involved in criminal or civil cases. For the vast majority of elections, these functions were handled formally, and the governors rarely interfered in the electoral processes at any of the phases of the electoral cycle.

As only one of the four groups of local institutions involved in the provincial network of electoral processes, even the most senior of appointed positions such as the governor, could not fully control the administration and governance of the province. Since the administration of justice and local governance of the province – from fire prevention to disease control to lighting the streets to dealing with commercial disputes and all other manner of daily issues – was managed by the estate institutions, urban and district institutions of self-government, and local courts, each with elected members and each playing other substantial roles in the electoral process, the appointed officials often served to confirm the activities conducted by people and institutions which were to a significant degree elected by their local communities. The governors of the first half of the nineteenth century were at times even directly challenged by the local population of Kazan, leaving their authority limited.
Together, the elected and appointed officials serving in these four groups of institutions across the cities and districts of the province formed an electoral network that incorporated all of the processes required to conduct the entire electoral cycle in various contexts and for various positions. While the electoral practices that created the entire circle of electoral activity were not without their flaws or challenges, they did manage, over the course of more than a century prior to the Great Reforms, to fill hundreds of elected positions in a range of institutions that administered and governed the complex and diverse province of Kazan on a daily basis. It was this collection of elected people, working at times independently, at times together, at times in parallel, at times with the imperial government, and at times against the centrally-appointed officials, that actually ensured the functioning of the province.

**Governor’s Authority Limited: Elected Institutions and Local Leaders Challenge Imperial Officials**

Over the course of the first half of the nineteenth century, Kazan province had 16 different governors: four died in office, one was sent to another province, and one left office due to illness. Of the ten remaining, half were dismissed from their positions under the pressure of the provincial population. Manifesting in multiple ways, pressure was often exuded informally, yet leaving the Ministry little choice but to remove the unpopular governors. As Biktasheva notes in her study of the “vertical of power” and provincial governors, the official legal status and authority of governors in the first half of the nineteenth century was in flux, therefore the “institution of governor functioned in the conditions in which the execution of the vertical of power was not entirely formed.” Further, she notes that official, written complaints sent to the

state authorities assumed new meaning, “becoming their own form of participation by the population in the governance of the empire.” Written complaints were not only successful in dealing with electoral irregularities, they were also successful in serving as oversight of the governors. Biktasheva and her co-authors also found that oversight “existed in the form of accountability, audits, and constant overt and covert observation.”

In addition to the Senate at the central level and the prosecutor on the provincial level, there also existed locally-elected officials who observed the work of the governor and provided essential and decisive oversight.

The primary locally-elected institutions that assumed responsibility for oversight of the governor were those of the estates, particularly the noble assembly and the marshal of the nobility. Biktasheva and her co-authors note that because the marshal of the nobility or other elected members of the assembly served on all of the primary provincial administrative committees, they could and often did appeal directly to the Senate or to the emperor when there was a perceived problem with the governor.

One such example arose in the beginning of the nineteenth century during the reign of Alexander I, when the governor, the marshal of the nobility, the prosecutor, and the vice-governor got into an irresolvable conflict that spilled over into an institutional debate. A group in opposition to the governor formed, and, using the administrative resources available in the elected institutions as well as other contacts, the group succeeded in having several audits by the Senate initiated against the governor, and as a result, Kazan governor N. I. Katsarev was dismissed from his position.

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308 Ibid.
310 Ibid., 12.
311 Ibid., 13-14.
A similar instance occurred after the great fire of August 1842 in Kazan. Most of the city was destroyed, including the entire eastern and south-eastern sections of the city as well as the university and the market/trade areas. Almost immediately, however, the rebuilding began. A special *gubernskaia stroitel’ naia komissiia* (provincial construction commission) was formed under the direct leadership of the governor, Sergei Pavlovich Shipov. The commission was to oversee the proper rebuilding of the city and by December 5, a new plan for the city, approved by the authorities, was unveiled. By all accounts, the commission worked hard to redesign and rebuild the city under the intense guidance of Shipov. Serious efforts were made to redesign the city based on better architectural, safety and sanitation, and aesthetic standards, and no doubt the task was enormous.

Not all residents of Kazan, however, appreciated the approach to that task taken by Shipov. He and the commission “bombarded the city assemblies [estates assemblies] and residents with their demands,” creating a “construction mania.” Shipov even forced the local population to build stone houses and to destroy existing homes to make way for his planned constructions. He went so far as to declare: “Kazan – eto ia.” (“Kazan is me.”) As a result, several elected officials, including the *gorodskoi golova* and members of the merchantry, including prominent figure Petr Ivanovich Dokuchaev, cited Shipov for abuse of authority. When Shipov responded by publically reproaching the *golova*, Dokuchaev and others joined together against Shipov, and the governor was dismissed from his position. In this case, the appointed authority – the governor – was not allowed by the local population to overstep his

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315 Ibid., 23.
316 Ibid.
bounds. Bishtasheva notes that the power of the governor was often balanced by that of the city administration, which was backed by the nobility, and as seen here by the merchantry. These local forces appear to have created a type of a checks-and-balances system, to which one can add a third aspect, that of participation by the population through officially filed complaints.\textsuperscript{317} The frequent turnover of governors in the first half of the nineteenth century in Kazan province indicates, the local population, including elected officials and representatives of various groups, not only administered the province on a day-to-day basis, they also governed the province, at times together with appointed officials and at other times in opposition to them.

**ELECTING MORE THAN ADMINISTRATORS AND BUREAUCRATS: ELECTORAL PROCEDURES OF THE LOCAL RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

Not only did religion at times enter the electoral experiences of secular administrative institutions, so too did elections enter ecclesiastical institutions in Kazan province. In 1744, consistories were introduced into the Russian Orthodox Church; one of the main consistories was that of the Kazan spiritual consistory (*Kazanskaia dukhovnaia konsistoriia*). The consistory was to serve as an auxiliary body of the church administration, and was headed by the consistory secretary who was responsible to the head procurator of the Synod. The consistory secretary oversaw several churches divided by village and/or city; each church had an elected caretaker/overseer. The authority of the Synod was linked to local perishes via the *blagochinnyi* (deans), established to support the practice of electing clerical elders to represent parish priests, but this was altered in 1820 when the deans became answerable to the authorities of the diocese.

A unique collection of documents from the Kazan consistory provides a glimpse into the election of the church caretakers. What one immediately notices from these lists of elected

\textsuperscript{317}Biktasheva, “Kazanskoe gubernatorstvo,” 9 and 40-41.
caretakers is the additional information provided about the ethnicity of the person elected, many of whom were recently-converted Chuvashes or Tatars. This is not surprising given the on-going efforts at conversion and efforts to solidify the conversions already claimed. Likewise, there were several notations on the lists of names indicating that the elected caretakers were often merchants; no notations referring to noble status were included.

On April 26, 1845, the consistory sent a letter to the governor’s office with the registers of those elected to oversee eight churches in the city of Kazan, several of whom were listed as merchants. On May 7, 1845, a similar letter was sent to the governor, this time listing the names of five meshchane; this series of correspondence also included a change in an elected caretaker at one of the churches. On April 3, 1845 the consistory sent a letter with registers of ten elected caretakers whose names appeared to be Russian in origin but who were listed as Chuvash merchants. The number of such registers in the National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan for 1845 totals approximately 20, and included caretakers of Chuvash, Russian, and Tatar descent who were almost exclusively merchants. The formal registers of official caretakers did not always list this descriptive information however. Therefore it is hard to fully determine the demographic distribution of the approximately 100 elected caretakers listed for the year 1845. Rather, these illustrative examples provide the broadest range of distribution listed in the documents.

It is also important to note the manner in which these Orthodox authorities were linked to the local secular authorities in jurisdictional terms. Each of the submitted registers of elected caretakers follows the same paperwork path: first, a letter was sent from the consistory to the

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318 NA RT, f. 2, op. 2, d. 12414, l. 4895-4898.
319 Ibid., l. 4-8.
320 NA RT, f. 2, op. 2, d. 12419, l. 1-2. As many as 13 Chuvashes were listed on another similar register, NA RT, f. 2, op. 2, d. 12414, l. 7-7ob.
governor’s office, then, the governor wrote a decree including that information to the relevant department of the police, and following this, the police reported back to the governor’s office confirming this information. This chain, clearly involving the police authorities, was part of the expansion of surveillance under the Nicholas System that sought to know more, report more, and ultimately to control more. This was also consistent with the stated role of the police to ensure that Old Believers were not elected for local positions. As with other secular elections, these ecclesiastical elections were part of the entire electoral cycle of the province’s administrative institutions.

**Conclusion**

The bureaucratization of Russian imperial administration under Nicholas I has been well documented and also reinterpreted by recent historical research, and Kazan’s experiences presented here are consistent with those new interpretations of the bureaucratization and concurrent expansion of elected positions. Mutually reinforcing, the expansion of the local bureaucracy as well as the associated increase in elected positions as a means of filling those administrative posts introduced procedures and practices as formal mechanisms of negotiating this local landscape. In particular, four groups of local institutions – institutions of self-governance, estate-based institutions, judicial courts, and the imperial institutions – together formed the entire electoral cycle, establishing within, across, and between these institutions the network that facilitated the electoral practices of the province. These formal electoral experiences constituted the very electoral history that evolved to become an accepted part of how Kazan province was administered. Additionally, local elections within the Kazan consistory
were part of the overall electoral experience of the province that spanned secular and sacred institutions, demonstrating the consistency of these practices in a variety of diverse contexts.

Those who filled the expanding number of elected posts across the empire have been frequently, and unfairly, characterized as uneducated, poorly-trained and lacking an *esprit de corps* that could have fostered professionalization among their ranks.\textsuperscript{321} Given the demographic realities in the provinces, these characteristics are not surprising, although also given the significant improvements made since the provincial and administrative reforms of the eighteenth century, one should remain cautious about over simplifying the picture of elected officials in the first half of the nineteenth century. That said, as was evident in Kazan, those who were better educated and better suited to perform elected duties were often busy with other matters and avoided the obligation to serve, even when elected.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, however, significant changes and improvements were made in visual appearance and quantity as well as in coherence and quality of electoral documents, signaling an evolution in electoral processes.\textsuperscript{322} More than simply a formality, these changes signaled an increasing seriousness with which the electoral procedures were approached, which may have led to an increase in the number of official complaints filed. While irregularities still occurred, and while there was little expression of interest in rights of participation, for example, that were seen in the Reform era, the electoral procedures codified in the 1766 Manifesto were followed – even in less-than-ideal elections – and formed the roots of

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item\textsuperscript{322} Yet, certain terminology remained in the electoral documents indicative of earlier periods. Other terminology used foreshadowed subsequent electoral changes. In this way, the electoral experiences of the first half of the nineteenth century represent not only an important continuation of previous electoral experience, but also provide a link to subsequent electoral experiences of the Great Reform period of the 1860s.
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Russia’s imperial electoral culture that grew in the second half of the nineteenth century and continued into the early twentieth.

These evolving improvements were in part a result of the investment, however modest relative to the challenge, in educating and training those who would become locally-elected officials. Several members of the noble Molostov family, of which there was a “well respected” prominent branch in Kazan province, were examples of young men who chose to enter administrative service in Kazan in the first half of the nineteenth century. As required by a decree of Alexander I published on August 6, 1809 regarding the education of civil servants, V. P. Molostov passed the specified examinations in French, German, and “general history, geography and statistics of ancient and modern times,” at Kazan University in the spring of 1810. Molostov went on to serve as the trustee of the Kazan school district (popechitel’ Kazanskogo uchebnogo okruga) from 1847-1855, during which time the educational opportunities for the raznochintsy as well as for peasants increased. This was particularly important for Kazan, as a large number of locally-elected positions were filled by merchants, meshchane, raznochintsy, and even peasants. Whereas other provinces may have had a greater number of nobles serving in elected positions, Kazan province had relatively fewer due to the demographic specificities of the province.

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325 Ibid.
326 S. A. Frolova, “‘Imeet li on poznanii a, k semu rodu sluzhby nuzhnye?..’ (Kak sdavali ekzamen v Kazanskom universitete budushchie popechiteli Kazanskogo uchebnogo okruga V. P. Molostvoy i M. N. Musin-Pushkin),” Gasyrlar avazy = Ekhoy vekov, no. 2 (2008): 77-86.
327 Ibid.
328 In the beginning of the 1830s, Mikhail Valendeev, a newly-baptized Chuvash from the village of Bogorodsk in Iadrinsk district in the local land courts, and in 1836 peasant Bekhmet Mukhametov served as a translator in the Tetiushi land court. Khairutdinov, Upravlenie gosudarstvennoi derevnei, 76.
329 See ibid., 63-104.
and who served in the expanding local administrative institutions across the province were significant, an ever widening circle of the local population was involved in the governance of their own province through those elected officials.

As the archival cases presented in this chapter demonstrate, elections were not without their challenges. Corruption, absenteeism, a lack of training, and the pressure of other priorities among the voters and candidates were the reality of many elections across all types of institutions. However, even in those cases when the results of the elections were questioned, electoral practices themselves were not challenged. It was the perceived lack of proper implementation, or other personal issues which brought participants to file objections or requests for dismissal, which in itself was an indication of the growing legitimacy enjoyed by elections as a set of local political practices. Even by the end of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, local life was largely administered by those who were either elected or who served in elected institutions.

Through the course of daily administration, not infrequently, although not often recognized in common perceptions of provincial governance, the local population and local officials challenged the authority of those officials appointed from the center. As the frequent turnover in the governors of Kazan demonstrated, appointed officials did not always, and sometimes actually rather rarely, held more local authority than local elected officials and other notable members of society.

Further, when electoral irregularities did arise, the representatives of the central authorities were at times consulted, but at other times local officials used their own reasoning and experience to determine how to proceed. Likewise, when official guidance from the central government did not correspond to local realities and the preferences of the diverse local
population, that guidance was disregarded, partially or fully, overtly or more quietly. This was particularly the case in Kazan province when balancing ethnic and religious matters, such as Old Believer participation in elections. The imperial policy of transferring administrative authority to the local population via expanding elected positions resulted in even more substantially ingraining the processes and legitimacy of elections in the realities of local administration. As a result, from the eighteenth century on, local elections represented a practice of local governance that linked the experiences of the pre-reform period with the reform period and beyond.

Throughout the three decades of Nicholas I’s reign, the tandem expansion of bureaucratic positions and the elections that filled those positions created many new officials poised at the brink of fundamental change through the most far-reaching reforms that would follow just a little over a decade after defeat in the Crimean War. Elected offices had become much more common and, as such, electoral processes were more frequently practiced. With that practice - and slowly with increased literacy among elected officials, education, and experience - came greater experience in preparation of the electoral documents as well as in the articulation of the reasoning behind why and how certain electoral steps were followed across all segments of the electoral cycle. Further, as the complaints, concerns, and inquiries analyzed above indicate, these electoral processes included more than simply the act of voting itself. Elected officials, those who participated in the elections, and those who did not, often objected, disagreed or challenged the elections on a host of grounds. They also succeeded in challenging the authority of the centrally-appointed officials. As such, elections were increasingly a significant means of filling local positions, and finding people to do the tedious work of daily administration. The picture of the bureaucracy expanded by Nicholas I no longer appears to be stagnant and stifling, rather it is a dynamic picture; the local elections of Kazan province therefore substantiate the
work of historians who challenge the traditional image of an imperial Russia of dark, uninteresting provinces in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The dynamism of local elections during the Nicholaevan period formed the roots of the electoral culture that would soon witness significant change.
With the abolition of serfdom in 1861, the Great Reforms opened a period of profound change across the empire, fundamentally altering the evolution of electoral culture that had been developing gradually on the local level in a variety of institutions for decades. A series of legislative measures introduced from the central government affecting nearly every aspect of society, the Reforms were ultimately prompted by the Russian defeat in the Crimean War and the resulting realization that the system, which had developed under Nicholas I, was in crisis. These Great Reforms have been described as a “renovation,” a “revolutionary situation,” a “crisis of the upper classes,” as truly “great.” In a sense, each of these descriptions offered by just a few of the many scholars who have written on this Era is accurate. Scholars have not, however, examined the roots of the electoral procedures employed by the new institutions - the zemstvos and the reformed city dumas - created by the Reforms. The century of experience with local elections influenced the practices and habits of those involved in the elections to these new institutions. Despite this fundamentally new context, in function and form, the local elections

332 In S. Frederick Starr, “Local Initiative in Russia Before the Zemstvo,” in The Zemstvo in Russia. An Experiment in Local Self-Government, eds. Terence Emmons and Wayne S. Vucinich (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 23, the author tentatively acknowledges the link between the zemstvo experiences with those that came before it although he does not focus specifically on electoral experiences: “In our review of the organizational life of the three estates into which the Russian population was divided from the late eighteenth century to the founding of the zemstvos, we have assumed that, for better or worse, these institutions were the schools in which were formed many of the political attitudes and habits that were later to appear in the zemstvos. This assertion must be qualified to the extent that numerous gentry and smaller numbers of men from the urban estate and peasantry gained administrative experience through service on the staffs of ministerial agencies at the provincial or district level,
of the period of the Great Reforms to a large extent represented a continuation of the electoral practices that were codified in the 1766 Manifesto in the procedures used when conducting a wide range of local elections.

This chapter aims to show the links between previously employed electoral procedures and fundamentally new institutions through an examination of electoral complaints filed by a variety of voters; the complaints themselves were an element of existing practice. Further, through a brief examination of the legislative statutes that established the zemstvos and reformed the city dumas and analysis of archival cases of complaints about elections, I attempt to demonstrate how the codified statutes, the basis of electoral procedures, were clarified and modified through the process of resolving the issues raised in these complaints. With each election, rooted in the diverse local context, with each complaint and each resolution, precedent was established, weaving into local electoral practices the evolving political sentiments that reflected the era of the Great Reforms. In this way, the existing electoral procedures provided the means by which new and existing voters alike could express their views on voting rights, participation, ethnic and religious issues, matters of jurisdiction, and issues of the letter versus the spirit of the procedure.

Who were the people whom these voters elected and about whom the voters filed official complaints? Memoirs of zemstvo deputies and others involved with the local zemstvos in various capacities, as well as local newspapers, provide insight into the reasons why people may have become involved in the new elected institutions, and how their participation affected the outcome of activities they undertook.

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whether in career appointments or through elective posts. Such service was certainly of significance on a functional level.”
Once elected, the zemstvo deputies operated in the very diverse ethnic and religious context of Kazan province. I aim to demonstrate how the elected members of these institutions attempted to navigate the complexities of issues like the inclusion of Kazan into the imperial railroad network and the expansion of primary education in this diverse context. While many zemstvo deputies and members of the “third element”333 sought to improve well-being of their districts and province, the realities of religious and ethnic tensions, and the business interests of competing local merchant families often affected their activities.

Consistent with these realities, a critical assessment of one local zemstvo emerges, for example through a series of articles published in 1886 in Kazanskii birzhevoi listok, challenging readers both past and present to consider the work of the zemstvo and the sincerity of those who were elected zemstvo deputies. These articles are contrasted with the self-assessment offered by N. A. Mel’nikov in his memoirs about his 19 years of service in the district and provincial zemstvo. From these sources, a more complete picture may be seen of the zemstvo as an institution, and importantly for this study, the connection between local zemstvo elections and its activities.

Seen as a whole, the electoral procedures and electoral experiences that were rooted in many decades of previous elections provided the basis for wholly new elections of the Great Reform era. In this new context, the evolving sentiments of voters were revealed in their electoral complaints, which themselves further shaped electoral procedures. Elected for a variety of reasons, the deputies navigated the needs and interests of the local populations, at times with greater success (e.g. in ensuring the inclusion of Kazan into the imperial railroad network), and

333 The “third element” were those professionals hired to work for the zemstvos carrying out a host of programs requiring specialized knowledge or training. These professionals included doctors, agronomists, teachers, statisticians, and lawyers, among others. At times, these people volunteered their labor or worked for very small salaries.
at times they were less successful, (e.g. in addressing the complex problem of local education). Throughout this period of incredible change, the procedures by which local officials were elected remained relatively similar, despite adjustments made based on precedent formed through actual cases. These procedures provided relatively deep roots for the long-awaited national elections to the State Duma in the new century.

**Electoral culture and Kazan’s zemstvos: Modifying previous electoral principles, maintaining existing procedures**

In addition to emancipating some 22 million peasants, the Great Reforms established a new jury system in local courts and contributed to a significant change in popular legal cultures, liberalized the administration of universities, reformed significant portions of the military, and established new institutions of local self-government at the provincial as well as municipal levels through the zemstvos and reformed city dumas.\(^{334}\) Building upon an edifice of many decades of overlapping reforms and adjustments to those reforms, the provincial and urban institutions of self-government introduced by Alexander II represented in many respects a continuation of as well as a break from previous efforts at governing an increasingly complex multi-national empire coping with a host of challenges.

The specific procedures followed to elect officials and representatives to these new local administrative institutions - the compilation of eligible voter lists, the verification of those lists by the voters themselves and by a designated institution, the official approval for elections (and their time and place), the administering of the oath to candidates by priests and mullahs, the casting of votes via voting balls, the counting of those balls, the signing of official ballot lists, the

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\(^{334}\) The term “self-governance,” while often used to describe the zemstvos and city dumas, is problematic due to the limitations placed by the central government on the activities of the institutions.
forwarding of the official election results to the governor’s office for approval, and, most relevant for the present investigation, the filing of formal complaints in the event of a dispute regarding election results - were remarkably similar to the electoral practices and experiences prior to the Great Reforms. It is in part because the electoral habits, expectations, procedures, and complaints were previously established that conducting elections in the new period of greater societal involvement in the administration of the cities and provinces was easier. From the most practical of issues to the more complex and essential practices, elections had become routine over the course of almost a century before the first zemstvo or reformed city duma elections. The processes and procedures were fairly well known, and when discrepancies occurred, complaints were filed, increasingly by a broader group of people including the peasantry.

There were, however, important elements of change witnessed in electoral practice introduced through these new institutions, including the greater involvement by those who were not previously engaged, greater sophistication in dealing with eligibility requirements, and greater reliance on precedent and previous experience to guide resolution of inquiries and complaints. Electoral experiences of the Great Reform period were linked to those of the pre-reform era in critical and previously-unrecognized ways. It is to those experiences that we now turn.

**Elections to Zemstvo Institutions**

Introduced on January 1, 1864, the Statutes on the Zemstvo Institutions called for the establishment of zemstvo bodies in only 33 of the 50 territorial-administrative units of European Russia. The Don region briefly had a zemstvo, the institution never opened in Orenburg, and zemstvos were later opened in Bessarabia and Ufa. Nine other provinces were added in 1911
and 1912, and in 1917, under the Provisional Government, zemstvos were extended to the entire empire. While the Don Cossack region briefly had a zemstvo, the institution never opened in Orenburg, and was eliminated in the Don region in 1882. Nine other provinces were added in 1911 and 1912, and in 1917, under the Provisional Government, zemstvos were extended to the entire empire. Zemstvos were established at the provincial and district levels, and were responsible for the management of local affairs related to economic welfare and the needs of the territory. They were expressly prohibited from engaging in political activities. Organizationally, the zemstvos had an assembly (sobranie) with decision-making authority and an executive board (uprava) with executive authority. Unlike existing institutions, however, as representative institutions, the zemstvo assemblies consisted of deputies (glasnye) from the all groups of the local population who served together. The deputies at the district level were elected through three separate electoral groups (nobility, meshchanstvo, and peasantry). The compilation of voter lists, their publication in local newspapers, and the verification of those lists based on the specified qualifications were procedures established for prior estate assembly elections, and were rooted in the procedures outlined in the 1766 Manifesto.

Specifically, the practice of dividing the population into different groups, each of which elected their own members, was continued. The major difference, however, was the basis upon which the population was divided. The pre-Reform procedures divided the population into estate (sosloviye) bodies. In the Reform Era, however, after the emancipation of the serfs, property ownership, not the estate system, became the legal basis for dividing people into different groups. Property ownership, therefore, determined eligibility to vote and to be considered a

337 Not all of the population of the province was equally represented by the zemstvo institutions.
candidate (e.g. if a peasant were to own the specified amount of land, he could vote in the first curia rather than with the other peasants who did not meet the property ownership qualification).

The type of property held by an individual established electoral eligibility: private, rural property; private, urban property; and communal, village property. Based on this property differentiation, three electoral curiae were formed, each with its own electoral assembly: district landowners, townspeople, and those from village communities. No one district curia was allowed to have more deputies than that of the other two curiae combined. General criteria for voters as well as for candidates were being 25 years of age or older, not being under investigation or on trial, and not being sentenced by a court or the estate to which they belonged. Foreigners were excluded.

The deputies of the provincial zemstvo assembly were to be elected by and from the district zemstvo members; this indirect means of electing the provincial zemstvo deputies paralleled the system used to select the members of the provincial noble assembly, and would become a point of serious concern to voters in the early part of the twentieth century. The

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338 District landowners were defined as those who: 1) owned a specified amount of land, determined on a district-by-district basis, 2) had immovable property and/or industrial or economic establishments valued at 15,000 roubles or more in that district or having not less than 6,000 in profit annually, 3) represented private owners as well as institutions, societies, companies, and associations with similar property holdings, 4) represented small landowners and institutions owning at least 1/20th of the land qualification, and 5) were clergy with a certain amount of land. Land qualifications included that leased to others and that continuously used by peasants. The district marshal of the nobility presided over the landowners’ assembly.

339 The urban electoral assembly was held for those who: 1) possessed merchant certificates (important for Kazan), 2) factory owners and those who owned industrial and commercial establishments within the town with a profit of 6,000 roubles or more, 3) owned immovable property valued at 3,000 roubles in larger towns, 1,000 roubles in medium towns, 500 roubles in smaller towns, and 4) represented private owners, institutions, companies, etc., that met the qualification. The mayor presided over the urban electoral assembly.

340 Village participants in the assemblies included those who: 1) were chosen by the volost’ (county) assemblies from their membership, which was one person for every 10 households. Electors could not be more than 1/3 of the total number of persons having the right to participate in the county assembly, but each village was to have one representative among the electors. Peasants could also elect landowners, parish priests or other clerics from their electoral assembly. Peace arbiters opened these assemblies, and then a chairman was elected.


342 While it may seem obvious that foreigners would not be allowed to vote, they were allowed to participate and vote in merchant and financial institutions. Given this, it was not surprising that the exclusion of foreigners was explicitly stated.
marshals of the nobility (at the provincial and the district levels) served as the heads of the zemstvos. The executive boards (upravy) of the district and provincial zemstvos were elected by and of their assembly members.

Although the formal statutes referring to electoral procedures were vague and left considerable room for interpretation, they guided local officials and voters in conducting elections for these new institutions, and when confusion arose, those officials often filed formal complaints. Therefore, because they served as the basis for electoral activity of the zemstvos, and because they influenced the larger electoral atmosphere it is essential to outline them here in brief. 343 The district zemstvo executive board prepared and confirmed the list of eligible voters published at the end of the last annual meeting of the previous assembly. For one month following this publication, the board could – and often did – hear complaints about those excluded from the list and investigated the validity of such complaints. Once amended, the lists were sent to the provincial executive board for confirmation together with the proposed time and location of the electoral assemblies for each curia. This was all to be confirmed by the provincial board, again within a month’s time, and then forwarded to the Ministry of Interior.

Once the voter lists were approved and official permission for the time and place of the elections had been sought and received, the elections themselves proceeded. Each electoral session was to last no longer than three days, and each assembly was responsible for verifying the eligibility of participants. Nominations for deputies were accepted from any member who had the right to become a deputy himself. Several alternates were also elected to replace those who were permitted to decline service, those who had been elected from another assembly, those who became ill or died, and those who moved away from the district. Elections took place

343 For a detailed description of all electoral rules of the zemstvo institutions, see McKenzie, “Zemstvo Organization,” 38-44.
according to the system described earlier, with each voter placing a “shar” (ball) into one of two boxes, either the “elect” or “do not elect” box for each candidate. Electoral ballot lists were signed by the assembly officials and all voters present. The electoral documents were forwarded to the district executive board for confirmation and further transmitted to the governor’s office. Final verification of the validity of the elections was made by the district assembly, but the governor could intervene or overrule their decisions. From the documents examined for this chapter, there were no instances of the governor overruling zemstvo election results.344

The zemstvos were integrated into the existing local political and institutional network, which was critical for the conduct of elections, including when complaints or objections were issued. Perhaps the body most critical to the electoral processes of the zemstvos was the provincial board that aided the governor, and which was subordinate to the Ministry of Interior. The governor’s provincial board was the primary body to address the formalities of the electoral process, and to investigate, to rule on, or to pass along any complaints or issues regarding the conduct of the elections. This jurisdictional distinction, that appears to subscribe considerable authority to the governor’s office, has led some historians to conclude that power in the provinces was in the hands of the governor.345 Recent scholarship, however, has challenged this notion. Andrei A. Iartsev notes, “The local bureaucracy had to, to a large extent, give up part of its work in the area of social activities.”346 Moreover, as the complaints examined below demonstrate, “the vast majority of controversial questions between the governor and the organs of local self-government were decided through local compromises.”347 Further, the governor’s ability to influence local elections was also limited, “in practice, even in the event of serious

344 This is consistent with new historiography presented by Iartsev, “Organy zemskogo samoupravleniia,” 170.
347 Ibid., 168.
violations, governors, only with extreme caution, decided to lodge a protest because the
cancellation of elections had a very negative effect on the local society, and the rerun of elections
were plagued by extreme absenteeism."\(^{348}\) These observations by Iartsev are consistent with the
realities seen in the archival cases presented here and demonstrate the limited role of the
governor in influencing the conduct of zemstvo elections.

In 1890, the electoral rules governing the zemstvos were modified by the central
government to reflect the significant loss of land among the gentry and the associated decline of
their power, and to continue to ensure that a large portion of zemstvo members were nobles.
These modifications now grouped voters by estate, while still retaining the previous property
qualifications. Noble and non-noble property owners had their own electoral assemblies for
those who met the stated property qualifications, and a preliminary assembly for smaller property
owners. Peasants no longer had their own electoral assembly.\(^{349}\) Further, as a result of these
changes introduced in 1890, various groups could no longer vote. These were Christian clergy,
Jews, peasants and those peasant associations owning non-allotment land, merchants, those with
less than 6,000 roubles in profit from commercial and industrial establishments, and those who
were under public surveillance.

The 1890 modifications also specifically lowered property qualifications in favor of the
nobility, many of whom had lost their land since emancipation. Peasants, regardless of the
property they owned, were allowed to participate only as members of the village communities.
Volost’ (county) assemblies elected one person each, and from this pool of candidates, the
governor established the number of deputies required; there were some variations allowed based

\(^{348}\) Ibid., 170.
\(^{349}\) The number of peasant members of district zemstvos in Kazan province decreased from 145 to 112 in 1890. V. F.
Abramov, “Organizatsiia zemskikh uchrezhdenii i ikh organov,” Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo: ezhegodnyi
on population. Voting was to be secret (although how the voting was to be secret was not
described, and as the cases examined below indicate, they were rarely so), and the assemblies
were to last no more than two days. Not only were the types of people eligible to participate
reduced by these reformed electoral regulations, the overall number of zemstvo deputies was
reduced. This relative regression in terms of the expansion of voting rights was an attempt by
the central government to manage the effects of the changes brought about by more local self-
governance through elected institutions.

What is often referred to as the period of “counter reforms,” also witnessed the
introduction of the “provincial board for zemstvo affairs,” which came to be known from 1892 as
the “provincial board for city and zemstvo affairs.” While many historians have taken this, and
the electoral participation changes noted above, to indicate “an attempt to increase administrative
pressure on the zemstvo,” \(^{350}\) Richard Robbins argues that the provincial board did not increase
the governor’s power, nor did it rationalize its application.\(^ {351}\)

The experiences of Kazan province indicates that this more recent perception of the
relative balance of power between the zemstvos and the governor is perhaps more accurate.
Throughout the period of the Great Reforms, the zemstvos elected members following
procedures rooted in previous experience, and undertook a whole host of activities aimed at
improving the welfare of the province. In the areas of agriculture, education, sanitation, and the
development of roads, Kazan’s zemstvos led regional efforts and became a leader in a number of
spheres of activity. The zemstvo elections filled the institutions with deputies, but who were
they, why did they serve, and what did they focus on once elected? It is to these questions that
we now turn.

\(^{351}\) Richard G. Robbins, Jr., The Tsar’s Viceroy: Russian Provincial Governors in the Last Years of the Empire
Attracted to Serve for a Variety of Reasons:
Local Deputies and the Practical Work of Kazan’s Zemstvos

Following the introduction of zemstvo institutions across Kazan province, an initial wave of enthusiasm, similar to that seen in other provinces, led many leaders and professionals to become involved in the zemstvos as elected members. Many were motivated by a call to serve, truly caring about the well-being of the population. There were other motivations, however, that led deputies to participate. Mel’nikov, as the third generation of those who had served in the local administration, became involved first in his district zemstvo as a means of embarking on a career as a public servant. Still others, however, as Mel’nikov observed in his memoirs, looked out for their own interests and for the interests of the organizations they represented, including religious institutions and government agencies, hoping to secure increases to their budgets.

The first zemstvo elections in the empire were conducted in the fall of 1865; all district zemstvo assemblies were to hold their first meeting on October 12, 1865, and the first meeting of the provincial zemstvo assembly opened on November 20. Many professors from Kazan University became actively involved in the new zemstvo bodies, contributing expertise in areas of critical need: agronomy, veterinary sciences, health care, education, and statistics. Leading chemist A. M. Butlerov, for example, declined his position as dean at Kazan University to serve in the zemstvo. Also elected as deputies during the first three-year term, were well-known scientists from the university, A. I. Iakobi and A. N. Beketov, whose voices carried authority among the first generation of zemstvo deputies.

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Either as zemstvo deputies or as members of the ‘third element,’ scientists and specialists from the university and other provincial educational institutions developed programs to be implemented by the zemstvos in key areas of need. As A. G. Mubarakshina demonstrates, professors from Kazan University also aided the zemstvos by supplementing their work through the numerous private organizations or societies (obshchestvennye organizatsii) they formed: the Society of Naturalists (1869), the Society of Archeology, History and Ethnography (1878), the Juridical Society (1879), the Physico-Mathematic Society (1890), and the Pedagogical Society (1900).

As the work of the zemstvos expanded in the 1870s and 1880s, new areas of activity were included, specifically the treatment of mental health. The ability of Kazan’s zemstvos to provide assistance in this area was almost exclusively due to the many professors of the university who were able and willing to work for and with the zemstvos. One prominent example was that of Aleksandr Ustinovich Freze, who was a prominent doctor of mental health, born near Tallinn and educated in Kaiserliche Universität zu Dorpat (later known as the University of Tartu), and subsequently trained in Moscow. In 1863, he was invited to Kazan to play a leading role in founding the department of psychiatry at Kazan University. It was on the basis of the work of this department and its members that mental health clinics were opened in Kazan, which were in turn the basis for the zemstvo clinics. Freze was the first director of the Kazan district home for the mentally ill, established in 1869. In October 1875, the Kazan provincial zemstvo asked Freze

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355 Abramov, “Kazanskoe zemstvo v poreformenny period,” 5.
to assume responsibility for the zemstvo mental health clinics, which were to be transferred to his direction in their entirety, including the budget allocated by the provincial zemstvo.  

Additionally, they cooperated with specialists from other neighboring provinces to improve their collective efforts: well-known zemstvo medic I. I. Molleson, who graduated from the medical department of Kazan University, teamed with doctor V. O. Portugalov of Viatka province to develop a method for studying sanitation that was used in Kazan, and that was also eventually used to conduct comparative analysis for the development of healthcare in the Volga and Ural regions. Further, the Kazan zemstvo teacher’s school for women was the first zemstvo educational institution for women in the Russian Empire, providing all of the teachers for the zemstvo schools of the province. 

Given this strong scientific and professional base, the Kazan provincial zemstvo became a regional leader, coordinating regional professional activities although official this inter-zemstvo coordination was strictly forbidden to prevent the politicization of the institutions. V. F. Abramov noted that “the majority of the zemstvos of the Volgo-Kama region uniformly posed the question [to the government and to the tsar] about opening in Kazan province Povolzh’e

360 In particular, the zemstvos of Kazan, Penza, Samara, and Simbirsk provinces were in close contact, based on long-established regional socio-economic and cultural developments. M. S. Nizamova, “K voprosu ob opredelenii geograficheskikh ramok v nauchnom issledovanii po zemskomu samoupravleniiu na materialakh Povolzhskogo i Ural’skogo regionov,” Izvestiia vysshikh uchebnykh zavedenii. Povolzhskii region. Gumanitarnye nauki. Istoriiia, no. 1 (2007): 12. I would also add Nizhnii Novgorod to this list of provincial zemstvo organizations connected to this region.
regional zemstvo institutions for health care and education (Volga specialized hospital, bacteriological institute, agricultural institute, regional eye care center, etc.).”

Kazan province was not unusual in the enthusiasm it witnessed in the initial years of the zemstvo operations, but it did fill a unique regional role as a result of the expertise offered by those who were affiliated with Kazan University. Their activities provided a rich pool of resources from which the province drew, and contributed to broader, regional efforts at practical improvement of agriculture, health, and sanitation.

Inside the Kazan Zemstvo:
The Memoirs of Zemstvo Deputy N. A. Mel’nikov

For 19 years, Nikolai Aleksandrovich Mel’nikov served as a zemstvo deputy in Kazan province; he documented his years of service in his memoirs written in emigration in 1936-1937. These memoirs provide his candid observations about the men with whom he served at the district and province levels, suggesting answers to the questions: who chose to be elected to serve and why? And how did this choice of zemstvo deputies influence the work of the zemstvo? From Mel’nikov’s observations, one learns that elected zemstvo deputies served for a variety of reasons, including curiosity, self-interest, career advancement and opportunities for greater influence, as well as a desire to improve local conditions. Mel’nikov presents his interest in being elected to the zemstvo as one of continuing generations of service begun by his grandfather, and his interest in the well-being of the population of Kazan province.

361 Abramov, “Kazanskoe zemstvo v poreformennyi period,” 5. For a description of these institutions, see also E. V. Cherniak, Zemskoe samoupravlenie v Rossii (na primere Kazanskoi gubernii), 1864 - mart 1918 (Kazan: Kazanskii gosudarstvennyi tekhnologicheskii universitet, 2005), 224-245.

362 N. A. Mel’nikov, 19 let na zemskoi sluzhe (avtobiograficheskii ocherk i vospominaniia) (Ioshkar-Ola: MarNII IALI, 2008), 32-34.
At the age of 26, he was elected to the Koz’modem’iansk district zemstvo and worked his way up to the position of chairman of the Kazan province zemstvo board. He was also elected as a deputy to the third State Duma, but preferring the work of the local zemstvo, he returned to Kazan in 1916. Beginning with his first experience in Koz’modem’iansk district zemstvo assembly, to which he was elected on the basis of his wife’s property qualifications, he notes that the members included: “two deputies who were large land-holding nobility, ten peasants, two representatives of the imperial government (forest rangers), the gorodskoi golova from Koz’modem’iansk, and one representative of a religious institution, the local dean. Among the peasants there were three Russians and seven Chuvashes and Cheremises.” He notes that for the peasants, “especially for the inorodtsy (non-Russians),” the presentations heard at the sessions “acted like a sleeping aid, and they preferred to not participate in the commissions and to spend their free time in the city.” Moreover, Mel’nikov expressed his frustration with the lack of interest of many of the other deputies, stating that he was “the only one who reacted to the suggestions of the board: the representatives of the government and the spiritual institutions most importantly looked out for the interests of their institutions, the gorodskoi golova only looked out for the benefits that would go to the city’s institutions, and the elected deputies peacefully dozed off.”

Mel’nikov found company in sharing his frustration through his friendship with V. I. Obraztsov, who served as the chair of the district zemstvo board before him for approximately 25 years. In sharing his memories about serving with his fellow deputies, Obraztsov told Mel’nikov that he tried during his tenure to “wake our ‘Messrs. deputies’ (‘gospoda glasnye’), but nothing

363 Ibid., 68.
364 Ibid.
365 Ibid.
And his certainty in his position was known, “only until the next elections,” indicating that there was some element of unpredictability to the electoral outcomes. When Obratszov retired in 1901, he recommended that Mel’nikov be elected to the Kazan province zemstvo assembly, which did occur in the fall of that year.

Mel’nikov describes in some detail the provincial deputies who served concurrently with him, including two provincial marshals of the nobility: Nikolai Dmitrievich Sazonov and Sergei Sergeevich Tolstoi-Miloslavskii. Mel’nikov provides these descriptions to underscore an important point about zemstvo service, particularly by those who occupied important positions – that their influence over the zemstvo could be substantial, but only to the extent that they were actively engaged in the process. Sazonov, Mel’nikov recalled, was not particularly interested in the zemstvo, and “was a bit dry, … and even tried to stay away from the social circles to which he belonged. He lived practically alone and interacted only with his closest relatives.” Mel’nikov suggests that Sazonov was elected by the nobility of Laishev district because he was the most independent. He was not, however, elected to the position of provincial chairman on his first try.

In contrast, Mel’nikov approached Tolstoi-Miloslavskii with caution, but after several interactions, Mel’nikov became more comfortable with his natural intelligence, his directness, his honesty and his “passionate, uncontained love for Russia and for the Russian people.” Tolstoi-Miloslavskii “did not make one decision and did not take one step without being firmly

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366 Ibid., 69.
367 Ibid.
368 Ibid., 63.
369 Ibid., 63-64.
370 Ibid., 64.
convinced that it would be beneficial for the population.”

His curiosity was piqued, and Mel’nikov wanted to know what Tolstoi-Miloslavskii thought about the zemstvo.

Yes, what is your zemstvo? They built nasty schools, let in uneducated teachers, threw onto the district two or three stinky hospitals, to which men are scared to go, and themselves took up the question of parliamentary structures and left their schools and hospitals solely to the preferences of the third element, who are interested in political propaganda more than in the education of the people. Do you really think that this is all necessary and beneficial for Russia?

Over time, however, Mel’nikov reported a transformation in Tolstoi-Miloslavskii, and the latter admitted to him that “yes, this is real work, and if you continue along this path, I will go with you.” He did ‘go along with Mel’nikov,’ and was recruited by P. A. Stolypin to serve as a governor, but his reply was very telling of the relative importance of the local zemstvos.

I thank you, P. A., but allow me to state the following: now, in the position of provincial marshal of the nobility, I am a big boss, and you want me to make of me a provincial bureaucrat. You will agree that I have reasons to decline your offer.

The influence that was held by the provincial marshal of the nobility as the head of the provincial zemstvo was considerable, more influential than that of the governor, thought Tolstoi-Miloslavskii. While historiography often notes the limitations of the zemstvos’ activities, intentionally placed on it from its inception in 1864 and thought to be confirmed by the reforms of 1890, the observations of Mel’nikov regarding his service and those of his contemporaries in Kazan province indicate that those who were involved perceived their influence to be considerable, (at least for one deputy) more than could be gained through serving in the position of governor appointed by Stolypin.

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371 Ibid.
372 Ibid.
373 Ibid.
374 Ibid., 65.
Just as Tolstoi-Miloslavskii underwent an evolution in his view of the zemstvo, and therefore his perception of which position would allow him greater influence, so too did Mel’nikov evolve in his perceptions of himself and his ability to serve in the zemstvo as he would have liked to have served. “It seemed to me that to work in the area that most of all interested me – [the area examining] the differences among economic, including agrarian, activities, I did not have enough theoretical knowledge. … I was not satisfied with myself.”

In addition to his frustration with this state of affairs, which at this point in the career of Mel’nikov was too passive and too distant, he believed, he longed for a broader perspective and he found serving at the district level insufficient. “I thought that on a bigger territory, with more resources, surrounded by developed and educated colleagues, and associates, I would have many more opportunities.” This led Mel’nikov to leave Kazan province and travel to Moscow to study agronomy. However, once he arrived, he found himself, “in another world” – that of politics: “in Koz’modem’iansk, [I was] permanently in the weeds and swamps of ‘ongoing business,’ and was distant from politics and rarely heard club talk about political topics.” Outside of Kazan province, Mel’nikov felt like a complete youngster with regard to political questions.

During his time away, much had changed in Kazan Province. In the middle of December, 1902, he went back to Kazan to catch “at least the end of the provincial zemstvo assembly and take part in the elections for the provincial board. Mel’nikov reported that while “the zemstvo assembly took place quietly, talking and deciding, as always, various questions of

375 Ibid., 96-97.
376 Ibid., 97.
377 Ibid.
378 Ibid., 102.
379 Ibid.
local administration,” at the cafeteria over breakfast intense discussions and arguments about political topics took place.\footnote{Ibid., 103-104.}

The fundamental changes created by the establishment of the zemstvos during the Great Reforms opened a world beyond simply greater involvement in the administration of the provinces in which they were instituted. As seen in the memoirs of Mel’nikov, and the archival cases analyzed below, political culture in the provinces was also evolving from that of the first half of the nineteenth century, and continued to evolve in large part due to the actions of elected zemstvo leaders. Who were those leaders? And why did they serve?

As Mel’nikov stated, “it happens that in society and in the press, zemstvo officials are called not only people elected by the deputies of the zemstvo assembly who are answerable to the voters, but also zemstvo servants, who do not carry that responsibility.”\footnote{Ibid., 108.} ‘Zemstvo officials’ are “only those elected, … among whom there are several educated, respected, and useful people.”\footnote{Ibid.} Those people focused their practical work on the provinces, perhaps because, as with Tolstoi-Miloslavskii, more influence could be exerted through the zemstvos, or perhaps because it allowed them to focus on the wellbeing of the people, as with Mel’nikov.

Regardless, the electoral procedures that had previously elected local officials to estate assemblies and to other local positions, were now used with important modifications to elect officials to entirely new institutions in an entirely new social, economic, and political context. Therefore, while the processes by which those officials came to serve – for whatever reason they did – was largely unchanged, the context in which those procedures were followed had changed considerably. As seen in the following section, in that new context, the need to educate the province’s children took on a new urgency, and in order to address that need, the local zemstvos
had to interact with the local communities they formally represented in a diverse province. Many of those communities, however, had their own ideas about how best to teach their children.

**The Challenge of Educating a Diverse Population: Zemstvo Interactions with Local Communities**

Local efforts to provide primary education in multi-ethnic and multi-confessional Kazan province demonstrate the challenges faced by officials elected to the provincial and district zemstvos in addressing local needs. In order to provide a glimpse into those challenges as they emerged in the actual complex environment unique to Kazan province in which the elected officials had to balance competing interests of various groups, I briefly examine one area of considerable sensitivity – that of primary education. What emerges from this examination is that there appears to have been some measure of tension between those deputies elected to the zemstvos and their constituents. On one hand, once elected, deputies were to represent all of the communities in their district (or province in the case of the provincial zemstvo), yet on the other hand, some of those communities – in particular the Muslim communities – did not in practice feel represented, at least with regard to the education of their children.

Despite this tension, zemstvo officials had to work with other local institutions, including many which displayed a deep skepticism among many Tatars and non-Orthodox people regarding the purpose of education efforts. Due to the memory of earlier forced conversions and Russification policies, many Tatars preferred to have separate institutions than those established by the zemstvo – even when the communities were required to pay taxes to finance both the Russian schools as well as their own schools. Education was one of the primary spheres of zemstvo activity, and in Kazan province, this area of responsibility was particularly contentious.
Russian and non-Russian (inorodtsy) deputies served on the provincial zemstvo board, and at least for some zemstvo deputies, the issue of ethnicity was immediately apparent. In describing the personalities of those with whom he served on the district zemstvo board, Mel’nikov notes the reaction of one deputy – Ivan Klimovich Zinov’ev. Zinov’ev referred to the elected inorodtsy as “dogs,” questioning whether or not they actually understood anything. Mel’nikov observed, however, that Zinov’ev was actually a very well meaning person and “if he saw a need somewhere, he was the first to raise the question about providing help.” This observation by Mel’nikov about his fellow elected member of the district board, casts an important light on the work of the zemstvos in areas like education, and provides further insight into why the local Tatar and other non-Russian communities may have been so adamant about educating their children in their own community-based schools versus those under the auspices of the zemstvo, where the intentions of the members may be questioned. Throughout the period of zemstvo activity, the issues associated with primary education increased in urgency, likewise increasing tensions of the local communities of the province as they attempted to negotiate the need for more schools, the need to oversee those schools, and the need to educate the children in a manner acceptable to those of different ethnicities and religions.

As part of the Great Reforms, statutes further regulating primary schools were introduced in 1864 and 1874. The goal of primary education, as articulated in Article 1 of the 1864 Education Statute was “to impart religious and moral notions among the population and to spread useful, basic knowledge.” Primary schools financed by private individuals or communities were permitted, although they were to seek approval from school boards established by the

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383 Ibid., 71.
384 Ibid.
Statute (Article 10), and curriculum and textbooks were to be under the control of the Ministry of Education. The language of instruction was to be exclusively Russian, and the educational program was to include religion, reading of secular and sacred texts, arithmetic, and penmanship; singing was optional (Article 3). Primary education was not, however, compulsory, nor were the proper ages for school attendance defined.

The 1864 Zemstvo Statute established district school boards to function as oversight and supervisory bodies for local schools. The school boards consisted of two delegates elected from the district zemstvos, one member each from the Ministries of Education and Interior, and a member from the Orthodox Church; other departments also sent members. The tasks of these school boards included opening and closing schools, supervising instruction, certifying teaching, approving and distributing teaching materials. The provincial school board included two elected zemstvo representatives, the bishop, the governor, the director of schools, and was responsible for oversight of schools and for the distribution of funds allocated by the Ministry of Education.

Not long after the implementation of the provisions outlined in the 1864 Zemstvo Statute, several changes were made. The first was in response to the assassination attempt against Tsar Alexander II in 1866. On May 13, 1866, a decree (rescript) was issued by the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, Prince Gagarin, that underscored the goal of primary education, namely to strengthen religion, in particular Orthodoxy. This goal was a part of the overall effort to preserve the existing political system. In response, supervision over schools, specifically over

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386 See also Jeffrey Brooks, When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 47-51.
387 Half of the Statute’s articles dealt with these district school boards.
388 Eklof, Russian Peasant Schools, 54.
389 PSZ I, vol. 41, 43298.
390 Eklof, Russian Peasant Schools, 64.
private schools, was tightened. Oversight went even further with the establishment on May 26, 1869 of the position of inspector for primary schools in each province.

As with many provinces of the Russian Empire, Kazan had primary schools sponsored by the nobility, the Orthodox Church, the general administration of the province, the Ministry of Education, peasant communities, trustees, and private individuals. In addition to these schools, however, the province’s Tatar and Muslim communities also sponsored numerous primary schools throughout the province. The question of whether or not the state should oversee mektebs and medreses (schools), privately sponsored by wealthy Tatar merchants and neighborhood communities, was contentious. Although formally overseen by the Muslim ecclesiastical administration in Ufa, little actual supervision or regulation over mektebs and medreses occurred.

These schools were often criticized by Russian inspectors, yet they were also effective in providing Islamic training to the students, and provided them with basic literacy in Arabic. They were viewed as a primary means of keeping the Tatar population of the province separate from the Russian population, and of promoting more radical versions of Islamic beliefs. However, there were several liberal members of the Tatar community who were critical of these schools because they were perceived as being too narrow in their focus. Many proposed reform of the mektebs and medreses. Specifically, they proposed introducing more secular education into the schools and linking them with Russian educational institutions like Kazan University. These

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391 Eklof notes that on “February 19, 1868, an important law began to require that those wishing to establish private schools must receive a clean bill of moral and political health from the local school authorities and to mandate that teachers in such schools be certified.” Eklof, Russian Peasant Schools, 65. There were many Tatar and Muslim schools that continued to operate outside of this system. Schools in private homes were legalized in 1882.
392 Chernaïak, Zemskoe samoupravlenie v Rossii, 186.
393 See Geraci, Window on the East, 136-143.
proposals were rejected, however, by traditional Muslim clerics and by the government alike. While Russian schools were open to Muslims, they often held little appeal because many in the Tatar and Muslim communities were not convinced of the value of a Russian education, and were skeptical of the motives of some of the local zemstvos.

In February of 1870, school regulations were issued for “Tatar-Muslims.” In light of the mass reconversions back to Islam from Orthodoxy, the apostasy of 1865 and 1866, the government believed that – as explained in the introduction to the regulations – “the Russification of the Tatar-Muslims can be introduced only by means of spreading the Russian language and education, avoiding all measures that could engender in this naturally suspicious tribe (plemia) the fear of government [efforts] to lure children from their faith.” A three-part plan was outlined for schooling of Tatar children aimed at assimilating them to Russian culture: primary schools for Tatar boys and girls sponsored by the state, in which the main subject would be Russian language (commonly called Russian-Tatar schools); preparatory Russian classes, as prescribed by the Ministry of Education, for Muslim students who were to attend Russian schools, and once in those schools, Muslim communities could pay for teachers to instruct students in Islam instead of the regular lessons on Orthodoxy, and; community-sponsored Russian language and mathematics classes in existing mektebs and medreses.

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394 Ch. Kh. Samatova analyzes the correspondence between the local government agencies of the province about the control over mektebs and medreses and about the more moderate approaches taken by some of those schools to the education of Muslim children. Ch. Kh. Samatova, “Shkol’naia politika samoderzhavii v otnosheni tatar-musul’man v vtoroi polovine XIX - nachale XX vv. (na primere Kazanskogo uchebnogo okruga)” (dissertatsiia na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni kandidata istoricheskikh nauk, Institut istorii im. Sh. Mardzhani AN RT, 2010), 14.
395 This law also required the opening of teachers’ seminaries in Ufa and Simferopol.
397 For a more detailed discussion of the efforts at education among Tatar children in Kazan province, see Robert Geraci, “The Il’minskii System and the Controversy over Non-Russian Teachers and Priests in the Middle Volga,” in Kazan, Moscow, St. Petersburg: Multiple Faces of the Russian Empire, ed. Catherine Evtuhov et al. (Moscow: OGI, 1997), 325-348.
were to be obligatory for all boys, and new *mektebs* and *medreses* were to be opened only if they could meet the requirement of having a community-financed Russian language teacher.398

The 1870 regulations were met with considerable anger among many in the Muslim Tatar communities who believed them to be disrespectful of Tatar traditions and an outright attempt to destroy them. They also saw the requirement to pay for Russian instructors as an affront given that the government paid for Russian Orthodox education in part with the taxes collected from the Tatar communities. Due to the lack of success of these regulations in establishing Russian schools and Russian classes among Tatars and Muslims, the Ministry of Education created the position of inspector for the Kazan educational circuit,399 filled by V. V. Radlov, to deal directly with local communities regarding the opening of schools, the placement of teachers, and the teaching materials to be used in the schools. Radlov’s proposal was to: introduce into Tatar *medreses* the study of Russian as a foreign language as was done in the gymnasiums; introduce the study of mathematics, including introductory algebra, and other sciences; and, establish the Kazan teacher’s seminary that would teach secular subjects and Russian language.400

On May 31, 1874, a Revised School Statute was issued that changed the composition and responsibilities of the local school boards; the other elements of the 1864 Statute remained unchanged. The responsibility for shutting down schools deemed disorderly or harmful was transferred from the school boards to the inspectors, and they now had the authority to confirm and/or remove all teachers. The inspectors were also added to the membership of the school boards; one of them or a member from the Ministry of Education was to be at each of the school board meetings. Article 32 of the 1874 School Statute placed the responsibility for the correct

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399 This inspector was also to cover Bashkir and Kirgiz schools as well.
400 A. Iu. Khabutdinov, *Ot obshchiny k natsii: tatary na puti ot srednevekov’ia k novomu vremenii (konets XVIII - nachalo XX vv.)* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 2008), 82.
moral teaching at each school in the hands of the marshals of the nobility, while the administration and curriculum of the schools was the responsibility of the inspectors. Perhaps more critical for Kazan province, however, was the decision in 1874 by the Ministry of Education to impose direct and immediate control over all Muslim schools across the empire. By extension, all mektebs and medreses, not just those newly-built, were required to teach Russian language, but they were still to be financed by the Tatar communities.

Further regulations of primary education were introduced in 1888 and 1890. In 1888, the Ministry of Education required all mullahs to be proficient in Russian, and in 1890, all books used in Muslim schools were to be censored. Further, as Robert Geraci notes, “all Muslim clergy, teachers, and elected officials (were to) be Russian subjects educated within the empire.” In 1892, manuscripts and foreign publications were banned from Muslim schools. Collectively, these policies were perceived by many in the Tatar and Muslim communities as attempts at forced conversations and elicited considerable negative reaction, including violent responses that destroyed schools and threatened the lives of those involved in the Russian education projects.

Within the context of a multi-national, multi-confessional province, Kazan’s zemstvos as institutions of local self-governance, attempted to adapt to local society. Often zemstvos had to interact with community-based organizations of self-government, for example, mahallas, which were sections of the city or the slobody that often developed around a mosque that

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401 As a result of these measures, in 1893, only 506 Muslims had met the educational qualification and were able to pass the Russian language exam required for one to become an imam. Khabutdinov, Ot obshchiny k natsii, 84.
402 Geraci, Window on the East, 142.
403 The author of a newspaper article “To the Attention of the Muslim Society,” “Vnimaniu musul’manskogo obshchestva,” Volzhskii vestnik, February 1, 1892, 2, advocates for the learning of Russian language by Tatar children in their schools.
404 More research is clearly needed into these groups to understand the nature of their self-governance more completely. There is evidence, for example, that there were elected members of the boards that oversaw these local schools, such as people referring to their service on school boards in other local election documents.
functioned as a locus of religious and cultural traditions. Mahallas in Kazan, which had deep roots in Muslim culture, date back to the policies of religious toleration of Catherine the Great that allowed the building of mosques, and many were built in the second half of the eighteenth century and first half of the nineteenth. Mosques were often sponsored by wealthy Tatar merchants, and bore their names, including the Apanaev, Azimov, Burnaev, Galeev, Usmanov, and Iunusov families. The power and influence of the wealthiest of these families often extended for generations forming merchant dynasties. Among the new mahallas formed in Kazan in the nineteenth century were: the mahalla of the “Golubaia mechet” (“Blue mosque”) founded by merchant of the first guild A. I. Zamanov; the “Piataia sobornaia mechet” (“Fifth Cathedral mosque” founded by merchant M. M. Mamiash; the “Sennaia mechet” (“Hay mosque”) founded by the merchant Iunusov brothers of the first guild, and; the “Kazakovskaa mechet” (“Kazakov’s mosque”) founded by merchant of the first guild M. I. Kazakov. The community-based activities that were centered around them included caring for the elderly and the less fortunate, and attending to other rituals of life including weddings and funerals. They also had commercial functions in consolidating capital for trade developments like the opening of new bazaars and markets.

Since many Tatar Muslim mektebs and medreses were established in association with these mosques, they were part of the network of primary education that affected the children of Kazan province. As noted above, many Tatar communities emphasized the need to retain Tatar language and ethnic traditions as well as Islamic practices. Some who sponsored mosques and the schools associated with them adhered to these beliefs, and others attempted to move more in the direction of secular education and vocational training necessary for the evolution of industry.

405 According to Russian law, mahallas were not independent legal entities (iuridicheskoe litso).
406 These community-based organizations (obshchiny) were also established by Jews and other non-Orthodox believers.
and manufacturing needs, which were areas often pursued by Tatar entrepreneurs in the Reform area.

In 1871, the first Russian class opened in the “Usmannaia mechet’” and was an example of one of the more liberal mahalla schools. Schools of the new type, however, were less frequent than more traditional religious schools. By the end of the nineteenth century, there were only four Russian classes in medreses. There was considerable resistance among the supporters of Tatar mahallas to the new Russian-Tatar schools. In reaction to this resistance, the state exerted considerable influence on members of these communities. The imposition of new qualifications on candidates for Muslim spiritual positions created profound dissatisfaction among Tatars and only intensified the distrust within the mahallas toward these new Russian-Tatar schools. There was also distrust, as shown by Mel’nikov’s observations described in his memoirs, by some of the elected zemstvo deputies of Russian ethnicity of those of non-Russian ethnicity. This mistrust and skepticism influenced the way that some of the zemstvos attempted to address the local needs related to primary education.

Although there were considerable difficulties and tensions, the new elected institutions of self-governance were able to work with the local communities, albeit within financial and other constraints, to make progress on issues of importance to the local and broader communities, including primary education. As G. R. Zigangirova argues, this cooperation created “on the territory of Kazan province a specific form of self-governance, of which various forms of Tatar-

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407 Khabutdinov, Ot obshchiny k natsii, 82.
408 Ibid.
410 Mel’nikov, 19 let na zemskoi sluzhebe, 71.
Muslim self-governance were a part,” including the *mahalla* that developed educational institutions in parallel to those sponsored by the *zemstvo* and other official state organs.411

**Elections as they Occurred According to Voter Complaints:**

**Specific Cases from Zemstvo Elections**

The formal complaints filed by voters and others interested in the outcome of local elections in Kazan province were an essential part of the electoral procedures prior to, during, and following the period of the Great Reforms. In providing voters a means of expressing their views about the conduct of specific elections, these complaints were a part of the elaboration and clarification of existing electoral procedures. They were also a means of negotiating the power balance between the governor and the *zemstvo*; the scales of which often tipped in favor of the *zemstvos*. Through the resolution of these complaints, precedent was also formed.

In this way, the formal procedures of complaint, employed over many decades, were similar in structure to those filed prior to the 1860s, yet the sentiments expressed in those complaints were reflective of the new political and social context of reform. Specifically, the very notions of direct participation rather than indirect voting, and the even greater attention paid to proper procedure, were now discussed openly by voters. For the first time, voters were expressing in their own words the belief that elections were considered valid only when those and only those who had the “right” to participate did so, although the welfare of the community was also an important consideration meaning that the very definition of “right” was at question and was dependent upon specific cases. These newly-expressed notions mark an important point

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in the development of electoral culture as seen in Kazan province as in the actual complaints analyzed here.

**Property Requirement Met:**

*Irregularities During the 1868 Sviiazhsk District Zemstvo Elections*

June 6, 1868, Honorary Citizen of Sviiazhsk, Mikhail Koz’mín Ranzhev, claimed his inalienable right (*neot”emlemoe pravo*) to participate in the election of delegates for the second three-year term of the zemstvo assembly. This right, he stated, was based on the fact that his property was officially valued at significantly more than 500 roubles thereby meeting the qualification requirement. Despite this, he had been excluded from the preliminary list of eligible voters compiled by the Sviiazhsk district zemstvo board. Moreover, not only did he meet the property requirement, he was not under investigation and had not been indicted. He had served as the head of the city (*gorodskoi golova*) and was at that time serving as a member of the Sviiazhsk district school board. On these grounds, he asked that the Kazan Governor instruct the city duma and the zemstvo to allow him to participate in the upcoming elections.\(^\text{412}\) The Sviiazhsk city duma wrote to the governor confirming that indeed, although Ranzhev’s home was under renovation - thereby temporarily reducing the value of his home - he also had several other smaller buildings on his property, which put his total property value at 605 roubles. The duma agreed to duly add him to the list of eligible voters.\(^\text{413}\)

But matters, it seemed, were not so straightforward. The Sviiazhsk district zemstvo board also wrote to the governor on June 9, 1868, to inform him of their understanding of Ranzhev’s case. In February, the board had published the list of voters in the local newspaper, the *Kazanskie gubernskie vedomosti*, along with the instructions that “those who have the right to

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412 NA RT, f. 1, op. 3, d. 1519, l. 2-2ob.
413 Ibid., l. 3.
participate in the electoral assembly (should) present evidence about their title, age, property, and place of residence by February 15.”

The zemstvo board did not receive any announcement about eligible voters from the Sviiazhsk city duma, or from Ranzhev, by the required date, and they therefore proceeded to file the lists appropriately for confirmation. Although on March 12, the board received a letter from the duma inquiring about the possibility of including a list of city voters, that list was actually provided back to the duma only after a two-month delay (May 6). It was only subsequent to this, on May 28, that the duma informed the zemstvo board that the property assessment commission (raskladochnaia komissiia) had valued the property of Ranzhev at no less than 510 roubles. The zemstvo board, however, did not feel it was able to make any changes to the list according to established rules and explained this to the duma. Nevertheless, based on the ruling of May 26, 1867, published in the newspaper Severnaia noch’, those who disagreed with the board could file a complaint within three days and the complaint would be forwarded to the governor’s board. In short, the Sviiazhsk district zemstvo board, in their letter signed by chairman Shmelev, determined that it was up to Ranzhev to submit a complaint. Ranzhev’s complaint was filed accordingly, and he was added to the list of eligible voters.

Ranzhev’s case, however, was far from the only irregularity alleged during the 1868 zemstvo elections. And, what was reported by gorodskoi golova Saiarkin and board chairman Shmelev indicated that the complicated politics and intrigues of Kazan’s local elections were not eliminated with the appearance of the zemstvo institutions onto the local landscape. In many respects, at issue were personal disputes, not the electoral procedures for the new institution.

Shmelev officially reported to the governor on July 8, 1868, that there were a few irregularities in the eligible voter lists and with the conduct of the elections themselves: “a) at the

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414 Ibid., l. 6-7ob.
415 Ibid., l. 11-14, and l. 19-20.
city electoral assembly there were people who participated, and people who were elected although they did not have the right to be elected: merchant Dmitrii Semenov Stepanshin was not included on the list of electors; and Sviiazhsk meshchanin, Vasilii Petrov Lobanov, who, according to the criminal chamber (ugolovnaia palata), was under considerable suspicion, yet was added. Lobanov was even confirmed as a deputy although during the election he received the same number of “yes” votes as “no” votes. Moreover, the gorodskoi golova, during balloting, did not accept his rightfully-allowed voting ball and did not vote; and, b) at the Ul’iankovo village assembly, kollezhskii asessor Aleksandr Ivanov Titov was elected as a deputy although he did not have any property in that district and therefore … did not have the right to be elected.”416

Acting in his personal capacity as a voter, as opposed to his official capacity as a member of the Sviiazhsk zemstvo board, meshchanin Shmelev then submitted a separate memorandum to the governor in late June 1868. He began by stating that he was a property owner in the city of Sviiazhsk and was invited to participate in the electoral assembly of city voters to elect deputies to the district zemstvo assembly on June 15, 1868. During the elections, he noted several irregularities which were inconsistent with legislation. In addition to the irregularities noted in his official letter described above, Shmelev added a third: “the Sviiazhsk district scribe participated in the assembly, and was included in observation of the election, but according to the Statutes on the Zemstvo Institutions, he did not have the right to do so.”417 Given these irregularities, Shmelev requested that, because those without the right to vote were allowed to participate in the city assembly, the elections be considered invalid and a new term for the

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416 Ibid., l. 18-18ob.
417 Ibid., l. 21-22.
election of deputies be named so that they can occur, “on the precise basis of existing legislation.”

Yet a third report on the elections was filed by Sviiazhsk gorodskoi golova, honorary citizen (pochetnyi grazhdanin) Saiarkin, who contested Shmelev’s claims about his own improper participation.

1. During voting for the election of deputies to the Sviiazhsk district zemstvo assembly, … I, in fact, did not have a voting ball, because I was convinced that I did not have the necessary qualifications to vote or to be elected…

2. Meshchanin Vasilii Petrov Lobanov, who was present during the election, indeed was indicted but that became known on a different day… In regard to merchant Dmitrii Semenov Stepanshin, he, based on having paid his guild dues, has the right to participate in the electoral assembly; and if he was not included on the voting lists, then that was simply a clerical oversight.

3. The comment against meshchanin Lobanov about the ballot list was made when it was still not known about his indictment.

Saiarkin stated again in closing his report that these mistakes were made due only to his inaccurate understanding of the new regulations on city electoral assemblies. He also hastened to add, however, that if meshchanin Shmelev had in mind only the proper conduct of elections, and not his own personal interests, then he would be a man good for his debts, an honest man and he would have been obligated, during the elections, to announce the improprieties since he should have known all of the regulations, and what’s more he, the acting chairman of the Sviiazhsk zemstvo board, could have eliminated all of the mistakes. But meshchanin Shmelev announced, on a different day than the elections, that he learned about Lobanov’s indictment and that he, Shmelev, wished to be a deputy from the city. Moreover, he asked me, in front of merchant Golubev, if he would add a voting ball, and when I refused this unlawful request, he filed a complaint about it, so that it would seem as if those omissions during voting were made intentionally and not by mistake.

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418 Ibid.
419 Ibid., l. 24.
420 Ibid.
As seen in this case, the filing of formal complaints was at times a means not only of raising questions about the proper conduct of the electoral process, but also a means of airing personal grievances. These two explanations for the irregularities – one presented by Shmelev and one offered by Saiarkin – may have been interrelated, but it is unclear which version, or if both or even neither, was accurate. To this disagreement was added yet another.

On July 4, 1868, the Sviiazhsk zemstvo board transmitted to the governor a complaint by peasant deputy from the village of Podberez’ia, Onufrii Petrov, about his not having been elected as a member of the district zemstvo board. It seems there was a bit of confusion on Petrov’s part as to how the two-stage zemstvo electoral system worked. Although this system had been used by the estates prior to the Great Reforms, it raised concerns among many new voters, particularly the peasants. In this way, an electoral procedure that was rooted in existing practice and continued for the new institutions, it was challenged, suggesting new political concerns of the new era.

Because this complaint outlines the perceptions of elections by a peasant voter, revealing a great deal of consideration for the electoral processes themselves and their meaning, it is important to recount them in detail. It is only through the careful reading of the arguments presented that the views of a peasant voter in these elections become evident, even when recounted by Shmelev:

> Without entering into an analysis of the extent to which deputy Onufrii Petrov wrongly presents the facts regarding the board and … the extent to which his complaint unmask[s] his complete ignorance of existing laws, the district board considers it necessary to express its opinion only on two main points of his complaint. Specifically regarding his not having been elected as a deputy to the assembly, although he wishes to be a member of the board, first, deputy Onufrii Petrov states that he does not welcome the desire of the peasants of all of Ul’iankovsk county to elect him as zemstvo deputy for the upcoming three-year
term, which he told the person in charge of overseeing the elections, the acting peace mediator (mirovoi posrednik) of the second settlement (uchastok) of Sviiazhsk district, Mr. Levashev. Then, deputy Onufrii Petrov, just having declared his complaints about not having been elected as zemstvo deputy, and in fact he was not elected (as is seen in the election list presented by the acting peace mediator Levashev), he stated his desire to be elected for the second three-year term as a member of the Sviiazhsk district zemstvo board, offering even to exchange himself for two members: Tishev and Lashkin. It is difficult to speak seriously in light of such a naïve (if not worse) offer and a complete ignorance of existing laws; the requester of course does not even suspect that on the basis of Article 46 of Statutes on the zemstvo institutions, members of the board are elected only from among those who participated in the assembly, i.e. from among deputies, and he, as explained above, was not elected as deputy for a second three-year term; and of course, it will be unnecessary to point out that the fact of his complaint to Your Excellency itself, on naming (him) a member of the board, already more than confirms the stated opinion on the unfavorable ignorance of the requester who thinks that there may be some kind of legislation on this subject. 421

Petrov had previously served as deputy during the first three-year term in the district zemstvo assembly. His apparent ignorance of electoral rules then, as conveyed by Shmelev, may not have actually been so much an ignorance of the rules per se, as an expression of a sense of injustice and an expression of an alternative view of an electoral structure more desirable to certain voters, particularly those against whom the rules were stacked. In other words, his complaint may have been a protest against the indirect voting system rather than an ignorance of how that system worked. The indirect voting system was not agreeable to peasant Petrov, and he felt it more favorable to elect members of the board directly, rather than from assembly members only. As seen below, Petrov’s view is consistent with views expressed by other peasants involved in the zemstvos.

Given the many irregularities in the Sviiazhsk district zemstvo elections of 1868, articulated in multiple complaints from various participants, each with his own perspective on

421 Ibid., l. 15-16. Petrov’s original complaint was not included in the archival file.
what had transpired, the governor declared the elections invalid and called for new elections.\footnote{Ibid., l. 29-30.}

Over time, this would occur multiple times as the integrity of various elections was challenged by participants for a range of reasons.

**Skipping Ahead: Direct Elections vs. Indirect Elections in Practice**

On June 2, 1874, the governor of Kazan sent a letter to the Tsivil’sk district zemstvo board to reconfirm the rules on calculating the terms of service for zemstvo deputies and to call for their election. All of the proper paperwork was also confirmed (corrected, verified voter lists, and lengths of electoral assemblies). In late May 1874, electoral assemblies were held by the village societies to elect those who would go forward to the county assemblies from whom zemstvo deputies would then be elected. However, upon completion of the village electoral assemblies, peasant of village Akmurzin, Ivan Abramov Cherniaev, submitted a letter questioning these elections. He was among those electors of Tsivil’sk volost’ who went to the Churatchinsk county board for the election of deputies, but, he noted, the elections were incorrect: “Peasants Aleksei Appolonov Mefodiev, Gavriil Sergeev Butorov, Nikolai Petrov Sharin, and Nikolai Aleksandrov were not elected at the county assemblies but were nonetheless elected as deputies.”\footnote{NA RT, f. 1, op. 3, d. 3384, l. 18-21.}

Having inquired about Cherniaev’s complaint, the zemstvo board found that he was correct in that:

1) During the electoral assembly of May 29 in the village of Koshel’ia, the following peasants were elected by the majority of vote as deputies: Aleksandr Vasil’ev Makarov, Klimentii Koz’min Bogatov; and as alternates: Vasilii Potapov Belkov, priest from the village of Shakulov, Mikhail
Gerasimov Khrustalev, peasants Andrei Ivanov and Vasilii Grigor’ev. Of these elected individuals, peasants Bogatov, Belkov and Grigor’ev were not members of the county assemblies. …

2) According to the electoral session of May 29 in the village of Churatchikov, the following people were elected by majority vote as deputies: soldier of the city of Tsivil’sk, Gavriil Sergeev Butorov, peasant of the village of Ianrosov, Nikolai Petrov Shorin, and as alternate, peasant Ivan Matveev Sorokin. Both Sorokin and another alternate, peasant Pavlov, were not members of the county assemblies. Therefore, at three village assemblies candidates and alternates were elected - Bogatov, Belkov, Grigor’ev, Butorov, Shorin, Aleksandrov, Danilov, and Pavlov – who were not members of the county assemblies, which is against the law. 424

These electors allegedly had not participated in the initial round of voting at the county assemblies, which was the second round of elections, from which successful candidates would then be eligible to participate in the final round of elections, those for deputies to the district zemstvo board.

In a declaratory letter to the governor of September 17, 1874, Nikolai Petrov Shorin tried to clarify the situation. He was elected at the village assembly as an elector for the election of deputies to the Tsivil’sk district zemstvo assembly. But, he believed, at that same assembly he was also elected as deputy to the Tsivil’sk zemstvo board. Later he found out that the zemstvo assembly had excluded him and others from being deputies. “A peasant from the village of Starye Urmary, Aleksei Danilov; from the village of Burtasy, Aleksei Pavlov; and from the village of Churanovaia, Klementii [sic] Koz’min Bogatov [were excluded]… on the basis that we were not first elected as members of the county assembly.” 425 Shorin found this ruling incorrect and cited Article 35 of the Zemstvo Statutes that clearly states that the electoral assemblies held in the village estate (sel’skoe soslovie), elect deputies who participated in the assemblies. He did not understand why he had been excluded. Moreover, he objected to the invalidation of the

424 Ibid.
425 Ibid., l. 29-30ob.
entire election for deputies from three whole village assemblies of Tsivil’sk district, “since other people besides me (Shorin) participated in those assemblies were not elected at the volost’ assemblies.”  

He then went on to state that voter lists had been published in the Kazanskie gubernskie vedomosti and Shorin and others had been included on those lists. He had a point. “Why should the list of those who had the right to participate in the electoral assemblies be compiled according to the law,” if they were actually not eligible. “(If this were the case) then it would be necessary to limit the lists to one containing the names of those elected by the county assemblies.”  

This was a logical argument from his perspective. But, in a telling remark, indicating learned experience with correspondence related to electoral procedure, Shorin noted that in their reply, the “zemstvo assembly did not cite any law, which may have governed the stated ruling that deputies may not be individuals not previously elected at the volost’ electoral assemblies, and most likely if such a law existed, then the assembly would have cited it in their ruling.”  

Citation of law, statute, regulation and decree was very common and nearly every official ruling included citations as the basis for the stated decision. Also, logically, he supported the election of deputies Aleksei Pavlov and Aleksei Danilov, elected in the last three-year term from 1871-1874 as deputies from the District zemstvo assembly; Danilov was not among those elected in the county assembly, “but he, in my opinion, did not lose the right to be deputy.”  

Ivan Matveev Sorokin, on the other hand, elected as elder of Tsivil’sk county, also should not have been elected as deputy, in Shorin’s opinion, because “according to article 114 of the

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426 Ibid.
427 Ibid.
428 Ibid.
429 Ibid.
rules of the Emancipation Manifesto, … the district elder is to be a homeowner.’’ Sorokin did not have his own property and lived in the home of his wife. Following this logic, Shorin stated that Sorokin then did not only have the right to be elected at the village assemblies, but also even at the city assemblies as one who trades according to confirmation of the second guild, I have my own place, and also was, from 1861 until June 1866 in the position of chairman for the economic section (khozyaistvennaya chast’) of the Tsvil’sk county board. I was elected as sworn chairman of the Kazan district court and am at the present time a deputy of the Tsvil’sk city duma.431

Finally, Shorin cites the ruling of the zemstvo assembly, based on Article 30 of the Zemstvo Statutes, “in which it is written that the assemblies for electing the district deputies from village societies are formed from voters appointed by the county assemblies from amongst themselves. Those voters are not more than 1/3 of the overall number of individuals who have the right, according to law, to participate in the county assembly so that in total from each society there is not less than one representative.” In Shorin’s opinion, this article does not indicate that individuals elected as deputies should be elected directly from the county assembly, but rather should be simply elected “from amongst themselves, i.e. from among the peasants and without other elections,” because as happened previously and presently “among peasants, individuals may make mistakes rendering the elections illegal.”

Shorin asked the governor to reconsider his exclusion as deputy to the Tsvil’sk district zemstvo assembly because voters were continuing to elect deputies, many of whom were not elected by the county assemblies. Ultimately, Shorin stated, “if he was deemed not to have the

430 Ibid.
431 Ibid.
432 Ibid.
433 Ibid.
right to be a deputy, it was best to hold new elections, and not to include those who were previously elected.”

Despite the many articulate arguments presented to the governor, the latter replied on October 8, 1874, declaring the exclusion of Nikolai Petrov Shorin from being a deputy in the Tsivil’sk district zemstvo assembly correct. The governor’s letter was little more than a few lines long, while Shorin’s extensivedeclaratory letter offers multiple arguments and reveals the logic whereby he believed his election should have stood. First, there seems to have been confusion as to what position he was actually being elected to during the initial village electoral assembly – he was not being elected to both the position of elector and deputy at the same time. Likewise, the voter lists that indicated his eligibility signaled to him that he was eligible to be elected as the deputy directly. The indirect process was not, in his eyes, consistent with the manner in which the voter lists were compiled. Further, given other factors of eligibility and service, (e.g. home ownership), he felt that he was eligible even when others who had been elected were not eligible because they were not homeowners. His exclusion, in the face of his qualifications and the absence of qualifications by others, was confusing. Also, in the omission of citations to legal statutes and laws by the zemstvo in presenting their arguments, the suspicions of peasant Shorin were raised. This manner of addressing these matters, developed over decades, had become a standard part of electoral practice and was noted in its absence as much as in its presence. Drawing still further on electoral experience, Shorin noted the problems that had frequently arisen among peasant voters in making “mistakes;” given this, it seemed to make sense to hold more direct elections to avoid these possibilities. And finally, if his election was to be declared invalid, then the “mistakes” that led to his election should invalidate the entire election, and the process should begin again, without those previously elected. Overall, the

434 Ibid.
logical arguments presented by peasant Shorin were multiple, diverse, and appeared to draw on knowledge of the electoral processes, the actual practical experience of having witnessed multiple elections and having been elected to multiple offices, and on what seems to have functioned as dual notions of legal “rights” and other socially-accepted norms of “right.”

*Keeping the Local Peace: Adapting the Rules to Retain an Effective Official*

On December 11, 1875, the Kazan province zemstvo board met in their 11th regular session. During the session, they held elections for peace mediator in Spassk district. *Kollezhskii asessor* Nikolai Alekseevich Dobronravov was elected. He had held that position for the two previous terms, having been elected by unanimous vote of the Spassk district zemstvo assembly, and was also elected as Honorable peace mediator of Spassk district unanimously by the assembly for the current three-year term that was ending. However, during the December 11 balloting in the Kazan provincial assembly, Dobronravov received 35 “yes” votes and only 1 “no” vote (*neizberatel’nyi shar*). The same had occurred with the unanimous election in the current regular Spassk district zemstvo assembly: Dobronravov received only 1 “no” vote. Technically, Dobronravov was to have received completely unanimous support. In light of the fact that he had “fulfilled his obligations and made useful actions in his previous service as peace mediator for societal good and respect, the provincial zemstvo assembly on December 31, 1875, unanimously requested,” that the Minister of Justice look favorably on the appointment of Dobronravov as peace mediator in Spassk district. Just a few weeks later, the Kazan branch of

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435 NA RT, f. 1, op. 3, d. 3810, l. 1.
436 Ibid.
the Ministry of Justice informed the zemstvo assembly that he “does not see any problems with his appointment.”

Confusion, however, began when the Ministry of Justice in St. Petersburg sent a letter to the governor of Kazan nearly six months later, on July 31, 1876, stating that Dobronravov actually could not be appointed because there were no vacancies for peace mediator at this time. The Kazan province zemstvo board replied on August 16, 1876, stating that on December 11, 1875, elections were held for two vacancies for the position of peace mediator in Spassk District, for which Bulygin and Dobronravov were elected. At that time, Bulygin was serving, but there was still a vacancy for peace mediator in the first settlement, since there are not three but four settlements in Spassk district, each of which needed a peace mediator. Moreover the zemstvo board added that the responsibility of peace mediator for the first settlement of Spassk district was filled by Dobronravov as honorary peace mediator of Spassk district.

The documentation on this case ends with a letter from the Kazan governor to the Minister of Justice on August 18, 1876, bringing this specific local information to the attention of the Minister: there were four settlements and therefore four mediators were needed. It is not clear, however, whether the well-respected Dobronravov was allowed to serve as peace mediator in the district of Spassk; the archival documentation is silent on this. There was great value placed on the long and respected service of an elected official over the official requirements of electoral procedure. The community seemed to believe that it was more desirable to retain Dobronravov’s service than to strictly adherence to regulation the one “no”

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437 Ibid., l. 5-6.
438 Ibid., l. 7.
439 Ibid., l. 9-9ob.
440 Ibid., l. 10-11.
vote should be overlooked. Moreover, the needs of the local community in terms of the number of elected peace mediators were not known by the officials in St. Petersburg. The local community presented what they believed to be a reasonable, justifiable solution to filling needed electoral positions.

*Property Burned, Status Lost? Conditionality and Elected Office*

In October 1898, peasant Aleksei Apollonov Mefodiev of Tsivil’sk district wrote to the governor inquiring as to whether two other peasants, elected as members of the Tsivil’sk district zemstvo board, should be discharged from their positions due to what Mefodiev alleged as a lack of appropriate qualifications, including a lack of appropriate property qualifications and inappropriate conduct. Ivan Maksimov and Grigorii Vasil’ev Levin were elected at the 34th Tsivil’sk district zemstvo assembly. Levin did not have his own household in the voting jurisdiction and was arrested in 1894 for disturbing the peace. Further, a few weeks later, Mefodiev wrote to the governor to elaborate his case for the removal of Levin from the district zemstvo board:

(Levin) lost his property in a fire on June 27, 1898, and he did not have his own means to rebuild over the summer by the time of [voter] registration, rather the opposite. His purchases made immediately after the fire destroyed his house and out-buildings were made with 1,030 roubles borrowed from the meshchanin L. Sergeev, and therefore Sergeev advocates on Levin’s behalf, hiding this from the zemstvo assembly (because of the) loss of his right to be a deputy.  

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441 NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 267, l. 1-1ob.  
442 Ibid., l. 3-3ob.
Further, Mefodiev alleged, Maksimov hid his loss of property because he was subject to criminal proceedings according to the law, although he did not elaborate as to what those proceedings were.\textsuperscript{443}

The case was easily resolved by the provincial bureau of zemstvo and city affairs on April 21, 1899, in an announcement that followed several letters of inquiry that served to clarify the issue of Levin’s and Maksimov’s property ownership.

In the election of zemstvo deputies, the law does not require the strict ownership of their own individual homesteads and outhouses and settlements if they participated in the sessions together with older members of their family, as in the given case of Ivan Maksimov, participating in the session with his father. On the other hand, Grigorii Levin, since 1881, had his own independent household, losing it only temporarily due to fire, and is rebuilding. … The request by Mefodiev in regard to the arrest of Levin in 1894 does not mean that Levin loses his right to be elected in the village and county assemblies, since the arrest was just administrative, only as a punishment for disturbing the peace at the session.\textsuperscript{444}

Both Maksimov and Levin were allowed to retain their positions as zemstvo deputies, having been elected first at the county assemblies, and the case was closed.

This straightforward case serves to indicate how realistic situations like the loss of property in a fire may have changed a person’s eligibility to participate in elections or to be elected. Moreover, while the law stated that one could not be arrested or indicted to remain eligible to vote or to be elected, and had to demonstrate good behavior, Levin was allowed to retain his position because the offense was deemed “just administrative.” Not only does this indicate a certain flexibility in terms of interpretation based on realistic situations, it also indicates a comfort with electoral practice – there were no doubt countless other similar

\textsuperscript{443} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{444} Ibid., l. 8ob-9.
circumstances encountered by the district and provincial boards that oversaw electoral matters. Local circumstances were to be considered along with electoral statutes.

**The City Dumas of Kazan Province: Modified Electoral Practices within Existing Institutions**

The municipal reforms of June 16, 1870 created a new city duma, an institution whose members were elected from each of the estates, and which were responsible for administering the affairs of the city. Eligible voters in the city elected delegates to the city duma every four years. As with the zemstvo, the city duma had an executive board (*uprava*), with the head of the city (*gorodskoi golova*) serving on the executive board and the administrative bodies. Members of the executive board were elected from among the deputies of the duma through city electoral assemblies.

Again, property ownership was the decisive qualification determining voter and candidate eligibility. City taxpayers who owned immovable property (no minimum property requirement was set) and those who paid specific dues on trade and industry had the right to participate in elections, regardless of their estate. Government agencies, institutions, associations, companies, churches and monasteries also had the right to participate in elections. The minimum voting age for men was 25; women could participate only through official proxies. Teachers, bureaucrats, doctors and other professionals as well as hired laborers did not have the right to vote. While property ownership, specifically home ownership, was essentially the decisive qualification for voting rights, the issue of apartment rental was frequently debated as many who rented apartments were wealthy and wished to participate in the local city dumas but were excluded.

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Similar to the procedure developed for the zemstvo institutions and consistent with earlier procedures established for elections to estate assemblies, voters were divided into three, unequally-sized curiae, based on decreasing amounts of taxes paid to the city. Each curia (high, middle, and low taxpayers) elected the same number of members, meaning that the “weight” of the highest taxpayers was greater than that of the other groups. This disproportionate voting could result in one deputy from the first category representing as few as three voters whereas one deputy from the third category could represent as many as 180 voters. Once elected, the deputies of the city dumas were responsible for the city’s finances with which they were to manage a range of city administrative tasks including water, sewage, lighting, roads, transportation, property assessment, parks, fire prevention, etc. In confining their jurisdiction to these elements of local management (**khoziaistvo**), the dumas’ elements of potential political opposition were also to be confined. In Kazan, the overlapping jurisdictions of the city duma and the provincial zemstvo created challenges of tax collection and of coordinating basic administration of services, yet at other times provided opportunities for effective cooperation.

Voter eligibility for the city dumas, as is evident from archival sources, had its peculiarities. Because there were no established minimum property qualifications, voting rights were granted, paradoxically, to those who paid just a few kopeks to sell goods, yet were denied to those who rented expensive apartments. As is often the case where paradoxes emerge, the rules were frequently circumvented by those who purchased certificates of trade or by acquiring real estate of little or no value. What this appears to indicate is that there was a desire to participate in these elections and in the work of the city duma. Among the personal, professional and societal reasons to participate in the local city duma and elections was the opportunity to

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influence decisions important to the province and communities. In the second half of the nineteenth century, among the most pressing of issues was ensuring that Kazan was connected to the expanding imperial railroad. Given the tremendous personal, business, and economic development interests in ensuring that Kazan would become a regional hub of the imperial railroad, it is not surprising that great effort was expended to this end by local elected officials. Further, their own involvement in these efforts provides a glimpse into the motivations of some officials for their involvement in local elected politics.

**Encouraging Economic Development: Linking Kazan to the Expanding Imperial Railroad**

In the 1880s, the need to connect Kazan to a main line of the expanding imperial railroad network emerged as especially urgent; the industrialists and merchants of the province were losing a great deal of profit to other areas which could move their products more quickly and efficiently than could still-disconnected Kazan. With personal profit and the economic development of the province hanging in the balance, the elected members of the Kazan provincial zemstvo knew that they had to combine efforts with all possible allies to out maneuver other cities who were advocating for inclusion into the railroad before Kazan.

With millions of roubles at stake and the future of many industrial projects of the province in question, the zemstvo deputies, as Mel’nikov recounts in his memoirs, wanted to “realize their dreams” of connecting Kazan to the main imperial railroad network. In order to accomplish this, they first had to work to gain the full support of the Kazan city duma and

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447 For example, with the opening of the Moscow-Cheliabinsk line through Syzran’ to Samara, “a significant number of freight trains on their way to Siberia bypassed Kazan. … After this, the opening of the Samara-Orenburg-Tashkent line took many freight trains on their way to Central Asia away from Kazan. And finally, the new Northern Siberian line, St. Petersburg-Viatka-Perm- Ekaterinburg, weakened the influence of Kazan over a large area of Viatka and Perm regions.” Mel’nikov, *19 let na zemskoi službê*, 200.
combine efforts to lobby the imperial government. After all, Kazan as a city stood to also gain tremendously from the fulfillment of their dreams. Through the cooperative efforts of these two elected institutions, Kazan did beat out its competitors, in particular Nizhnii Novgorod, and secured imperial support for the project and the necessary private financing to complete the necessary construction, including the very expensive freight rail bridge over the Volga River. The success of this enormous project was an example of how local elected officials used their combined efforts and alignment of interests to advance economic development of the province, with each institution contributing complementary strengths.

Discussion of the railroad coming to Kazan began as early as the 1840s. Beginning in August 1868 with the government decree requesting that city councils determine the place for railroad stations, the first proposals for the Southern-Siberian railroad line to go through Kazan were made. The decree also prompted serious discussions about the trans-Siberian railroad in the 1870s. As the minutes from the city duma meetings regarding the expansion of the railroad to Kazan indicate, at times the debates among elected members were heated and contentious. The head of the duma took his guidance from the resolution of these debates, and along with the elected deputies represented Kazan not only at the local level, but also at the imperial level, keeping local interests in the foreground.

The Kazan city duma then established a commission of ten elected members headed by the gorodskoi golova. The commission was supplemented by non-elected technical experts in January 1876 to determine the location of the railway station and the port that would connect Kazan to the overall railway network. Despite their work and the efforts of those who

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448 Mel’nikov, 19 let na zemskoi službe, 201.
449 E. V. Cherniak, and A. B. Madiiarov, Gorodskoe samoupravlenie v Kazani (1870-1892 gg.) (Kazan: Dom pechaty, 2003), 104.
petitioned on behalf of the various routes, plans for further expansion of the railroad were
delayed by the Russo-Turkish war in 1877-1878.

When the government returned to the question of building the trans-Siberian railroad in
the early 1880s, representatives of Ufa had intensified their efforts to promote the building of the
railroad through their city. The zemstvo railroad committee was then formed in Kazan in 1883
to advance the personal and public interests of the province in the debate about future routes; two
university professors – N. A. Osokin and S. M. Shpilevskii – made presentations during the first
meeting of the committee held on February 2.

In 1884, another petition in support of the inclusion of Kazan was sent from the
province’s nobility, zemstvo, duma, and stock market. In the end of 1884, the Committee of
Ministers (Komitet ministrov) accepted plans for the Siberian railway to go through Samara, Ufa,
and Zlatoust. 450 This was a tremendous blow to Kazan, and the petitions from the city
intensified. Professor N. A. Osokin, having already developed a plan to connect Kazan with
Murom, and in so doing connecting it to the Moscow-Nizhni Novgorod railroad, provided an
alternative at the joint emergency session of the nobility, zemstvo, and city duma at the end of
1884. 451 Among the elected members of the city duma for the term from 1883 to 1887 were M.
M. Azimov, M. A. and Iu. M. Apanaev, M. I. Galeev, Z. U. Usmanov, and M. I. Iunusov,
prominent members of Tatar merchant families. Ia. F. Shamov and S. S. Chetvergov, of
prominent Old Believer families, were also members. 452 Given the business interests of these
families, their involvement in the city duma placed them directly in a position to advance their
interests along with those of the zemstvo and the province as a whole.

450 N. P. Zagoskin, Sputnik po Kazani (Kazan: Tipo-litografiia Imperatorskogo universiteta, 1895), 528.
451 Ibid., 529.
452 Cherniak and Madiiarov, Gorodskoe samoupravlenie v Kazani, 119-123.
The alternate plan – the Murom-Kazan line – however, was also initially rejected by the government, although the group did gain permission for the line to be built if private funds from private railroad societies or individual industrialists could be raised; no funds would be provided from the government and no government funds were to be borrowed for those purposes. In light of this, the duma gave permission for the gorodskoi golova to conduct discussions with private investors and railroad societies to very little initial effect. Kazan’s leaders had to redouble their efforts.

In March 1889, the gorodskoi golova, S. V. D'iachenko, was sent to St. Petersburg to discuss the situation with the government. The reply he received was again that private funds should be found because there was very little chance that the line would soon be built with government funds since the Murom-Kazan line did not have strategic significance to the empire. Mel’nikov reports that the group found a means of both demonstrating the need for a freight bridge over the Volga, and for ensuring that the project would not only be financed, but also supported by the government. Realizing that it was difficult to justify that the bridge, estimated to cost some 10 million roubles, should be built if it was to benefit Kazan alone, the group decided to emphasize the further connection of the proposed rail line to Ekaterinburg; in this way the bridge would benefit not only Kazan, but Ekaterinburg, and all of the trade to and from Siberia. This argument was supported by one of the largest private railroad entrepreneurs, Nikolai Karlovich von Meck. Further, to ensure that the bridge would be supported by the government and would actually be built “no later than 1913,” the members of the zemstvo assembly, considered the upcoming 300th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty and decided to

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453 D’iachenko was again sent to St. Petersburg in 1890 for four months to press for Kazan’s inclusion in the railroad network.
454 Cherniak and Madiiarov, Gorodskoe samoupravlenie v Kazani, 107.
455 Mel’nikov, 19 let na zemskoi sluzhbe, 201. Private funders estimated the cost of the bridge to be six million roubles. Cherniak and Madiiarov, Gorodskoe samoupravlenie v Kazani, 108.
name the bridge over the Volga the “Romanov” bridge – to which the Tsar has agreed.\textsuperscript{456} This
dual strategy of underscoring the economic and political significance of the Murom-Kazan rail
line demonstrates the political savvy of the elected members of the zemstvo together with those
of the duma to successfully advocate for their joint goal.

A closer look at the records of the Kazan city duma also demonstrates how the more local
goals – those of Kazan itself – were discussed, and how the priorities of the members differed
reflecting the difficulties in reaching consensus. On August 17, 1890, during the XIX session of
the duma, two options for the location of the Kazan station for the Murom-Kazan railroad line
were discussed, following the report by Viazemzkii, the head of the expedition to excavate the
proposed route. One option for the station was the \textit{Igumnova sloboda} and the second location
proposed was the \textit{Tatarskaia sloboda}.\textsuperscript{457} Prominent duma member D. I. Obraztsov stated during
the session that the first option was not acceptable because it “did not meet the wishes and the
needs of the city of Kazan.”\textsuperscript{458} One of the primary reasons for this was that it was located seven
\textit{versts} from the center of the city,\textsuperscript{459} which would be inconvenient and expensive for those
transporting freight as well as being inconvenient for passengers.\textsuperscript{460} Also, the \textit{Igumnova sloboda}
would not have made a good station option because it was separated from the city by an area that
was often flooded by the Volga and Kazanka rivers.\textsuperscript{461} Were the station to be located between
the \textit{Tatarskaia sloboda} and the city, it could be connected to the horse-drawn tram line that could
take goods and passengers into the city. Duma deputy K. A. Iushkov sounded a more cautionary
note by reminding the members of the duma of the extremely difficult financial situation of the

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{456} Mel’nikov, \textit{19 let na zemskoi službhe}, 201.
\textsuperscript{457} “Protokol XIX zasedaniia Kazanskoi gorodskoi dumy avgusta 17 dnia 1890 goda,” in \textit{Protokoly zasedanii Kazanskoi gorodskoi dumy za 1890 god} (Kazan: Tipografiia N. A. II’iashenko, 1890), 734.
\textsuperscript{458} Ibid., 735.
\textsuperscript{459} One versta was equal to 3,500 feet or just over 1 kilometer.
\textsuperscript{460} “Protokol XIX zasedaniia,” 736.
\textsuperscript{461} Zagoskin, \textit{Sputnik po Kazani}, 556.
\end{footnotes}
city, which did not allow for the realization of these plans. Instead, he warned, the duma was speeding up plans and starting too many projects before financing had been secured. He stated in a matter-of-fact fashion that the budgets would have to be cut to make any of the plans possible. Moreover, Iushkov cautioned the duma members that fighting over the location of the station would not solve the fundamental problem. N. E. Baratynskii followed these statements by saying that in his opinion, the task of the duma during that session was not necessarily to determine which of the two proposed locations was best, but to determine which location in general would better address the economic needs of the city. It was based on this criterion, proposed by Baratynskii, that a third option was presented at the conclusion of the discussion: the station could be located somewhere near the Grivka sloboda. Further work would need to be done, however, to secure sufficient financing and ensure the availability of city land for the station.

During the September 28, 1890 session of the Kazan city duma, the question of the location of the station again arose. N. A. Osokin suggested in his remarks that during the August 17 session the duma members unanimously agreed that given the importance of the industrial and trade needs of the city, the station should be built in the city not far from the Novo-Tatarskaia sloboda and near the Grivka sloboda. Baratynskii, however, disagreed and stated that “It would be a mistake to consider the resolution of the August 17 session of the duma unanimous, since three of the deputies present maintained a different opinion.” Namely, the location of the station was still under consideration, and more importantly, financing had not yet

462 “Protokol XIX zasedaniia,” 739-742.
463 Ibid., 742-744.
464 Ibid., 750.
465 “Protokol XX zasedaniia Kazanskoii gorodskoi dumy sentiabria 28 dnia 1890 goda,” in Protokoly zasedanii Kazanskoii gorodskoi dumy za 1890 god (Kazan: Tipografia N. A. Il’iashenko, 1890), 761.
466 Ibid., 763.
467 Ibid., 764.
been secured. Obraztsov was among those who disagreed with the implication that the duma members had reached consensus about the location of the station.\textsuperscript{468} While an agreement had not been reached in August, one was reached a month later. At the conclusion of the September 28 discussion, it was agreed that should the railway station be built near the \textit{Tatarskaia sloboda}, the city duma could commit 50,000 roubles, but the remainder of the funds would need to be found from private sources, including those who would profit from the trade brought by the railroad.\textsuperscript{469}

In January of 1891, D’iachenko was still in St. Petersburg attempting to ensure that the railroad line would be built. He sent a telegram back to the Kazan city duma explaining the difficulties of attempting to negotiate a connection for Kazan to the railroad. D’iachenko relayed that the government had declined to invest in the rail line from Kazan to Murom, but that the private society that was supporting the construction of the line from Moscow to Riazan agreed to connect Kazan, although the final leg would have to be a ferry crossing over the Volga instead of a railroad bridge. D’iachenko asked that the duma decide whether or not they wanted him to stay in St. Petersburg and advocate for this option.\textsuperscript{470} He did remain in St. Petersburg until the final decision was made by the government and confirmed by the tsar to support this line.

The line was indeed built with the considerable help of many private investors, including Kazan’s industrialists, merchants, and nobles – many of whom were elected officials – who had joined forces to represent their own interests and those of the economic development of the province to ensure that Kazan was successful in being a main stop on the expanding imperial railroad.\textsuperscript{471} Together these deputies and other experts sought to secure the economic position of

\textsuperscript{468} Ibid., 765.
\textsuperscript{469} Ibid., 772.
\textsuperscript{470} Cherniak and Madiiarov, \textit{Gorodskoe samoupravlenie v Kazani}, 108.
Kazan and the entire province and to resort revenues lost to other cities as the railroad lines bypassed them. The tremendous cooperative efforts on behalf of the province were successful regardless of, or perhaps due to, the personal interests of the elected members of the provincial zemstvo and the reformed city duma, along with those of the existing institutions of the estate assemblies them. The first trains pulled into Kazan on June 15, 1894; the train station used by passengers to this day was opened in 1898. On May 25, 1913, in time for the 300th anniversary of the ruling dynasty, the Romanov rail bridge over the Volga was opened for use.

The Right Decision Made by the Wrong Person: A Case from the City Duma of Chistopol’

Service for the greater economic good of the province was not the only motivation for some elected officials to the province’s city dumas as well as to the zemstvos. Personal interests alone motivated Chistopol’ city duma deputy, Merchant Ivan Koz’min Susloparov. On November 23, 1895, the Chistopol’ gorodskoi golova, Avgust Ivanov Burger, opened the session of the city duma and on his own authority expelled Susloparov from the group of duma deputies allegedly due to Susloparov’s loss of eligibility qualifications because he transferred his property, a store, to another individual. Over the next several years in a long, extended case, Susloparov sought to have his right to serve as duma deputy in Chistopol’ reaffirmed, appealing as far as to the Governing Senate in St. Petersburg. His case was one of more than simply verifying property qualifications, it reveals how and why people may have chosen to serve, and the long process of appeals open to those who chose to pursue what they viewed as their rights, even when those rights were pursued based on self-interest.

472 Cherniak and Madiiarov, Gorodskoe samoupravlenie v Kazani, 109-110.
The case of Susloparov is important to examine because it illustrates several essential points about the electoral procedures of the Reform period: first, it illuminates how the entire complaint and appeals processed occurred, including local and imperial authorities; second, it demonstrates both the official as well as perceived practical matters of jurisdiction involving individuals and the duma assembly as a body; and, third, it brings to the fore the question of rights of participation and rights of service granted through electoral procedures, even when the qualitative outcome of those procedures is less than ideal – rights granted through procedural accuracy overruled actions taken in an effort to do what was perceived (at least by one elected official) as the morally right thing to do. The case of one Susloparov, therefore, serves to raise several questions about rights, jurisdictions, and the power of electoral procedures; the spirit versus the letter of the law. These issues would be raised repeatedly in the context of local elections throughout the Reform period, indicating a qualitative change in the local electoral culture even while the details of technical electoral procedure remained similar to that which preceded the 1860s.

Susloparov opened his written complaint to the governor about having been expelled from the Chistopol’ duma on November 23 by objecting to Burger’s personal decision to exclude him from among the duma deputies. Susloparov stated that the city duma did not concur with Burger’s decision and did not accept responsibility for it. Susloparov then rebutted Burger’s claim that he had lost his qualifications to serve as a deputy because of his property ownership status. Susloparov stated that his trade business in the city of Chistopol’ did not actually close down, and further he stated that he had been a member of the second merchant guild continuously for nine years for which he had guild certificates. Further, he had receipts for payment of his guild fees required for trade and industrial entrepreneurs. Burger, the gorodskoi
golova, did not accept this evidence and Susloparov, “to avoid further confrontation,” gave in during that duma session and left.\textsuperscript{473}

Susloparov’s formal complaint continued by citing the technical lines of official responsibility, jurisdiction, and authority of the gorodskoi golova, duma deputies as individuals, and the duma deputies as an assembly. He stated that the gorodskoi golova did not have the authority to personally remove him as a duma deputy and that this responsibility lay solely with duma members themselves. Proper consideration of Susloparov’s removal required that the matter be officially added to the duma agenda and then discussed by the full duma before a decision could be taken by the assembly. That was not done, Susloparov reported, which meant that the duma could not consider the issue. Instead, Burger refused to open the issue for discussion and he took full personal responsibility for the matter. Susloparov also objected to Burger’s actions because of the public questioning of his trade qualifications amounting to slander, which affected his credit worthiness. Burger not only overstepped his authority in terms of duma procedures, Susloparov claimed, he also overstepped ethical bounds by slandering him. Susloparov stated that if Burger’s logic were more broadly applied – namely that a duma deputy could be excluded at any point when his trade business may have reached a low point, then “half of the deputies of the Chistopol’ city duma (may be excluded) when their trade is temporarily reduced [such as] when a merchant sells all of his goods in advance of a big requisition of new (goods), or when accepting grain-related sales, which does not happen all year round.”\textsuperscript{474}

Based on this, Susloparov asked that the governor to declare the actions of Burger illegal and to hold him criminally responsible for abuse of authority. Further, Susloparov asked the governor to allow him to rejoin the sessions of the city duma, specifically because on December

\textsuperscript{473} NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 83, l. 1-3.
\textsuperscript{474} Ibid.
18, “the duma will consider (his) report on the opening of the Chistopol’ men’s gymnasium and that during the opening there will be a free reception for poor residents of the city,” and Susloparov found it “extremely desirable to participate and personally explain the necessity of opening a clinic for reducing diseases of the sick residents of the city.”

In response to Susloparov’s petition, the provincial bureau of zemstvo and city affairs asked for more information about the case from Burger himself.

A reply was forthcoming from Burger to the governor on December 19, 1895, which outlined the state of affairs regarding Susloparov in a quite different light.

1.) Chistopol’ second guild merchant Ivan Koz’min Susloparov has not had any homes for the last four years, as listed on the voter lists noted by the Chistopol’ city administration, as well as according to the registers (raskladnochnye vedomosti), nor on the voter lists based on communication from the senior notary of the Kazan regional court. Susloparov currently does not conduct trade that requires certification of the second guild.

2.) Regarding Susloparov, the former Viatka meshchanin and now Chistopol’ second guild merchant, came to Chistopol’ 15 years ago as a door-to-door salesman of Singer sewing machines. After a while, he opened a trade business in Chistopol’ in his own name and built a house, on the basis of which he ran for duma deputy, but in 1894, he sold his house and he transferred his store in an underground sales area. In October 1895, the time came for him to pay, and then Susloparov hid away from Chistopol’ and he sold his store to a peasant of Rybnaia sloboda, Tabdukov, and at that point he returned to Chistopol’ on the last steamship when the creditors had already gone back to Moscow. Regarding the transfer of the store, I learned about it only at the end of October, when one of Susloparov’s creditors came to ask me as the gorodskoi golova if I could tell him about Susloparov’s property. Then a sign above his store stating “- - former” written in small letters, was brought to my attention. In 1895, Susloparov was brought in for criminal activity for swindling, but as a smooth guy, he was able to extract himself from that situation. Susloparov’s credit notes from the banks are compromised: state and society banks are protesting and his credit in these institutions is closed. In such a case, a duma deputy Susloparov may use the title of deputy as a recommendation for his own interests as is seen in his complaint.

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475 Ibid.
3.) In light of what has been written above, and that which is governed by articles 24-59 of the city regulations, I fulfilled my proper obligation by excluding Susloparov from membership in the duma. It does not matter that Susloparov sent for a decision by the Governing Senate, since the authority for making a decision exists within the city regulation of 1870. 

4.) Susloparov fell into his position as a duma deputy by accident as he was elected as the last alternate and no one expected that he could one day become a duma deputy.

5.) Susloparov states that I did not add the question of his exclusion from membership in the duma to the agenda for discussion. … I was obligated to bring the question of exclusion of Susloparov from the list of duma deputies for discussion, and I did it, during the opening session of the duma.

Burger’s explanation of the relevant events indicates his own sense of what was best for the city duma in terms of the removal of Susloparov as deputy. While he cited the authority of the city regulations of 1870, he also cited his own dual authority as the gorodskoi golova and the chairman of the duma. Burger believed that his actions were definitive, regardless of Susloparov’s complaints and pending appeal to the governor. Susloparov believed otherwise.

On December 18, 1895, during the duma assembly, Susloparov took what he believed to be his rightful place among the Chistopol’ city duma deputies who had gathered in session to conduct their business, which included elections for members of the Chistopol’ housing tax commission (Chistopol’skoe po kvartirnomu nalogu prisutstvie). During the balloting for deputy Lukashevich, Susloparov noted that Burger did not call his name, nor that of another deputy, to cast their votes. At that point, Burger raised the question of Susloparov’s exclusion as deputy before the duma, explaining that the governor had informed him that Susloparov did not have appropriate qualifications since he no longer had his home – he was no longer qualified to be a duma deputy. Again, the duma did not accept the responsibility for his removal, and Burger

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476 In other words, the responsibility for such decisions rested with the local authorities and not with the Governing Senate.
477 NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 83, l. 7-8.
removed Susloparov on his own personal authority, which was inconsistent with the ruling of the Governing Senate – according to Susloparov – of November 22, 1873 and June 11, 1892.\textsuperscript{478}

The Chistopol’ district police chief reported to the governor in response to his request for information on the case that

Chistopol’ merchant of the second guild, Ivan Koz’min Susloparov, at the present time is serving as an agent in the insurance society, “Iakr,” and besides that he sells gold and silver things door-to-door; he does not have a permanent residence in Chistopol’ and also does not have any kind of trade-industry enterprise. Susloparov sold his store in the colonnade in Chistopol’ in May of 1895 to a peasant from the village of Rybnaia sloboda, Grigorii Nikiforov Tabukov, who manages it completely independently.\textsuperscript{479}

Susloparov relentlessly pursued his case, however, and on April 5, 1896 sent the governor a certificate from the inspector of Chistopol’ district no. 153 on the type and size of his trade enterprise, which requires selected documentation of membership in the second guild.\textsuperscript{480} The matter went on to the provincial bureau of zemstvo and city affairs in August 1897 and from the bureau to the Governing Senate in December 1897. The Senate, however, determined that the city duma was indeed the body that had the proper authority to determine the verdict of this case.\textsuperscript{481}

The journal of the Chistopol’ city duma of October 26, 1899, records the duma’s final decision about two related issues of this case: whether Ivan Koz’min Susloparov did indeed lose his right to be a duma deputy as a result of the change in property status, and whether or not he was wrongly dismissed from his position as duma deputy. The duma found that on one hand, gorodskoi golova Burger was correct that Susloparov, at the time he was excluded as a deputy in November 1895, had indeed given his house and his store to someone else thereby losing the

\textsuperscript{478} Ibid., l. 10-10ob.  
\textsuperscript{479} Ibid., l. 11.  
\textsuperscript{480} Ibid., l. 12.  
\textsuperscript{481} Ibid.
property qualifications that gave him the right to be a duma deputy. On the other hand, based on the city regulations of June 11, 1892, “the exclusion of a city duma deputy who has lost the right to participate in elections … may occur first only by decision of the duma upon discussion of the question that was added to the agenda.”482 In other words, it was true that merchant Ivan Susloparov did not meet the property requirement to maintain his position as a duma deputy and should have been removed from that position. However, the proper means of removing him was by decision of the city duma, upon having discussed the question that had been officially added to the agenda for discussion, not by the personal action of the gorodskoi golova serving as chairman of the duma. So, while Susloparov did succeed in proving his case against Burger four years later, the verdict came too late - his term of service had already expired.

Susloparov originally chose to serve as duma deputy, after having been elected as an alternate, most likely for reasons of personal interest. Yet, he was successful in arguing his case through the appeals process, taking his allegations against the gorodskoi golova all the way to the Governing Senate that ruled in his favor: Burger had exceeded his authority in removing him from his position as deputy.

This case illuminates the entire process of formal complaint, filed by someone who participated in or was interested in the elections. Further, it outlines the proper authority and jurisdiction to make decisions about a procedure and/or a qualification that, if not followed, would compromise the local elections. The decision as to whether or not to remove Suspolarov from his position was a decision reserved for the city duma itself, after discussion. The Senate, however, did not make the final determination - this was sent back to the local duma for final decision. Four years later, it was determined that the reason for the gorodskoi golova’s actions was correct – Susloparov didn’t have sufficient property any longer. But, he was not the right

482 Ibid., l. 26-28ob.
person to have acted on that information. As with the complaint, investigation, and appeal, the proper process of having excluded him from the duma in the first place was to have been followed. And, finally, following the procedure properly was paramount to acting on behalf of the perceived ‘right’ thing to do. Building on the years of experience gained in the decades prior to and after the Great Reforms, elected officials and those who participated in local administration through electoral institutions continued to find a means of balancing the adherence to process with what was understood to be the best decisions and actions for the institution or community.

**Kazanskii birzhevoi listok and Volzhskii vestnik:**
Local Press as Political Commentary

Kazan had a sizable number of local newspapers that served to provide all manner of local and international news and information, trade and finance statistics, local social news, and cultural and literary information as well as a host of advertisements. In addition, the local newspapers offered a forum for opinions and commentary by local residents on a variety of issues from the lack of provision of public services, to congratulatory summaries of the long careers of local elected officials. Having read through many of these newspapers, illustrative articles from *Kazanskii birzhevoi listok* and *Volzhskii vestnik* provide a useful glimpse of the atmosphere in Kazan province during the era of the Great Reforms. Further, this glimpse provides additional insights into the electoral process, elected officials, and the activities of the elected institutions.

Published from 1868-1892, the Kazan newspaper *Kazanskii birzhevoi listok* served as a primary means of not only disseminating basic information about the provinces’ zemstvos and the city dumas, including meeting summaries, calls for elections, and the results of those
elections, but also about the social, economic, and political life of Kazan. The pages of Kazanskii birzhevoi listok also contained sharp criticism about the activities of local zemstvos, and other perceived societal problems, including the lack of sufficient stipends for students. While at times this criticism was indirect, it was no less unmistakable, challenging both original readers and historians to consider the success of the zemstvos and the honesty of those elected to serve in the zemstvos. Criticism of zemstvo elections was also seen on the pages of Kazanskii birzhevoi listok. Conversely, through examples from abroad and from Kazan province, the positive work of elected officials was also provided on the pages of another of Kazan’s prominent newspapers, Volzhskii vestnik.

By the 1880s, more than a decade of experience with the province’s zemstvos allowed for evaluation of their performance. Serving as a means of forming, reflecting and disseminating public opinion, Kazanskii birzhevoi listok published an article on January 4, 1886, entitled, “The results of the Viatka zemstvo for 1885.” The article was particularly critical of the work of the zemstvo, which was similar to the work that Mel’nikov and Freze and others had been so dedicated. Opening with the cry, “Dreams, dreams, where is your sweetness!!” (”Mechty, mechy, gde vasha sladost’!!”), the article continues for multiple columns, outlining the failings of the zemstvo. “The number of schools is 10 times less than normal, educating one of ten children of school age, there is one doctor and one hospital for 60-100,000 people, which addresses only 1/10th of the demand, and for the improvement of the economic situation, nothing has been done.” One could be more accepting if the work was progressing even slowly, the unnamed author said, but this was not the case: “One cannot say this about the zemstvo.”

483 “Itogi Viatskago zemstva za 1885 g.,” Kazanskii birzhevoi listok, January 4, 1886, 2.
484 Ibid.
485 Ibid.
486 Ibid.
authors of the article attribute this state of affairs, in part, to the fact that the “majority of the best deputies left the scene, and were eliminated; the Razuvaevs and the Derunovs have taken their place – men with wolf-like appetites.”\textsuperscript{487} This was in contrast to the description about the initial years of the zemstvo that opened the article: “Many bright hopes were attached at one point to the zemstvo; what broad plans, what tempting dreams were fed to the deputies at the opening of the zemstvo. This was the first manifestation of our society’s self-governance (obshchestvennaia samodeiatel’nost’).”\textsuperscript{488}

This article about the Viatka zemstvo was followed immediately by the section entitled, “Local Section.” The lead item in that section was the “Extraordinary session of the city duma,” which was reported to have met with 25 people in attendance to discuss whether or not representatives of the city society should participate in the burial of professor N. A. Vinogradov, as well as seven other administrative matters.\textsuperscript{489} There was no mention of the performance of the Kazan provincial zemstvo for the previous year, nor of the duma, however the hard-hitting criticism of the Viatka zemstvo followed immediately by the simple announcement of the duma’s agenda seem to lead the reader to at least question the actions of the local Kazan institutions.

The article criticizing the Viatka zemstvo concluded in the January 5, 1886 edition of the \textit{Kazanskii birzhevoi listok}.\textsuperscript{490} The article closes with an even more direct tone than did part one: “No good impressions were made on me by the annual review, there is very little that is good, there is much more that is poor.”\textsuperscript{491} The author wonders whether there “will ever be anything better, and whether there will be those who are honest, energetic, and who fight for the wellbeing

\textsuperscript{487} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{488} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{489} “Ekstrennoe zasedanie gorodskoi dumy,” \textit{Kazanskii birzhevoi listok}, January 4, 1886, 2.
\textsuperscript{490} “Itogi Viatskago zemstva za 1885 g.,” \textit{Kazanskii birzhevoi listok}, January 5, 1886, 2.
\textsuperscript{491} Ibid.
of the people, and whether the zemstvo sun will shine and warm the best of the Viatka peasantry!

Does the reader believe this is possible? The author concludes with a prediction that perhaps only half of it would be accomplished.

On January 9, 1886, the criticism of the work of the Viatka zemstvo continued in another article published as a series, “Insufficiencies of Viatka statistics” (“Nedostatki Viatskoi statistiki”), analyzing the recently-released volume of zemstvo statistics. The unnamed author(s) of the articles begins with direct criticism of the work. “The first thing that catches one’s eye is the incomplete and unfinished nature of the work of the research of even the first district, moreover, the pure quality of the data … is not high; likewise, the analysis of the data regarding the economic situation and the conditions of peasant agriculture is minimal and incomplete, and in particular the description of industry (promyslov) is almost absent.” The article concludes in the January 10, 1886 addition of Kazanskii birzhevoi listok, and was followed by an article critical of the lack of support provided to students who were struggling to survive in Kazan on miserly stipends; again this placement of articles back to back may have been an attempt to lead the reader to a critical analysis of the present economic and social situation in need of attention.

In addition to these articles critical of the zemstvo activities and those who were elected to serve in the zemstvos, there were also several articles, which commented directly on the elections themselves, many of them even more critical than those referring to the activities of the zemstvo.

492 Ibid.
493 “Nedostatki Viatskoi statistiki,” Kazanskii birzhevoi listok, January 9, 1886, 2.
494 Ibid.
495 “Nedostatki Viatskoi statistiki,” Kazanskii birzhevoi listok, January 10, 1886, 2.
496 “Nabroski i nedomolvki,” Kazanskii birzhevoi listok, January 10, 1886, 2.
Politics, it seems, has always been dirty. At least this is what author Karp Skakunenko described in his article recounting the elections involving Zinov’ev and Smirnov to the Koz’modem’iansk zemstvo, published on September 17, 1881 in the *Kazanskii birzhevoi listok*. An article published by the *Kazanskii birzhevoi listok* seven days earlier, Skakunenko said, just flung mud in the face of the honest deputies by calling those elected “heroes.” The elections were allegedly “bought (podkupleny) and improper.” Evidence of this, according to Skakunenko, was the fact that Smirnov was not even permitted onto the ballot. Having provided further impressions of the elections, Skakunenko concluded by stating that he was able through his article, to shed light on the problem of the election and that hopefully by bringing this to the public’s attention, there would no longer be any means of secretly influencing the elections. In this respect Skakunenko’s article was another form of participation in elections and complaining about those improprieties observed. It is also further evidence of the fact that not all people who were elected to the zemstos did so honestly or for honest reasons.

On July 2, 1892, a candidate (not named) for a locally-elected office (also not named – although presumed to be a local zemstvo election) published the candidate’s views about the Voting Manifesto of Irishman Gladstone on the pages of *Volzhskii vestnik*. Gladstone’s Manifesto calls for “one person, one vote,” to become the basis for elections, which the Kazan candidate whole heartedly supported. In quoting the last line of Gladstone’s Manifesto, he asked voters for their support in the upcoming elections: “even given these (voting) constraints that lay before me, I hope that with the help of all, I will be in the position to not only ensure the

497 While the article does not specifically confirm that this is the same Zinov’ev as the colleague of Mel’nikov about whom he writes in his memoirs, there is reason to believe that he was because he came from the same district, and was involved in local elections.
499 Ibid.
500 “Izbiratel’nyi manifest Gladstona,” *Volzhskii vestnik*, July 2, 1892, 3.
completion of our work, but also the strength of our work, if only your opinion has not changed.” Through the Irish Manifesto, the Kazan candidate’s manifesto articulates clearly his understanding of his role as an elected official, and the importance of voting – so important, in fact, that the existing voting rules should be changed to one person, one vote. The *Volzhskii vestnik* was the means by which this candidate communicated with the public and his potential voters.

Not all elected officials, however, appreciated the local press. In an article in *Volzhskii vestnik* of March 22, 1892, Kazan city duma deputy Obraztsov, the one who played an important role in advocating for the connection of Kazan to the railroad, is noted to have had a particularly negative attitude toward the local press. Such an attitude, the article notes, was nothing new. “Practically from the first day of the activities of the city self-government, deputies of the duma not once expressed their discontent with the discussion of their public service in the local press.” In particular, Obraztsov was frustrated with what he took to be mischaracterizations and intentional omissions from the summaries of the duma assembly discussions published in the *Kazanskii birzhevoi listok*. While others, like duma deputy K. A. Iushkov, suggested that the way to address this issue was for “local papers to print the reports of the sessions of the duma in no other way than from the minutes.” Obraztsov was against this suggestion because, “while it may be preferable to print the minutes in full, at the same time it is not permissible to withhold the actions of the duma that should be known by all.”

The unnamed author(s) of the article went on to state that while there were no official objections listed in the duma minutes to these suggestions to print the minutees in full, there

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501 Ibid.
503 Ibid.
504 Ibid. Emphasis in the original. The original *Volzhskii vestnik* article cites specific minutes from the book compiling minutes of 1887 duma meetings.
were cases where there were indirect objections to what was published in the local press. An example provided by the newspaper article’s author(s) was that of a discussion in March 1891 about the city’s forests. Deputy V. M. Kliuchnikov raised the question of preparing firewood, and this was reported in *Volzhskii vestnik*. I. V. Riabchikov, was very upset, however, with this report because *Volzhskii vestnik* also published his own words regarding Kliuchnikov’s report: “Coming will be a report on the preparation of firewood; everyone knows that dogs bark at everyone.” Not everything that was recorded in the minutes of the city duma was fit to print— at least not according to those who wished for their statements at the sessions to remain out of the public domain. Others, however, felt that bringing those statements to the public was precisely the point. Local politics (whether motivated by the newspaper editors’ desire to inform the public or by one deputy’s desire to slander another) was aired through the local press, at times, the more distasteful aspects of the realities of the local elected institutions came unfiltered to the public.

At other times, however, the local press could be extremely complimentary of elected officials. On August 6, 1899, the *Volzhskii vestnik* published a letter to the outgoing gorodskoi golova, S. V. D’iachenko, who was largely responsible for the successful connection of Kazan to the imperial railroad. The newspaper chronicled the 12 years of elected service by D’iachenko, noting not only his success in terms of connecting Kazan to places beyond the province, but also for improving health care, education, trade conditions, and sanitation in the city. He was well-respected and well liked, so much so, that there was scarcely a negative thing to be said about his

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505 Ivan Riabchikov was involved in a dispute five years later (in 1896) regarding a series of elections in the meshchansko obshchestvo. See following chapter in this dissertation for the entire election complaint and resolution.

506 “Glasnye Dumy i mestnaia pressa,” 2. Emphasis in the original. The original *Volzhskii vestnik* article cites specific minutes from 1891, “directly” (bukval'no).
long term. The author of the tribute article closed by noting that it would be hard to elect a new person who could serve with such distinction.507

The picture of Kazan’s local elected institutions that emerges from the pages of the local press is one of at times disagreement and disrespect, which is consistent with that which emerges from the memoirs of Mel’nikov and the officially filed election complaints. The elected officials of Kazan province served for a variety of reasons, not all of them were for the welfare of the local community. Rather, the emergent picture of elected officials and the work of the elected institutions was more complex – at times, in particular with regard to efforts to secure Kazan’s position on the imperial railroad network, there was considerable cooperation, and at other times, there were contentious relations among members and with parts of the local community. Taken together, this complex picture enriches our understanding not only of how and why elections and electoral politics occurred on the local level in the second half of the nineteenth century, it also contributes to a better understanding of how locally elected institutions operated in a diverse and evolving context.

**CONCLUSION**

The Great Reforms, which began with the emancipation of over 22 million peasants in 1861 and continued with the establishment of provincial and district zemstvos in 1864 and the reform of city dumas in 1870, radically changed the urban and rural landscapes of the central provinces of the empire. While these Reforms have been studied by numerous scholars, the roots of the electoral procedures that were essential to these institutions, however, have not been extensively analyzed previously. The chapter began this analysis by examining in detail the complaints of those who participated in local elections to the zemstvos and to city dumas of

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Kazan province. These complaints were particularly important to the electoral process, not only because they aired the concerns of voters and corrected potential electoral errors, but also – and perhaps even more importantly - because it was through the process of determining how to deal with electoral irregularities that the procedures themselves became more refined when the law was notoriously vague. By following the procedures of complaints through to resolution, precedents were formed, which allowed for the electoral processes to become even more firmly rooted in actual practices. Largely resolved locally, these complaints demonstrate the limited role of the governor in interfering with the activities of the zemstvo and the city duma, and their elections in particular.

As the complaints themselves indicate, the proper implementation of procedures that were to ensure representation and participation on one hand, and the importance of those procedures reflecting the spirit of participation on the other, was paramount to voters of the province. At times there were apparent tensions between these twin goals of electoral processes, for example when the proper implementation of established electoral procedures resulted in the election of a less-than-optimal candidate, and when the specified indirect electoral procedures for peasant voters not only failed to provide for full enfranchisement, but also resulted in electoral errors.

Determining who had the right to vote and to be elected and why, was not as easy as one might imagine by examining the official statutes. Rather, local issues of religion, property ownership, and other considerations affected the means by which elections occurred locally. Also of importance was the negotiation of the realities of daily life, including the loss of property

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508 The issue of the ambiguities in the electoral statutes was also raised in M. A. Korf, “Otnoshenie glavnoupravliaiushchego II otdeleniem sobstvennoi ego imperatorskogo velichestva kantseliarii k ministru vnutrennikh del ot 6 maia 1863 g.,” in Materialy po zemskomu obschestvennomu ustroistvu, tom 2 (St. Petersburg, 1886), 453.
due to fire, the desire to retain the service of a well-respected elected official, or conversely, the perceived need to end the service of a less-than-respected elected official. The means by which the people of Kazan province balanced the practicalities of procedural accuracy and the welfare of the community reflected the fact that the local elections of Kazan province were both rooted in previous practices that provided experience and also embodied many new expressions of the changing political culture.

This chapter has also attempted to address, through examination of memoirs and local newspapers, not only how elected officials were elected and how they served, but why they served. The picture that emerges from this combination of sources and perspectives is one of a new context of the Great Reforms, in which existing electoral procedures were employed to elect officials to the new zemstvo institutions and the reformed city dumas. The familiarity of those procedures provided a foundation to aid in the conduct of these new elections. Yet, these elections, even if similar in process to previous elections, were also invested with political meaning that was only beginning to emerge prior to the Great Reforms.

The electoral procedures followed during the elections for the new institutions to a significant extent were built upon past experience. Participation was expanded and local elections qualitatively changed in the Great Reform period as illustrated by the issues raised in the complaints filed by voters in these new elections. Specifically, these issues were the importance of proper implementation of procedures in practice to ensure representation and participation on one hand, and the importance of those procedures reflecting the spirit of participation on the other. At times there were apparent tensions between these twin goals of electoral processes, for example when the proper implementation of established electoral procedures resulted in the election of a less-than-optimal candidate, and when the specified
indirect electoral procedures for peasant voters not only failed to provide for full
enfranchisement, but also resulted in electoral errors. The actual cases presented throughout this
chapter provide concrete examples of how the technical electoral procedures, many of which
were rooted in previous practices and implemented in the new context of the Great Reforms,
reflected a substantial change in electoral culture as a result of those Reforms.
CHAPTER IV

LOCAL ELECTIONS CONTINUE THROUGHOUT GREAT REFORM PERIOD:
ELECTORAL CULTURE EVOLVES IN EXISTING INSTITUTIONS

Electoral procedures within local secular as well as religious institutions that existed prior to the introduction of the Great Reforms, remained relatively unchanged in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, the political, economic and social landscape in Kazan province, and in much of the Russian Empire, profoundly changed as a result of expanded participation in the local administrative institutions of the zemstvo and the reformed city duma as well as by the other reforms. As a result of these fundamental changes, the sentiments of those voters who participated in elections at existing local institutions, as expressed through complaints filed in regard to elections to estate assemblies, the Orthodox Church, and other administrative positions, had also evolved considerably from those expressed earlier in the nineteenth century.

These sentiments, articulated through complaints about elections to this broad group of institutions highlighted the concern among voters about rights of participation, and on what bases they were determined – whether on the basis of religion, property ownership, paying dues, being a good member of a community, or ethnicity. Further, matters of jurisdiction, the right not to serve, and the legitimacy of the electoral process were also of concern to the voters, as articulated in their complaints. When seen together, they reveal a growing interest in elections not only as a means of filling needed positions, but also of political participation, and therefore who participates and why is of great interest. Some, of course, were interested for reasons other than the public good. Yet, even when personal or group interests influenced the outcomes of elections, and when the validity of elections was challenged, use of elections themselves as the mechanism of choosing representatives was not challenged; the majority of the requests for
action seen in the complaints was for elections to be rerun, while at other times, even when the result was less than desirable, if the processes and procedures were properly followed, the elections themselves stood.

Influenced by the changing political atmosphere of the Great Reform era and by the newly-established institutions of self-government, the elections to existing institutions including the estate assemblies, the Russian Orthodox Church, and other local positions continued while reflecting the significant change in political sentiments of the new times.

**CONTINUING ELECTIONS TO ESTATE ASSEMBLIES**

Estate assemblies played a critical role in the development of electoral procedures and practices throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As the institutions that collectively included the largest number of people in the experience of elections over several generations, the estate assemblies, including the merchant, noble, meshchanstvo, and craftsman societies in many respects were the broadest base of electoral experience in Kazan province both prior to and following the implementation of the Great Reforms. They provided the means by which individuals and groups were involved in the electoral process, revealing much about their views of rights, participation, jurisdiction and the validity of the electoral process. In so doing, their complaints further reflect the extent to which local voters’ views had evolved over the course of the multiple decades that they had been involved in local elective institutions. While continuously evolving, existing electoral procedures continued. Along with the procedures, electoral sentiments also evolved in a perhaps surprisingly broad range of local secular and religious institutions, most frequently in the estate assemblies to which we now turn.
The Merchants of Kazan Province

Kazan’s merchants were prominent not only within the province, but also throughout the empire. They managed a large portion of the trade of the empire, especially that coming from and through the east and the south. Long-standing trade ties within and outside the empire promoted this strong economic position, as did other factors including family, ethnic and religious ties that continued across many generations. These merchants were Russian and Tatar members of the guilds (*gil’deskoj kupechestvo*), as well as Old Believers and Jews, and those who were not part of the guild system. For centuries, as Alfred J. Rieber states, “On the Volga, and all along the thinly populated steppe frontiers of Western Siberia and Central Asia, Russian merchants struggled to hold their own against Tatar, Bashkir, and other local ethnic groups whose knowledge of the area and its languages and customs gave them formidable, often decisive, advantages.” 509 In the eighteenth century, the merchant activities of the Tatars were aided by the favorable policies of Catherine the Great, and “by mid-century, in the old Tatar city of Kazan Muslim merchants still represented 27% of the first guild, 31% of the second, and 35% of the third, for a total of 34% of the merchant population.” 510

The formation of capital among Kazan’s merchants centered around trade and profits from industrial production, including small-scale manufacturing, buying and selling, and monetary activities. 511 One of the most lucrative products was alcohol, and the monopoly over it allowed for mass capital accumulation. This predictably caused a long-running local struggle among various merchant families and groups to gain monopoly over this trade. 512

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510 Ibid.
512 Ibid., 212-217.
associated with this trade were the establishments that served alcohol, e.g. inns (traktiry). It was the responsibility of the Kazan city duma, however, to regulate the location of these establishments, and in 1877 they prohibited the opening of places that served alcohol near Muslim cemeteries.\textsuperscript{513}

Kazan’s merchants were actively involved in the Kazan city duma, the zemstvos, and other institutions of local self-government. Among the merchant families who played a prominent role in Kazan’s administration were the Dokuchaev, Zausailov, Unzhenin, Poduruev, Iunusov, and Aleksanrov families.\textsuperscript{514} They were able to participate in the development of local projects, including the connection of Kazan to the imperial railroad network. Many of these participants and their families stood to gain a great deal from their participation, in more ways than simply career enhancement; the railroad project alone was considerably lucrative.

The province’s mercantile was not only prominent in the capital city. The merchants of the city of Chistopol’, for example, formed a trading center that was rather different from that of the trading center of Kazan.\textsuperscript{515} The focus of merchant activity in that area was agriculture, in particular the trade of grain, including processed grains, the transportation and storage of grain, and milling. Tatar merchants primarily sold goods, including fabrics, leather items, tea, and sugar.\textsuperscript{516} In addition, profits from markets and small-scale trade activity also represented a significant portion of the city’s economy.\textsuperscript{517} Chistopol’ merchants of the first and second guilds were the main participants in this market trade, although the city’s meshchane and peasants also

\textsuperscript{513} Ibid., 216.
\textsuperscript{516} Ibid., 19.
\textsuperscript{517} Ibid., 17-18.
participated to a lesser extent.\textsuperscript{518} These merchants were primary trade contributors to the local budget.\textsuperscript{519}

Further, A. N. Zorin describes this trade, and the merchants who participated in it, as the primary drivers for economic development in the city of Chistopol’ in the second half of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{520} Among those prominent merchant dynasties of Chistopol’ were the Chelyshev, Shashin, Chukashev, Maklakov, Malan’ichev, Logutov, Poliakov, and Mel’nikov families.\textsuperscript{521}

Tatar merchants and entrepreneurs, along with Russian merchants, played a significant role in trade in the Volga and Ural regions, including in the city of Chistopol’. Among those Tatar merchants who were prominent in the economic development of the city in the era of the Great Reforms were Z. and R. Urazgil’deev, M-Z. Abdulvagapov, G. Kh. Urazgil’deev, Sh. Batyrshin, Z. S. Araslanov, and Kh. I. Akberdin.\textsuperscript{522} Many of these and other merchants from Chistopol’ were elected as gorodskoi golova, to various local administrative positions, and were active members of the Chistopol’ city duma and to the city board. They differed from the manchery of the city of Kazan in their influence in the city duma.

Their active participation in local merchant assembly elections and local administration indicated a considerable level of interest in being involved in local administration and local self-government. The electoral procedures, gradually established for the estate assemblies in the eighteenth century, were followed to a significant extent by the province’s nineteenth century merchants, albeit the complaints they filed reflected new Reform-era attitudes and desires for

\textsuperscript{518} Ibid., 18.
\textsuperscript{519} The predominance of the grain trade prompted local leaders to invest considerable time and effort in monitoring and tracking all aspects of the market. Gafiatullina, “Torgovo-ekonomicheskaia zhizn’ Chistopolia”, 5 and 15.
\textsuperscript{520} A. N. Zorin, Goroda i posady dorevoliutsionnogo Povolzh’ia (Kazan: Izdatel’stvo Kazanskogo universiteta, 2001), 151. For more information about the economic activity of the province, see 149-227.
\textsuperscript{521} Gafiatullina, “Torgovo-ekonomicheskaia zhizn’ Chistopolia,” 9.
\textsuperscript{522} These merchants were primarily members of the second guild, with the volume of trade no less than that of the members of the first guild. Ibid., 22.
rights of participation. The following archival cases examined below illuminate these new attitudes and sentiments through the words of Kazan’s merchant voters.

**Merchant Elections in the Reform Era: Examples from Specific Cases**

*In Russian-Tatar Merchant Society Only Orthodox Christians May Serve as Elders: No Muslims, No Jews, No Sectarians (officially that is)*

Elections for the elder and alternate elder of the Russian-Tatar merchant society were scheduled for January 1886. The out-going elder of the Kazan Russian merchant society, Aleksandr Mel’nikov (father of future prominent zemstvo and duma official N. A. Mel’nikov) wrote to the governor to inquire about what to do if a “Tatar is elected by ballot as elder or his alternate.” 523 Must the governor confirm the election of a Tatar to either of these positions, as stated in the regulations confirmed on September 16, 1885? 524 The governor replied that “since the merchant elder is the chairman of the merchant board and of the merchant assembly, no one can be elected as elder who is not of the Christian faith.” 525

Several months later the elections had not yet occurred, and in May 1886, the Kazan provincial board instructed the current Kazan merchant elder to collect all of the paperwork, books and documents from the former Tatar merchant elder and to schedule elections for a new merchant elder. 526 On June 12, 1886, an invitation was published in the local newspaper for all qualified merchants to participate in the elections for elder, alternate, and for one member and one alternate each for the Russian and Tatar orphans court to serve the term from 1886 to

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523 NA RT, f. 299, op. 1, d. 128, l. 1-1ob.
524 Ibid.
525 Ibid., l. 2-2ob.
526 Ibid., l. 3-3ob.
The elections in the Kazan merchant society were eventually held at the assembly on June 30, 1886, at which time merchant Krugovov [sic] was elected as the elder and merchant Latyshev was elected as the alternate elder.\(^{528}\) Given that Krugovov was Orthodox, the governor’s office did not need to confirm him in his position as elder.\(^{529}\)

In December 1889, the merchant elder Tarasov [sic] Rodionov wrote to the governor regarding the upcoming merchant elections to be held “based on the example of previous years’ elections in the merchant estate.”\(^{530}\) The elder wanted to clarify whether or not all of those who paid dues to the guild could be elected to the position of elder, although according to the electoral regulations, “a Muslim could not be elected as merchant elder.”\(^{531}\) Rodionov also wanted to confirm that, according to electoral regulations, “(in addition to Muslims), Jews should also be excluded since the responsibilities and obligations of the society performed by the representatives of the merchants must be in accordance” with the laws of the empire.\(^{532}\) In other words, Rodionov wanted to clarify that only those Christians who were part of the Russian Orthodox Church were to be elected to positions of leadership within the merchant estate. In particular, he was interested in clarifying how the exclusion of people of other religions could be

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\(^{527}\) Ibid., l. 5.  
\(^{528}\) As was the case in the first half of the century, elected officials often found that other commitments were more pressing than service. This was particularly true of Kazan’s merchants whose trade businesses demanded their full attention, leaving little time or energy to fulfill electoral obligations. The Nizhni Novgorod fair remained a very important trading location and many merchants were dependent on access to the trading opportunities provided by one of the empire’s dominant markets. This was true of alternate elder Latyshev who was to assume the responsibilities of elder on September 1, but on July 25, 1886, he informed the acting Kazan gorodskoi golova that he was leaving the next day for the fair, and requested to be relieved of his responsibilities until that time. This request was granted, but as of September 3, 1886, he had not returned to take his oath and commence his service. Ibid., l. 32-32ob and 35.  
\(^{529}\) Ibid., l. 28-29.  
\(^{530}\) NA RT, f. 299, op. 1, d. 164, l. 1-2.  
\(^{531}\) Ibid.  
\(^{532}\) Ibid.
consistent with the fact that all of these groups of people – regardless of religious affiliation – paid dues to the guild. If they paid dues, on what grounds were they to be excluded?\textsuperscript{533} 

In a letter of reply from the governor addressed to the merchant elder and dated December 29, 1889, the governor reminded the elder that all people who have the merchant title and guild certification, without regard to religion could in fact participate in local merchant society elections. Further, the governor added that women could also participate via personal representative (a proxy), although this required the purchase of proxy certificates that would give their male relatives their voice and vote.\textsuperscript{534} This guidance from the governor provided more ambiguity than clarity regarding the inclusion and exclusion of members, however. If the “laws of the empire” excluded them, yet they paid dues that should allow them to participate, and the governor confirmed that all should be able to participate, it was not clear which was the determining factor in their participation or exclusion.

The results of the elections seemed to confirm this ambiguity. On February 20, 1890, the merchant assembly elected Old Believer Efim Nikolaevich Pechnikov as elder and Orthodox Christian Iakov Semenovich Smolentsev as the alternate to the elder.\textsuperscript{535} These electoral results did not cause any concern among the members about the validity of the elections, and no one was reprimanded for having elected an Old Believer in the position of merchant elder.

Just as in the first half of the nineteenth century, even when the official imperial regulations governing the conduct of elections explicitly excluded certain groups of people from eligibility for elected office, people from those same groups were nonetheless often elected in Kazan province. This was particularly true for Old Believers and those from related sects. Local communities elected Old Believers, and often (either intentionally or unintentionally) omitted

\textsuperscript{533} Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{534} Ibid., l. 3-4. 
\textsuperscript{535} Ibid., l. 150.
these candidates’ religious affiliations from the ballot lists even when they were required to note their religion by electoral procedure.

Muslims were included as voters as well as candidates in local merchant assembly elections, although they were prohibited from holding particular posts, including that of merchant elder at the province level. They were excluded from these positions due to doubts about whether they could properly represent the estate as a whole. In the case of local institutions specifically designated as Tatar, they were, of course, included as candidates and voters at all levels. Yet, this seemingly clear separation of institutions along ethnic lines did not fully address the issue of broader representation: who was to represent the merchantry as a whole, as an estate, not just one group of the merchantry? In representing the merchantry collectively, Russian merchants were officially given preference over Tatar merchants, and this preference was typically honored by the local Kazan merchant society. Negotiation of local realities was more complex and less categorical than electoral statutes indicated, however. Local communities often found a way to balance ethnic and religious concerns, navigating among official as well as practical constraints of local political and administrative life.

“No Right to Refuse”: Elected Office as Service Requirement

On September 23, 1887, the Kazan orphans court sent a letter to the Kazan merchant elder reporting that merchant Andrei Alekseevich Ametevskii and alternate member, merchant Aleksei Andreevich Dubrovin, refused to fulfill their service obligations as elected members to the orphans court. In response to this letter, the acting merchant elder, Pavel Petrov, sent a letter to Ametevskii, who was a member of the Kazan city Russian orphans court and a Kazan merchant of the second guild, about his refusal to serve. According to “articles 617 and 647 of

536 NA RT, f. 299, op. 1, d. 128, l. 40.
volume 9 of the Code of Laws of 1876,” Ametevskii “did not have the right (ne vprave) to refuse to serve (and fulfill) [his] societal responsibilities to which [he was] elected; therefore [he] must assume [his] responsibilities.” Petrov also sent a similar letter to Dubrovin, again stating that Dubrovin did not have the right not to serve.  

On October 13, 1887, Ametevskii replied to Petrov, stating that

I cannot accept the responsibility of a member of the orphans court for the following reasons: I am alone and my trade business requires my personal oversight; my only helper, my wife, is sick. I do not have anyone to serve as my proxy; therefore regardless of my desire to fulfill the responsibilities placed on me as a member of the orphans court, I cannot. My trade business requires my personal involvement now, and also, I have to spend some of my time away from the city, so in order to accept this responsibility, I would have to take myself away from my business, which would be harmful. At the same time, I consider it necessary to inform you that I also serve as a churchwarden, which is also an elected position. In light of this, I have the honor of humbly asking you to explain to the Kazan merchant society my refusal to serve as a member of the orphans court.

Together with a letter sent by Dubrovin, in which he also stated that his trade business would suffer if he served as a member of the court, elder Petrov sent the comment by Ametevskii forward to the governor with a request for favorable consideration to dismiss the two from their elected positions. If this wasn’t possible, Petrov asked for permission to announce new elections to be held in the merchant society for a new three-year term for members and alternates to the Kazan city Russian orphans court.

The governor’s office replied that the “three-year term can only be terminated upon demonstration of hardship and long-term illness, therefore the arguments presented by (Ametevskii) and Dubrovin for dismissal from these positions, namely that of trade business, is

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537 Ibid., l. 40ob-41ob.
538 Ibid.
539 Ibid., l. 42-42ob.
540 Ibid., l. 46ob.
541 Ibid., l. 44.
not considered valid.”

The governor then agreed that alternates, “with the agreement of the (merchant society) members and with the consent of the provincial authorities,” could be released from service if the alternates had served for more than four months on the court. In a decree from the Kazan province board to the Kazan city Russian orphans court dated January 22, 1888, the matter was turned over to the merchant society for final decision on the dismissal of Ametevskii and Dubrovin, and on whether to hold new elections. On February 4, 1888, the merchant society met and decided:

Andrei Alekseevich Ametevskii should be dismissed, because without personal oversight, his trade business would suffer and because he serves as a member of the Kazan city duma and as churchwarden of the Kafedral’ni sobor. His alternate, Aleksei Andreevich Dubrovin, should be dismissed due to his continued illness. We, members of the Kazan merchant society, being in session in the house of the city society, upon hearing the above-mentioned reasons of merchants Ametevskii and Dubrovin, declare in their favor and therefore determine to dismiss them from service in the orphans court and confirm this in the present document with our signatures.

With this decision, the merchant society overturned the insistence of the Kazan orphans court that Ametevskii and Dubrovin “did not have the right not to serve.”

Several issues appear to arise from this case. First, as was by 1888 long established practice, the two who did not wish to serve officially filed their justifications for not wishing to serve - the demands of their trade business. As earlier in the century, trade was the livelihood of many merchants in Kazan and required constant attention and travel to sustain. This was well understood, and elder Petrov advocated on their behalf with the governor and with the court for favorable consideration of their requests for dismissal. The governor’s office, then, in returning

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542 Ibid., l. 49-50.
543 Ibid.
544 Ibid., l. 55.
545 Ibid., l. 56.
the decision back to the merchant society, in effect allowed the society to support two of its members. However, through the process of corresponding on the requests of the two merchants, the justification for their request officially shifted from one of ‘trade considerations’ to one of ‘illness that was such that service was not possible.’ Legally justifiable means were found for their dismissal when the actual reasons were not permissible according to law; the society supported its own members.

Further, the fact that merchant elder Petrov proposed a new round of elections to replace the two who could not serve is also revealing. Elections were the only means by which these positions could be filled, and therefore could be called when deemed necessary. This seems to indicate an acceptance and an endorsement of the local electoral process, although the results of the process were at times negotiated when needed for the overall benefit of the members of the merchant society, as in this case. In each of these aspects, the necessary steps in the electoral procedures followed were consistent with those of the pre-Reform period.

**Resetting the Clock: When Illness and Absence Disrupted Terms of Service**

As with the Spassk District Police Administration, the merchants of Kazan were also concerned about how to fill the position of member of the orphans court due to an illness-related absence. On March 8, 1896, elections were held in the Kazan merchant society for the Kazan merchant elder and alternates to serve on the Kazan orphans court. It was unclear, however, how to proceed with the elections for representative to the orphans court in 1896 because of events that had happened years earlier. In 1892, elections had been held for the merchant representative to the orphans court and Ivan Vasil’evich Kalashnikov had been elected to serve. However, in 1893, he became ill and could not serve out his term. Dmitri Akinfiev Goriunov had assumed
his place. The term was to have ended in 1895, but he remained in the position until 1896. The question then arose, should the new elections for a two-year term through 1898 be held so that they could be back on the regular cycle, or should the new term be set for three years as was originally intended.\textsuperscript{546}

The serving elder, Pechnikov, decided that the elections of 1896 would be for only two years, through 1898. Merchant Nikolai Ivanov Gvozdev together with Goriunov, however, in a letter of complaint to the governor, stated that the elections should be held for a three-year term and that an alternate should be elected as well.\textsuperscript{547} Gvozdev and Goriunov also stated that elder Pechnikov made a point of stating that a Muslim, Gizatullin Valiulla Gizatullovich, was elected in 1896, implying that it would be better to have a Muslim representative because all other current members were Russians.\textsuperscript{548}

In response to the governor’s request for further information, elder Pechnikov wrote that elections had already been attempted in 1895, but at the request of the Muslim society, the elections had been postponed because they specifically wanted a Muslim member of the orphans court and they had also requested additional remuneration for the Muslim representative. The Kazan city duma, on June 6 and 7, 1895, had allowed the merchant society to file a formal request to the government about this, but the society never actually followed through in filing formal requests until it had been determined whether a Muslim would serve or not. The decision was then made to wait until the merchant assembly in 1896 to hold the elections so that a new elder would also be elected. This meant that Gvozdev would also have to serve on the court an additional year, which prompted the questions about sequencing of elections.\textsuperscript{549}

\textsuperscript{546} NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 116, l. 1-1ob. 
\textsuperscript{547} Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{548} Ibid., l. 5. 
\textsuperscript{549} Ibid., l. 3-4.
Leaving aside the issues of whether a Tatar or a Russian should be elected to the orphans court from the merchant society, the provincial bureau of zemstvo and city affairs replied to the merchant elder Pechnikov that “while not electing a candidate is okay, shortening the term of service was unlawful, and therefore, the whole election was deemed invalid and was ordered to be rerun.” Pechnikov’s decision to change the term of service for a member of the orphans court from three years to two years was deemed illegal, and the concerns about the elections raised by Gvozdev and Goriunov in their complaint to the governor were addressed. The question of ethnic relations seems to have played a role in this election, although it is not clear to what extent. Rather, technicalities of terms of service were the primary stated argument of both those who complained and of the governor in his response. Other issues, while raised, were left unaddressed in writing.

Do Rights Always Extend from the Law? The “Right” to Participate and Voter “Rights”

In early 1896, a complaint was filed by Aleksei Gavrilov Lebedev, Tetiushi meshchanin, about “acts that were contrary to the law” during the January 21 elections for members of the orphans court. Lebedev alleged that several acts, inconsistent with electoral law or those that were improper, were allowed during the elections: first, that the Tetiushi meshchanskii starosta (elder), Aleksandr Viktorov Nechaev, voted when he shouldn’t have; second, that biological brothers from one house, Egor and Nikolai Novosel’tsev, were allowed to vote although only one brother, Egor, had a household; third, Akhmetzian Sharipov did not have, separate from his father Sharip Khashitov, the ability to vote; fourth, Khaibulla Valeev Agaev, did not have property or a home, and could not participate in the elections; fifth, Aleksandr Cherunov, had a brother, Ivan Cherunov, who was elected as a member of the orphans court so he did not have

550 Ibid., l. 3-3ob.
the right to participate in the election of his brother (due to conflict of interest); sixth, Lebedev, despite having served for six years, had to face reelection; seventh, Ivan Cherunov was elected as a member of the orphans court although he was the treasurer of the savings and loan collective and did not, in Lebedev’s view, have the time to serve. For these reasons, Lebedev sought to have the elections annulled and rerun.551

In relation to this complaint, the report of elder Nechaev to the governor on May 12 is illuminating in that it outlined his perceptions of “rights” both normative – what was perceived as correct in terms of the community – and legal – what was perceived as correct in terms of the electoral statutes. In his lengthy report, Nechaev’s articulation of his behavior in the elections based on his own understanding of these two types of rights demonstrates not only that elections had become a regular and expected part of local life, it also shows how political ideas were beginning to be articulated through electoral processes in the Reform era. Over the course of decades, the way in which local officials conducted elections grew in complexity. They also grew to incorporate more nuanced ideas as those which Nechaev outlined in his report to the governor on the 1896 meshchanstvo elections – specifically, multiple understandings of the idea of “rights.”

1.) On January 21, the assembly was called by me for the election of elder, assistant elder, elder for the collection of the society’s dues, an assessor of the money for collective use, for members of the Tetiushi orphans court, and an alternate member. When the meshchanskoе obshchestvo (society) gathered, after administering the oath … I proposed balloting for a member of the orphans court. … During the elections for member of the orphans court, I participated myself, not knowing that I, as a member of the society, did not have the right to vote in the elections.

2.) During the elections … Egor and Nikolai Nikolaev Novosel’tsev did participate. They are fairly good at their meshchanskii byt (way of life), and their home with a garden does not belong to just one brother … but to both brothers. …

551 NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 112, l. 1-1ob.
Egor Nikolaev Novosel’tsev has his own property that includes a good garden, and therefore they both have the right to participate in elections.  

In the first of these points of explanation, Nechaev cited his lack of knowledge of his own rights of participation in the elections, yet he confirmed the rights of the Novosel’tsev brothers to both participate, indicating that he did have some knowledge of the electoral procedures. The brothers are able to participate, he stated, not only because they both had homes, but also, he implied, because they were good meshchane. Rights of participation may have been upheld in particular for those considered to be in good standing with the society. This was also true, even more explicitly, of Nechaev’s justification for supporting the electoral participation of meshchane Sharipov and Agaev.

3.) Meshchanin Akhmetzian Sharipov … has an old, sick and decrepit father … and has lately conducted the affairs of the household, and as a full landlord, has always participated in the society. As he is a good landlord and member of the society, I do not have the right to evict him from the assembly.

4.) Meshchanin Khaibulla Valeev Agaev, who participated in the elections … does not have a home but a small house located beyond the city limits on an unplanned spot: because Agaev has a home, and is therefore a homeowner, he could not be removed from the assembly.

Nechaev defended the participation of Sharipov and Agaev in the society’s elections based not only on his interpretation of their legal “right” to do so, as he did for others, but also on the basis of the fact that Nachaev “did not have the right to evict,” the former and could not remove the latter. Nechaev, however, returned to the legal statutes to cite his explanation for not allowing Lebedev to circumvent the electoral procedures and advocate for unanimous re-election. He also underscored his decision by stating that not everyone in the society agreed to Lebedev’s plan, which elevated the weight of public opinion near to, or equal to, that of the legal statute. Further, he cited the requirement to invite all meshchane to participate in elections two days in advance of

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552 Ibid., l. 5-70b. Emphasis added.
the assembly, yet was unable to confirm that all who had the right to participate had received the
general invitation.

6.) Meshchanin Aleskei Gavrilov Lebedev served as a member of the orphans court for
six years, and put together a decree stating that the society should unanimously elect
him again as a member for another three years without an open election, but I did not
have the right to do so because there is no provision for that in the law, moreover,
not all members of the society desired such a decree on unanimous re-election, and
only a few supported this demand of Lebedev.553
8.) On January 21, the homeowners in the meshchanskoe obshchestvo (society) assembly
were invited to participate in elections, through one piece of correspondence; but
each one individually did not receive a notice. … An invitation to the meshchanskii
dom (building) is required two days in advance of the day of the assembly; but the
number of those meshchane who had the right to vote and who were gathered in
the city during the time of the elections, was difficult to determine. 554

In his explanations, elder Nechaev was dismissive of Lebedev’s allegations and argued that the
elections must stand. The provincial bureau of zemstvo and city affairs concurred with Nechaev
and the elections remained valid.

It is difficult to determine precisely whose recollection of events – those of Lebedev or
those of Nechaev – was more accurate, but what is more telling than the precise facts of this
particular set of elections is the listing of issues raised by Lebedev and the response provided by
Nechaev. Overall, they point to a complex, multi-layered perception of “rights” based as much
on perceived ethical or social norms determined by the realities of the local community as on
“rights” strictly interpreted from legal statute. There appears to have been a rather comfortable
coexistence of these perceptions as part of a unified whole of knowledge and experience upon
which to draw in managing the politics of local elections.

Determining voter/candidate eligibility in local elections – who could participate and why
– required knowledge of the community, its members, and a sense of what was “right” in that

553 This numbering follows that of the original letter by Nechaev, points 5 and 7 have been omitted here.
554 NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 112, l. 5-7ob. Emphasis added.
context as much as knowledge of legally-defined “rights.” This symbiotic relationship between the “right” as determined based on statute, and “rights” based on local realities existed for Nechaev as the guidance he needed in overseeing the elections and leading the meshchanskoe society. He cited social norms as the reason for the two brothers’ “right” to both participate in the elections, and for not evicting Sharipov from the assembly. He also allowed Agaev to participate as a homeowner, even though his home was beyond the city limits. However, when referring to his own inappropriate participation in the elections, Nechaev relied on interpretation of legally-defined rights and replied that he was unaware of the statute on this matter, yet he referenced the law when stating that Lebedev could not proceed with his petition to the society for reappointment him without elections.

Lebedev also appealed to two types of “rights” in his complaint. He referred to the official electoral rules in stating that Nechaev’s participation was illegal, and referenced property requirements when stating that the Novosel’tsev brothers were to be disqualified from voting because he stated that they did not each own a separate house, and that Agaev was also disqualified for not owning a home. Cherunov’s participation in the election of his brother was cited as a conflict of interest and not based on a reference to a legal regulation. Ironically, however, this was not the case when it came to his own expressed desire for ‘unanimous election’ outside of known, standard electoral practice (if one accepts Nechaev’s explanation).

In examining these two perspectives incorporated into the explanations by Lebedev and Nechaev however, one cannot overlook the possibility that the co-existence of “right” and “rights” was referenced (in different ways in different contexts) to advance personal interests over that of the society or adherence to law. In other words, arguments drawing on both normative and legal notions of “right” may have been selected to advance personal interest.
Nonetheless, the coexistence of these two equally compelling and equally accepted types of rights seems to indicate a fluid local context where structure and flexibility continued as two aspects of electoral experience that at times were the basis for resolution of conflict and at times were the essence of the conflict itself.

Ethnic Politics or Opportunism?
Factionalism and Protest over Orphans Court Elections

On December 16, 1894, elections were held in the meshchanskaia uprava (board) for a member of the orphans court. The seemingly straight-forward elections were anything but, and illuminate the complicated nature of local politics in Kazan province, which were heavy with ethnic overtones and caused 25 members of the meshchanskoе society to petition the provincial bureau for zemstvo and city affairs to cancel the elections entirely. At issue was whether a Tatar or a Russian should be elected as a member of the court. Seventy-six Russians refused to participate in the elections because they felt that the society should await a decision from the government as to whom should be elected, and on December 12 they sent a petition to this effect. When the 76 Russians refused to participate, the meshchanski elder, Ardashev, called the police who came to read the protocol about their refusal to participate in the elections and alleged that they were disturbing the peace. Ardashev, in a society assembly on January 13, 1895, offered for the society to discuss whether or not the 76 should be held responsible for disturbing the peace. Reading the protocol outlining the incident, Ardashev allegedly altered the text of the protocol, adding that the 76 were also “too loud.” He further determined that the 76 involved could not participate in the discussion over their fate.555

555 NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 84, l. 2-4ob.
At this point, one of the participants who had also signed the petition requesting cancelation of the elections, Pautkin, recalled a Senate decree that said that they could not be excluded from the debate. The elder did not let him finish his referral to the decree and asked the audience whether to let Pautkin continue, and a group of about 20 Tatars started to yell, “no, no need,” and Pautkin was not allowed to finish his statement. Then other members of the society noted that Ardashev had falsified the protocol by adding that the 76 were “too loud,” rendering the protocol invalid. Not surprisingly, Ardashev did not listen to this protest and called for a vote as to whether to hold the 76 Russians accountable for disturbing the peace: those who wished to vote “no” were asked to stand, and he counted the ones standing in the large, very full hall. The number of people who stood was reportedly 68 of a total of 190. The letter of complaint filed by 25 meshchane outlining the events stated that in reality the count had to have been different because there were 80 Russians alone in attendance, all of whom stood, as did some of the Tatars. When voting on Pautkin’s objection to the exclusion of the 76 from the debate on their responsibility for disturbing the peace, 99 people were said to have stood. A recount was demanded, but Ardashev said that the issue was resolved. At this point, several of the 76 walked out of the assembly, while others remained. Ardashev himself was reported to have “forgotten” to exclude some of them from the debate after all.

Ardashev went further. He asked the members of the society whether or not the 76 Russians should be excluded from the society. Iakhin, a Tatar, started to yell, “exclude, exclude.” Iakhin sat among the Tatars in the hall, and was said to have taken his cues from Ardashev. The petition to cancel the elections stated that “because Iakin was the commissar of the city board and therefore many of the Tatar merchants were dependent upon him, he could

556 Ibid.
557 Ibid.
558 Ibid.
influence (the course of events) in support of Ardashev’s illegal wishes.” Ardarshev did not hold a vote, he just declared the 76 excluded.

Very openly, the letter of complaint to the governor by the 25 meshchane stated that “this conflict was taken as a Russian-Tatar conflict, but the whole situation was wrongly characterized because there was no noise or disorder before or after the police came, to which the deputy police chief can testify.” Instead, the issue seems to have been one of Ardashev’s orchestration, “it was a ruse,” and further, Ardashev violated the right of those 76 by not letting them participate in the debate about whether or not they were responsible for disturbing the peace. Perhaps most telling, however, was the accusation that the verdict on the matter did not represent the whole society because Tatars were pitted against Russians by Ardashev who was trying to “incite conflict within the soslovie to ensure his reelection for the next three years by having Tatars support him since he could not count on any Russian votes.” The complaint stated that there were 15,000 Russians and 1,500 Tatars in the meshchanskoe society, and that Ardashev didn’t send invitations to the meetings to everyone (so as to try to ensure that those who wouldn’t support him wouldn’t attend).

In response to the governor’s request for more information about the invitations sent out in regard to the new elections to be held on January 13, 1895, the meshchanskii elder stated that on January 10, 370 invitations were sent – 250 to Russians and 120 to Tatars – and on that same day the election announcement was sent to the governor’s office. The elder’s response indicated that 6,488 Russians and 1,036 Tatars (7,524 total) had the right to vote, although it was

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559 Ibid.
560 Ibid.
561 Ibid.
562 Ibid.
563 Ibid., l. 70b.
impossible to tell how many eligible voters there were in Kazan at the time. These new elections were considered valid, and while there was a period of seven days when the 76 Russians were excluded from participation in the society, those who remained in the hall during the confrontation were allowed to vote.

This case presents a rather telling image of local politics in which relations between Tatars and Russians were allegedly manipulated for the personal gain of an elected official. In many respects this is typical of politics in general, whether the societal division exploited is that of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or some other division. The directness with which members of the society spoke of the issue to the governor is also telling, revealing a certain ease in directly addressing topics often left implicitly addressed.

Moreover, other aspects of participatory politics were directly addressed in these elections: whether or not to bring a divisive issue regarding the guilt or innocence of group members before the entire society, that of the group’s ability to participate in debate about the actions of which they were accused, and ultimately the question of whether or not to exclude members and on what grounds. Finally, it is also revealing that in such tense situations, the manner of resolution was to hold a new round of elections. As seen in other cases, elections were considered the only legitimate means of resolving this conflict. In this way, electoral practices were more legitimate than elder Ardashev’s attempt at gaining more votes through the use of ethnic appeals, an indication that ethnic divisions were not so easily exploited in Kazan, at least not in this case.

564 Ibid., l. 8-9.
565 Ibid., l. 10-11ob.
566 Ibid., l. 8-9.
Insufficient Property Qualifications, Grounds for Dismissal as Meshchanskoe Society Elder?

When Mikhail Alekseev Borovkov was elected for three years as the elder for the meshchanskoe society of the city of Tsivil’sk on January 7, 1896, he was not actually at the elections. It was not uncommon for people to be elected in absentia, but it often resulted in an official objection by the person unknowingly and usually unwillingly elected and an effort to be dismissed from the position; Borovkov’s case was not dissimilar. Borovkov based his formal objection to the governor on several points, most prominently, his failure to meet the property requirement:

1) I do not have my own property, and if I have a home, it is not separate from that of my brothers, one of whom - Ivan Alekseev Borovkov - has the proxy authority on the basis of this property to be a member of the Tsivil’sk city board; therefore, I … cannot be elected as the elder of the meshchansstvo.

2) The position of elder of the meshchansstvo requires that the person have a permanent residence in one’s community and that the person be more or less literate. I nearly always live somewhere else (na storone)…

3) My brother, Ivan Alekseev Borovkov, has already given a lot as a member of the city board, and were I to accept the position, I would already be the second person to serve from one joint household. ..

4) During the elections, I was elected by 19 votes of 26, and the alternate was Aleksei Mikhailov Aleksandrov, elected by 21 votes (of 26). … (B)ased on the ruling of Senate from September 27, 1889, a person who receives the majority of the votes cannot be elected as an alternate…

5) In the Tsivil’sk meshchanskoe society there are many people who could more than fill the position of elder, those who have their own property, are literate and have not been elected before. … The person guilty in my election was the current elder, I assume, elder Chernov.⁵⁶⁷

Through this long list of reasons for not being eligible for election or qualified for service, it is clear that Borovkov wished to be dismissed from this unexpected and unwanted position.

Further, the final sentence of his letter, accusing the current elder of orchestrating his election,

⁵⁶⁷ NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 114, l. 1-2ob.
suggests that there may have been other factors at play in the elections than simply a lack of qualified and interested candidates.

To clarify the situation, the Kazan provincial bureau of zemstvo and city affairs wrote to the Tsivil’sk district police chief on January 30, 1896. The letter recounts Borovkov’s claims that service would cause him extreme difficulty in terms of his ability to maintain his livelihood, which was milling. Moreover, he lacked private property in the city of Tsivil’sk. It seemed that the meshchanskoе society elected him not because of his qualifications and capabilities, but rather because the current elder, Chernov, put him in that position. Given this, the governor wished for more specific details about Borovkov’s property holdings, his family, his livelihood, his residence, his behavior, and whether or not he was under investigation, etc. In other words, could his eligibility be independently confirmed? Furthermore, an undercover investigation about the guilt of Chernov was to be conducted.568

The requested inquiry by the Tsivil’sk District Police found that Borovkov did have good conduct, hadn’t been indicted and wasn’t under investigation, and lived with his parents along with his four adult brothers. He had a wife and four small children and was indeed a miller. He was reportedly not poor. In regard to the actions of Chernov, it does seem that he was in some respects guilty of having proposed that Borovkov be elected, “because no one from his family serves although they have a lot of workers.”569 Whether this influence represented any unlawful act, was not clear. It was sufficiently clear to the provincial bureau of zemstvo and city affairs, following the report, that the elections were indeed valid; Borovkov’s complaint was dismissed.570

568 Ibid., l. 4-5.
569 Ibid., l. 6.
570 Ibid., l. 7.
Borovkov’s efforts to utilize his lack of private property ownership as a means of disclaiming his elected position was his best, and in fact, his only legal justification. The other reasons for arguing that he did not qualify, however compelling, had no legal basis. He did not have an advocate who could interpret his appeal. Even the alleged improper influence of the current elder over the elections for the new elder had no legal basis. All of this, however, was insufficient to overrule his absentee election as the new elder. In this respect, property qualifications were assessed on a family basis rather than on an individual basis. Further, economic hardship or the need to maintain one’s livelihood were not sufficient reasons for granting Borovkov dismissal, as was more frequently seen in the first half of the century. No one inside the society assisted in his appeal, attempting to recast his justification to be more successful. Borovkov’s case, however, was far from unique.

Elections for the Meshchanskoe Society and Orphans Court, Participant Eligibility Unclear

Just six days after the elections in the Kazan meshchanskoe society for the new elder and for members of the Kazan orphans court, a group of meshchane, led by Il’ia Matveev Sokolov and Stepan Pavlov Zhirkov, came together and launched a complaint to the governor that outlined the many problems with the February 20, 1896 elections. At issue was the inclusion of people who had, according to Sokolov and Zhirkov, not become full members of the meshchanskoe society, but rather had been included in their registers for accounting purposes. Only after five years on the registers and having received consent of the society, were they allowed to vote. In 1896, meshchanin Borisov, who had been included in the register of the Kazan meshchane along with his father, was allowed by the current chairman of the electoral assembly to participate in the elections although he did not have the right to do so. Borisov was
not alone, “not less than ¼ of the total number of people at the assembly for the elections had not sought formal permission to participate,” in accordance with the society’s rules.\footnote{NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 113, l. 1-2.}

Not only did the assembly chairman, elder Permiakovskii, permit Borisov and others like him to participate, said Sokolov and Zhirnov, he also prevented Zhirnov from taking the oath and casting his ballot (\textit{klast’ shary na vybory}), allegedly stating for some unknown reason, “I do not allow you to place your vote.”\footnote{Ibid.} As a result, Zhirnov had to leave the assembly. Moreover the oath itself was allegedly not administered properly. At the opening of the session, Permiakovskii asked the Orthodox priest to administer the oath thereby opening the elections, although not all of the electors had gathered. The Muslim participants who had gathered asked Permiakovskii to wait to open the elections because their mullah had not yet arrived. Other “Russian voters” were also late, causing Permiakovskii to have to again invite the Orthodox priest back to re-administer the oath. By the time the priest returned, the mullah had also arrived and the elections could actually begin. These delays caused some confusion as to who had actually taken the oath and who hadn’t. One of the people elected, I.V. Riabchikov, announced to Permiakovskii that two of the Muslims who had arrived at the assembly had not taken the oath but had participated in the elections. Permiakovskii, however, disregarded this announcement.\footnote{Ibid.}

Electioneering apparently also influenced the \textit{meshchanskoе} society elections. Sokolov and Zhirnov alleged that “before the elections began, one of the elected, Blokhin, a scribe in the Kazanskaia gorodskaia uprava (Kazan city board) took the bowl with the voting balls without the permission of Permiakovskii, and went up to the voter box for one of the candidates for elder, that of Sidorov, and started to ask those who were going to put their balls into the left (‘voting
no’") box to put their balls on the right for Sidorov. This seems to have, in the view of the complainants, been the sole reason for Sidorov’s having been elected.

Finally, the complainants stated that the Muslims who had been elected asked that Permiakovskii not confirm their election, thereby initiating their term of service, until after the end of the Ramadan fast, March 3, 1896. Permiakovskii, it seems, indirectly complied, which was illegal: religious considerations were not to influence service requirements. Given these improprieties, Sokolov, Zhirnov and the others who joined them in filing a formal complaint, appealed to the governor to overturn the elections.

In his formal explanation to the governor about these accusations, Permiakovskii stated that the elections for meshchanskii elder and for members of the orphans court were conducted properly and according to statute under his watch. Disputing the complainants’ first claim, that of the 119 people who participated in the elections there were those that did not have the right to do so because they were not full members of the society, Permiakovskii declared this not to be true and that not even one such person participated. Citing the relevant statutes, he stated that if there were those who participated without having the agreement of the society, their participation was indeed appropriate due to the overriding statute that determined salary qualification for full membership in the society, which each participant had met according to the record book of the meshchane in the city of Kazan.

To deny such people the right to vote and, in general [to exclude them] from all public affairs, is unfair because they are obligated to pay dues just as other meshchane. [Given this,] they have the right to demand from responsible persons (elected officials) of the meshchanskaia uprava (board) an accounting of the

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574 Ibid.
575 Specifically he cites article 463, vol. 9, ed. 1857 and article 522 of vol. 9, ed. 1876, as the statutes pertaining to those who are included as meshchane by various means, and article 494, vol. 9, of the ed. 1876 as the statute trumping the others outlining the salary requirements for full membership.
expenditure of these funds collected from them, and therefore they have the right to participate in the estate assembly and elect trustworthy people to the estate board.  

This point was especially important because the number of people who had entered the meshchanskoe society initially via registration was considerable, and they had also in the past been invited to participate in the affairs and elections of the society. As for Semen Borisov, Permiakovskii clarified that he had actually been included in the register in 1887 independently of his father Filipp Borisov. He went on to state that for purposes of registration alone, women and those retired from the lower service ranks had also been included, and the latter category of people had also been granted full membership in the society. 

Responding to the accusation that he had personal reasons for interfering in Zhirnov’s ability to cast his vote, Permiakovskii stated that the actual reason for the denial was Zhirnov’s failure to announce his participation before or after he took the oath. “Zhirnov was not registered, did not sign the oath and announced himself only when all of the voters arrived and were called to the voting boxes to cast their votes, i.e. at the end of the voting for members of the orphans court, about which, he, Zhirnov, never raised any objection at that time.”

Permiakovskii also did not find the second invitation to the priest to administer the oath to the voters unlawful. Mullah Salikhov could not come at the appointed time because he was finishing his prayers at the mosque, and he arrived at 8:00 pm; moreover after the oath was given to the Orthodox voters, about 10 (new) people were at the assembly, and in response to their request, the priest was invited a second time. Citing the complaint that “not everyone has gathered for the vote,” Permiakovskii noted that the number of meshchane required for the

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576 NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 113, l. 5-8ob.
577 Ibid.
578 Ibid.
quorum is not prescribed in the law, as clarified by the Senate ruling of September 27, 1889. Therefore, this complaint had no legal basis in his view.

Elder Permiakovskii also refuted the charge of electioneering for the position of meshchanskii elder, and denied his role in permitting it. He did not observe any of the behavior described by Sokolov and Zhirnov and stated that he carefully monitored the ballot boxes, being “present at all times next to the box diligently monitoring the conduct of voting.” Moreover, he had properly appointed others to watch the boxes and to serve as vote-counters, and there was no improper behavior by these people either, according to Permiakovskii.

Finally, clarifying the date of appointment of the Muslim elected officials, Permiakovskii stated that on February 6, they had submitted a request to the meshchanskaia uprava asking that the date for the soslovnye obshchestvennye sobraniiia (estate society assembly) be set for after the end of Ramadan, but the request was not approved in a decree on by the board on February 13. Nevertheless, the Muslim meshchane from Kazan province participated in the meeting on February 20; 32 people were in attendance.

Moreover, concluded Permiakovskii, none of the members who participated in the elections voiced any objections over the legitimacy of the elections for members of the orphans court or for the meshchanskii elder with the exception of Ivan Riabchikov. He had been a candidate for meshchanskii elder but was not elected, and complained to Permiakovskii only after the closing of the meeting that allegedly two Muslims, Shashtdin Sagadeev and Galei Valitov, participated without taking the oath. That complaint had no merit, said Permiakovskii, but only had the goal of creating a protest, because although those two were in the room at the

579 Ibid.
580 Ibid.
581 Ibid.
582 Ibid.
583 Ibid.
time of the elections, they were there as members of the general public and did not take active participation in the elections.584 As was standard electoral procedure, any objections should have been raised before the close of the session, directly to the overseer of the proceedings.

In a report to the governor by the meshchanskoе society board, the elections for the estate elder for the three year term from 1896-1899 were confirmed as valid, and Mikhail Semenov Sidorov was announced as the newly-elected elder. The report noted that Sirdorov was Orthodox, 40 years old, and not indicted or under investigation. Il’ia Sokolov, however, did register his “dissenting opinion,” although that opinion was not registered at the time of the elections.585

Meshchanin Il’ia Matveev Sokolov was not satisfied with this outcome and amended his initial complaint to the governor. Sokolov stated that, despite “rumors” that Permiakovskii watched over the ballot boxes at all times, this was not true, and Blokhin did in fact try to convince voters to cast their votes for Sidorov. Sokolov personally confirmed this and was willing to swear an oath to this affect. He then took one more step by informing the governor that Sidorov’s profession was that of a loan shark.

The validity of the February 20, 1896 elections were called into further question when Sokolov stated that it was actually he who had been elected as the meshchanskoе society elder during elections on February 5, and that he had reason to know that the ballot lists and other necessary election documentation from that election had not been forwarded to the governor as was required by procedure. Which were the correct, valid elections? Those on February 5 or February 20?

584 Ibid.
585 Ibid., l. 9-9ob.
A copy of the journal of the Kazan provincial bureau of zemstvo and city affairs assembly meeting from April 12, 1896 was forwarded to the governor to resolve the issue. After recounting what both sides presented, that by Sokolov, Zhirnov and 12 other people as well as the response by elder Permiakovskii, the journal noted that by looking at the list of voters who participated in the elections, it is clear that of the 119 voters, 50 were founding meshchane of the city of Kazan, included in the registers in the 10th census (vnesennye v revizskie skazki X narodnoi perepisi); 25 were invited from the merchant estate of undisclosed property value and were included in the register of meshchane of the city of Kazan; 20 were included by invitational decree of the Kazan meshchanskoе society and, finally, the remaining 24 voters were included at some point in the meshchanskoе society on the basis of article 522 of volume 9 of the Code of Laws, 1876 edition, with the ruling allowing for their inclusion into the register of the meshchane of the city of Kazan.586

Further documentation provided to the bureau shows that of the 119 voters present at the February 20 elections, 87 were Russian and 32 were Muslim. It is also important to note that the terms “Muslim” and “Tatar” are used at times interchangeably, and at other times, there seems to be no precise differentiation made by the authors between religion and ethnicity. These two categories appear to have been fluid for the majority of the nineteenth century, at least as regards elections.

The journal went on to reveal that indeed, there had been prior elections, but Permiakovskii said that those elections had been held on January 29, not February 5. Regardless, those elections had been declared invalid due to a mishap during voting.587

The meshchane who were at the assembly on January 29 took the oath correctly and according to the proper form, and those who had taken the oath signed their

\(^{586}\) Ibid., l. 12-18ob.
\(^{587}\) Ibid.
names to the oath. Then the chairman proposed to the assembly to open the
elections for meshchanskii elder for three years from 1896 to 1899, and the rules
on conducting elections were read. These notes were attached to the ballot lists of
the 17 people listed as candidates for meshchanskii elder, of whom 8 were
included on the final list, the others declined to be included as candidates. [At the
end of voting,] “a Muslim voter, Khalitov, announced to the chairman that he had
not yet cast his vote by putting his ball into the box because when his name was
called he was out of the hall ‘for natural reasons’ (estestvennaia nadobnost’). In
light of this, the representative, allowing Khalitov to cast his vote, announced that
before administering the oath 141 voters were registered at the assembly and
based on that number, the balls were allocated. Now it seems that in six of the
boxes that had the names of those who had been announced at the assembly as
(candidates), there was not one ball left whereas there should have been one
remaining. Also, in two of the last boxes for absentee candidates there were no
balls remaining, therefore two more balls had to be added. If in the dissemination
of the balls there ended up to be more than 141 balls, then there should be a
revote, otherwise the election would have been considered improper.  

When the boxes were opened and the voting balls were counted, there were numerous
inconsistencies, and therefore, it was “impossible to call the elections proper,” and they were
postponed for a reelection at the next assembly because it was too late to hold new elections that
evening. The assembly was closed at 10:20 pm.  

Having investigated the complaint filed by Sokolov, Zhirnov and 12 others, and the
explanation filed by acting elder Permiakovskii, and finally, having declared the earlier elections
of January 29 invalid, the governor’s office found that not one of the claims presented by
Sokolov and Zhirnov was valid and the elections for meshchanskii elder and members of the
orphans court were “conducted according to the rules and the terms of the elections, in general in
agreement with the law.” The governor then confirmed Stepan Sidorov as the new elder from
1896-1899.

588 Ibid.
589 Ibid., l. 17.
590 Ibid., l. 12-18ob.
591 Ibid., l. 20-21.
The estate elections within the meshchanskoe society of 1896 reveal several critical issues. First, the question of who was eligible to participate became one of overtly linking responsibility for paying dues to the society with the right to vote for those who would allocate those funds. At issue was not only who was considered fully part of the meshchanskoe society, but why those people who came to be on the register through the official accounting of the city population should be afforded the same rights as those who were hereditary members or those who met other membership qualifications. In other words, “taxation” brought “representation.”

With a shift in the electoral principle from estate-based qualifications to property-based and/or residency-based qualifications introduced as the basis for electoral eligibility for the zemstvos, a greater equality was seen in some aspects of voter and candidate eligibility qualifications, although this should not be overstated. In the case of the Kazan meshchanskoe society, the sheer number of meshchane who had entered the registers through accounting means also provided a significant constituency of voters.

Perhaps less conceptual, yet no less critical for the conduct of elections and their overall validity among those who participated were a series of technical issues, including who was in the hall at the time that the oath was administered, whether the priest and the mullah presided at the same time, and whether or not all of the voters were in the room when the votes were being cast. This process, as the complaints about the 1896 elections indicate, was not easy to manage, particularly when the number of voters exceeded 100. One might imagine the commotion in the voting hall with hundreds of voters casting their ballot balls for as many as a dozen candidates and alternates while public observers looked on. It is easy to understand that one voter may have been missed if he had stepped out. On the other hand, as the accusations of electioneering indicate, that same commotion may have provided ample opportunity for influencing voters or
swaying votes. It seems very unlikely that even under the most ideal of conditions the rules stating that voting should occur quietly and orderly could be followed.

The meshchanskoе society elections also indicate another aspect of local life that may or may not be entirely clear from the official documents. The Muslim elected officials asked to be officially appointed to their positions after the end of Ramadan, March 3. The official documents were reportedly submitted just prior to that, on February 20. Realistically, given paperwork processing times and other work routines, this date would have provided a natural delay before their term of service began. Bureaucratic delay, then, implicitly addressed the request when the explicit rules could not. From what is indicated in these documents, the official rules were therefore observed, while at the same time, the request of Muslim officials seems also to have been (unofficially) observed.

**Sacred Parallels Secular: Elections in the Local Russian Orthodox Church**

Secular electoral practices, routine by the time of the introduction of the zemstvo and the reformed city duma institutions, were replicated nearly identically in local segments of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Kazan theological consistory was established in 1744 as a result of the reorganization of the Kazan clergy department. Responsible for several monasteries and convents, the consistory also oversaw more than a thousand churches as early as 1782. Elections for church overseers were rather similar to elections of other non-Orthodox institutions.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, deans (blagochinnye) of the consistory were regularly elected for three-year terms following procedures that paralleled those of secular officials: permission to hold parish-level elections was first sought by officials in Kazan and when the date and time had been fixed, electoral assemblies were held with eligible voters;
eligibility was based on residency in that parish. Balloting occurred as it did for the estate bodies, zemstvos and dumas, and the ballot lists were similarly signed and forwarded for confirmation by higher authorities as well. When uncertainties, irregularities, or disputes arose about the conduct of elections, appeals and complaints were filed, often using similar language to that found in the complaints filed in other secular bodies.

**Electoral Practices in the Kazan Spiritual Consistory**

In September 1871, the Kazan spiritual consistory dean (*blagochinnyi*) of the second parish in the Sviiazhsk district, Priest M. Smirnov, inquired with dean Petr Fal’kov about where balloting was to occur for candidates for parish dean from 1872 to 1875 so that he could instruct the lectors on balloting consistent with the rules for election of the dean. Fal’kov, however, did not have instructions from the Spiritual Academy on how to conduct the elections and requested guidance.\(^592\)

The guidance was provided by the Kazan consistory and the elections were held on September 21, 1871, following a familiar process.

According to the order of the Kazan district dean of the city of Kazan, Priest Pavel Vozdvizhenskii of Georgievskaiia church, the clergy of the first *blagochinnyicheskii* parish - 15 priests, 1 deacon, and 6 lectors - arrived in the village of Solovtsov to legally conduct new elections for the second three-year term for their parish dean and his assistant. The introduction of elections for dean in Kazan district occurred three years ago, and the term of elections for the stated position in all the parishes for September 18, 1868 has ended. … The assembly was called at the home of the local landowner G. Mamaev. Before the opening of the assembly, attention was drawn to the district dean Vozdvizhenskii, (who) noted that he … would not be at the assembly for the election of candidates for dean, and therefore he recommended that a chairman be elected from among the priests, and under his supervision and approval the required balloting be conducted. The clergy unanimously elected Cherkasov as the chairman, who

\(^{592}\) NA RT, f. 4, op. 1, d. 6490, l. 1-1ob.
looked after all that transpired on the basis of the rules for the election of dean in the Kazan Diocese.  

Balloting was then held for all priests who had the right to vote, with the exception of one, who arrived too late. The official record of the vote indicates that the process was similar to that of secular elections.

Having conducted the balloting, we elected the following candidate for the position of dean: from the village of Il’insk, Priest Ioann Cherkasov, and from the village of Krasnaia Gorka, Priest Petr Palenin since they received priority before other priests in the number of ‘yes’ votes, specifically: the first received 17 ‘yes’ votes and 4 ‘no’ votes, and the second received 13 ‘yes’ votes and 8 ‘no’ votes. Regarding the voting for Priest Troitskii, the assembly decided to expose the balloting, and Troitskii, who having conducted it, received 10 ‘yes’ votes and 12 ‘no’ votes. In confirming this act, five priests signed.

The final ballot included 12 priests listed by village.

In October of 1871, the Tsarevokokshaisk dean, Archpriest Aleksandr Spasskii sent a report to Archbishop Antonii of Kazan and Sviiazhsk districts in which Spasskii stated that he, according to a decree of the Kazan spiritual consistory, was to hold elections for deans in those parishes where the term of service was to end 1871. But since deans in both parishes of Tsarevokokshaisk district were elected in 1869 for three years, the term of service was to end in 1872. As seen earlier, similar situations of unclear timing of elections and terms of service were common in elections for secular positions as well. The conduct of these elections, however, was in question because the dean, priest Pavel Vozdvizhenskii, would not take responsibility for conducting elections in that parish, believing that it was the responsibility of the parish dean to name the place of the elections for the village of Sotnury. Spasskii did

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593 Ibid., l. 4-4ob.
594 Ibid.
595 NA RT, f. 4, op. 1, d. 6577, l. 1-2ob.
596 Ibid.
officiate the elections on October 21, 1872: in the first parish, former dean, priest Ioann Rozhdestvenskii, received 14 ‘yes’ votes and 3 ‘no’ votes, and from the village of Nurma, priest Mikhail Troitskii was elected with 10 ‘yes’ votes and 7 ‘no’ votes; in the second parish, former dean Gurii Pokrovskii unanimously received 24 votes, and from the village of Arsk, Priest Aleksandr Smirnov and Aleksei Magnitskii both received the same number of ‘yes’ votes, 18, and 6 ‘no’ votes.597 The appropriate ballot lists were also filed.

The process of electing parish deans of the Kazan Consistory was parallel to that of other similar elections for local officials of secular institutions. Nearly every aspect of the process, including obtaining official approval to call the elections, the gathering of voters, the election of a chairman, the conduct of the actual elections, the term of service for the elected official, the establishing of their beginning and end dates, and the filing of official election-rated documentation was so consistent with that of secular institutions that the documents themselves, apart from the name of the Kazan Spiritual Consistory, bear no discernible distinction between elections for the spiritual and secular bodies. This broad electoral experience indicates that similar processes were followed in many aspects of local life, adding to the electoral experience of nearly all of Kazan’s diverse populations.

ELECTIONS AND OLD BELIEVERS

The active involvement of the Old Believer communities in the economic and political life of Kazan province was a primary factor in the cooperation between the local authorities and the Old Believers of Kazan, particularly during the Reform Era. Among the leaders of this growth were Old Believer merchants and industrialists who focused on the sale of grain, becoming some of the most consistent and long-standing grain traders. Their success gained

597 Ibid.
them access to the ranks of the guild merchants in greater numbers in the second half of the nineteenth century than previously. In particular, in Kazan and Chistopol’, Old Believer families who gained new prominence in the 1860s – 1880s included the Gordeev, Okonishinkov, Afanas’ev, Shamov, Shashin, Chetvergov, Shashabrin, Chelyshev, and Malan’ichev families. In addition to grain trade, many also traded in a wider variety of goods, and some became large landowners.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Kazan became one of the primary centers for banking capital for the eastern part of the empire. The directors and leaders of the bank boards were very often Old Believers. All of the top leadership of the province’s banks and fiscal committees were elected, following the same procedures as those used in all other self-governing institutions. Their terms tended to be rather lengthy, often extending six years, and it was common for the same person to be elected to multiple terms. In this sense, these elected positions were similar to professional positions and required considerable capability and responsibility. In most archival documents associated with these elections, the religion of the candidates is not listed, although the estate often was noted. This is not only consistent with the adaptability of local officials who administered local elections with the reality of the religious diversity of the province, but also with the interest among Old Believers participating in those elections, in some cases openly and in other cases less so, examples of both can be clearly seen in the electoral cases examined below.

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599 Ibid., 19.
600 NA RT, f. 96, op. 1, d. 38, l. 24-25.
601 NA RT, f. 96, op. 1, d. 21, l. 14-14ob.
602 Public support for the participation of Old Believers in local elections was expressed in an article published in the local newspaper. “Zapiska staroobriadtsve g. Kazani revisuiushchemu senator g. Kovalevskomu,” Kazanskii birzhevoi listok, May 10, 1881, 2.
Contrary to Official Rules: Old Believers Elected and Confirmed

In a routine report of January 28, 1872 to the Kazan provincial board, the Laishev district police chief informed the board about the results of Laishev city elections: merchant Timofei Ivanov Kruglov was elected as the gorodskoi starosta (elder); merchant son Vasilii L’vov Zakharov and meshchanin Mitrofan Sergeev Kuznetsov were elected as assistants to the elder. They had all taken the oath required of candidates standing for election. Merchant Iakov Filipovich Maksimov, however, was the only other candidate for the position of gorodskoi starosta, and as the second place vote-getter, was elected as the alternate to Kruglov. While he was confirmed in this position, he did not take the oath because he was a “schismatic of the Pomorskogo soglasiiia sect” (Old Believer).\(^{603}\) As consistent with official regulations from the first half of the century, Old Believers were not to be elected unless there were insufficient Orthodox candidates.

Also consistent with local practice from the first half of the nineteenth century, Old Believers, including Maksimov, were indeed elected, confirmed and served in local official positions. The minutes of the provincial board of February 7, 1872, reporting on the Laishev city elections of December 26, 1871, indicate the tension between the official policy toward Old Believers and the reality of their incorporation into the local politics of Kazan province.

Merchant Iakov Filipov Maksimov was confirmed as an alternate to the Laishev city elder for a three-year term in 1872. During the confirmation of Maksimov to that position, the provincial Board did not keep in mind that Maksimov is a schismatic of the Pomorskogo soglasiiia sect, since this information is not contained in the report of Laishev city obshchestvennoe upravlenie (city administration) nor in the ballot list, despite the fact that it was very strictly ordered in the Statutes on Elections that all police departments, all dumas and all

\(^{603}\) NA RT, f. 2, op. 2, d. 264, l. 5.
city administrations absolutely must provide this information and this was strictly stated in decree 7812 of the provincial board of October 5, 1871.604

The provincial board reported this omission as glaring. Further, according to the October 1871 decree, responsibility for such an omission would be assigned personally to “the deputies and the secretary of the duma, the police administration and equally the administrative clerks of the city administration.”605 It was clear to the board that merchant Maksimov “of the Pomorskogo soglasia sect (i.e. vrednyi [harmful]),”606 confirmed as alternate to the Laishev city elder, could not assume that position in the society for which he was elected. As a result, the provincial authorities were required to call for new elections for alternate to the Laishev gorodskoi golova. The board gave orders for “strict elections,” and for a warning to be sent to “new members so that they, in the future, would be more attentive and accurate.”607 The provincial board clearly suspected the omission of the fact that Maksimov was an Old Believer in all of the official election paperwork to have been intentional. Further, each of the individuals in each of the institutions that did not point out this fact was to be held responsible. However, it was not clear what the punishment would be for this offense, and the final instructions regarding future elections were simply to be more attentive and accurate. There seemed to be a recognition that while the election of Maksimov was improper from the standpoint of statute, it was in the interests of the local community to address the situation with only a slight reprimand.

On January 16, 1884, elections were held for the merchant elder and alternate for the Russian and Tatar merchant societies. The official election invitation stated that 100 members of

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604 Ibid., l. 60b.
605 Ibid., l. 6-9.
606 Ibid.
607 Ibid.
the merchant society were needed to meet the official quorum. The only candidate for elder on the ballot list for the Russian Society was 38-year old Mefodii Akumovich Korovin, who received 50 ‘yes’ votes and 23 ‘no’ votes. Korovin was listed on the official election ballot as an Old Believer. Two candidates were listed as alternates, of whom 48-year old Nikolai Nikolaevich Charushin was elected with 44 ‘yes’ votes and 29 ‘no’ votes. He was Orthodox according to the same ballot list. The second candidate for alternate to the elder was 39-year old Savelii Nikolaevich Erlykin. He was also an Old Believer (of the Pomorskogo soglasii sect). There was at least one Orthodox candidate who could have been elected for the position of elder, but no one was listed on the ballot other than an Old Believer. The Tatar merchant society also held elections for elder, and only one candidate was listed, 56-year old Galei Valitovich Valitov, who received 52 ‘yes’ votes and 20 ‘no’ votes; he was a Muslim. For the position of alternate, there was also only one candidate, 32-year old Galiasgar Zafich Bigaev [sic], also a Muslim.

The election of Old Believers to local positions indicates that while the official prohibition on the election of Old Believers was known, they were indeed elected at times quietly and passively. When their election became known, the official response was also passive. At other times, Old Believer candidates were openly indicated on the ballot lists for official local positions, and even when there were Orthodox candidates, Old Believers were elected. It appears that the local communities were not strictly bound by official rules, despite occasional appeals for their strict adherence.

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608 NA RT, f. 299, op. 1, d. 119, l. 2.
609 Ibid., l. 23-23ob.
610 Ibid. The Pomorskogo soglasii sect was considered one of the most radical and therefore dangerous of priestless sects.
611 Ibid. This name was not fully legible.
ELECTIONS TO OTHER LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS: SPECIFIC CASES

As seen above with the elections to positions of leadership of Kazan’s provincial banks, there were many other elected positions throughout the province that contributed to the governance and administration of local communities, both rural and urban. When examining the prevalence of these positions, as well as the rather sophisticated means by which local officials conducted the elections for those positions, it appears that these elections enjoyed a certain legitimacy as the means of selecting local leaders and officials. Significance was placed on the proper conduct of those elections based on following the established rules and procedures.

The desire for the proper conduct of the elections, however, was often complicated by the lack of clarity in the stated procedures themselves. As a result, those responsible for conducting and confirming the elections were required to use all of the resources of precedent and practice, known codified procedures, and pure logic to attempt to rationally close the gaps left by the incomplete regulations. At first glance it may appear that local officials navigated the system with surprising ease. However, when considering the many decades of electoral practice at even the most local levels, across many estates, ethnicities, and religions, the solutions and resolutions to the issues that arose seem simply normal. The following archival cases demonstrate this normalcy in the conduct of Kazan province’s local elections, even and especially in instances when there was a lack of obvious clarity in stated procedure. Precedent, practice, knowledge and logic led to reasonable resolutions and the continuation of local governance rooted in electoral principles.
Using Analogies to Clarify Technicalities: Local Officials Apply Experience

In 1880, the Spassk district police administration wanted to confirm the elections of police officials (sotskie and desiatskie) and the fire elder. They were unsure, however, of how to do so properly, and inquired of the governor the following:

1) How old must police sotskie and the police elder be?
2) How long are the terms to which they are elected?
3) Should the fire elder take the oath?

The police administration proposed the following answers to its own questions. “In volume two of the publication of 1851, in the section on communal elections (mirskie vybory), article 576 states that those elected should not be younger than 25 and that same publication, article 592, states that the village assembly elects people for various offices, including for police sotskie, and for each office, elects three alternates.” The police administration therefore took the view that 25 is the minimum age for sotskie and desiatskie, “as there was no age noted before that.” They next compared the election regulations, exceptions and the processes for conducting village elections to the district board and found that “On the basis of article 809 of volume 9, those elected may be peasants who have the same qualities described as those elected according to article 805, and should be not younger than 25 years old and in the second part of article 809, the sotskie and desiatskie also should not be younger than 25 old.” However, based on article 798 of volume 9, those elected to the village administration are under the jurisdiction of the volost’ elder and their assistants, who according to articles 805 and 809 should not be younger than 30

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612 Sotskie were lower-level village police officers, elected one per 100 households, and were responsible for peace and order in their jurisdiction. Desiatke were the most local of village police officers elected one per 10 households and were responsible for the peace and order of their jurisdictions, which were similar to neighborhoods.
613 NA RT, f. 2, op. 3, d. 5961, l. 1-60b.
614 Ibid.
615 Ibid.
616 Ibid.
years old. Moreover, in article 114 of the General Statutes on emancipated peasants, the minimum age is determined at 25 years, as well as 25 years for members of the zemstvo and city boards. Based on these contradictory articles, they were not sure of the correct minimum age.

Next they turned to the question of terms of service. The police administration stated that “on the basis of article 571 of the second volume of the publication of 1857, sotskie and desiatkie were elected for three years, and on the basis of article 572, they should assume their positions no more than one month after election.” Article 800 of volume 9, however, stated that elections for sotskie and desiatkie were to be announced annually at the beginning of December, and from this they concluded that sotskie and desiatkie are elected for one year. The introduction to article 571 of volume 3 of the Election Statutes (Ustava po službe o vyboram) stated that the term of service for sotskie was set at three years. In the publication of 1876 the term of service of the sotskie and desiatkie was set at one year. This raised an additional question: should elections for sotskie be held now or at the conclusion of the terms for those currently elected based on the previous law when people were elected for three year terms?

The Spassk district police administration followed the implications of these stated terms of service and noted a question: what were the procedures for replacing the sotskie in the case of illness, absences, etc. According to the 1876 publication, article 592 of volume 3, alternates were to be elected in the same manner in which the sotskie were elected. However, according to the 1876 publication, in the event of illness or absence of the sotskii, the elder desiatkii living in one of these villages was to assume that position, but the elder desiatkii should not be

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617 Ibid.
618 Ibid.
619 Ibid.
620 Ibid.
considered appointed.\textsuperscript{621} The studious readers of electoral law at the police administration found nothing in existing regulation to assist them in determining the length of the term for fire elder, and whether or not they should take the oath before they assume their lawful positions.\textsuperscript{622}

The governor sent the ardent officials at the Spassk police administration a decree answering their questions:

1.) How old should those elected as sotskie, desiatskie and fire elder be?
2.) For how long is the fire elder elected in villages and should they take the oath?
3.) Should sotskie, elected for three terms but not having finished their term of service, participate in elections now for one-year terms, or should the elections be held at the end of their three-year term?
4.) Who should be considered the elder desiatskii in the village in the case of illness of the sotskii?\textsuperscript{623}

The governor’s decree stated:

a) Peasants elected to elected positions must be not younger than 25 years – for all positions, including sotskie, desiatskie and fire elder.
b) The term for the fire elder should be one year and they should take the oath just like sotskie and desiatskie.
c) No laws have retroactive effect, and only have future effect, therefore, although article 800 of volume 9 of publication 1876 calls for annual elections of sotskie and desiatskie, that law should only apply to those who are at that moment up for election, so the sotskie and desiatskie should serve to the end of their terms.
d) Elections for the district board should be conducted by vote (po ballam) or by lots (po zhreb’iam), according to local custom (smotria po mestnym obychaiam). Therefore, in the case of illness or absence of the sotskii, in his place the desiatskie from the village who had the most votes (izbiratel’nykh sharov), or the desiatskii from the village who went to vote first.\textsuperscript{624}

\textsuperscript{621} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{622} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{623} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{624} Ibid., l. 7.
This correspondence reveals the extent to which, by the end of the nineteenth century, local officials had significant experience in not only conducting elections, but also in analyzing electoral regulations and procedures. They drew on a wide base of legal documents and also on local experiences. They identified contradictions and raised questions based on the logical conclusions of their inquiries. They were also serious about the conduct of elections and sought to cover all potential eventualities. Additionally, in the response from the governor, the answers to the questions were clearly and simply provided, even though the realities may have been anything but straightforward. This is indicated by the statement of the governor that elections for members of the district board were to be conducted “according to local custom.” Reconciling electoral regulations while taking into account local custom was the reality of how local elections were conducted.

_Elected Without Consent? Representative of the Village Elected without Their Involvement_

Sviiazhsk district peasant, Polikarp Grigor’ev Mironov, was surprised when on January 18, 1884, he was sent to the “Verkhne Uslonsk county administration in the city of Sviiazhsk … to find out who will be elected as the village representative and alternate to the district police administration.” 625 There he was excluded without any explanation by the county administration, at which time he went to the Sviiazhsk district police administration, where he was elected by the assemblies of the whole district as the first alternate to the village assessor. Mironov quickly “understood that our county administration sent me deliberately, not asking our village society who would like to be elected for this position.” 626 Mironov stated that he was elected without anyone having taken into consideration the fact that “I filled in by doing service

625 NA RT, f. 2, op. 2, d. 2887, l. 19.
626 Ibid.
for the society (*obshchestvennaia sluzhba*) in the district court two years ago, and that I am completely alone and have an elderly mother who is losing her sight.” In light of this, Mironov found his election as first alternate to the assessor illegal and wished to be dismissed from service.

The chief of police sent a report to the governor on April 26, 1884, regarding the matter in which he stated that Mironov’s name was indeed placed on the ballot as a candidate for village assessor of the Sviiazhsk police administration and during the general balloting, Mironov was elected unanimously as alternate village assessor, and at the time he did not state any objections. Furthermore, the chief of police added, the obligations placed upon Mironov as alternate village assessor were not substantial and therefore consideration of his domestic situation was not warranted; assessors, “permanently live in their homes” and “the need for alternates for village assessors arises only under very rare circumstances and moreover, should such a need arise, Mironov’s obligation could be further passed on to the second alternate.”

Based on this explanation, Mironov’s complaint was not accepted, and he was expected to serve.

While it is not clear why Mironov did not object to his unanticipated election at the time of the proceedings, his subsequent written complaint stated that he did not feel his election was acceptable because of his lack of intent to be a candidate, the fact that his village had not been asked about whom they wished to provide as a candidate, and that he did not feel his personal situation allowed him to serve. This straightforward case points to an essential issue regarding elections in imperial Russia that had been consistently true from the establishment of local administrative institutions: many people did not wish to serve, but were often obligated to do so.

627 Ibid.
628 Ibid., l. 22.
629 Ibid.
In this sense, elections were primary mechanisms of administration and governance essential to imperial rule over the territories.

**Can We Un-Elect Him? Removing an Elected Official**

On November 15, 1888, the Tetiushi district police chief sent a report to the governor complaining about the behavior of village assessor, peasant Galiulla Urazaev, and petitioned for his removal from that position. By June he had still not heard an answer from the governor and sent another request. Urazaev’s poor behavior included maintaining an “acquaintance with suspicious people, most of them (were) Tatars who engaged in horse theft, including his relatives, and he let them stay at his apartment. In addition, he engaged in squabbling and various intrigues, and, having an explosive character, he was not infrequently loud and disrupted the peace.”

He was fined 10 roubles for this behavior on May 31 by the first section of the Tetiushi district justice of the peace. The police chief further stated that “with that type of behavior, Urazaev undermines the authority of the other members of the police and it is impossible to accept him in that position.” As a final note of emphasis, the police chief stated that this information was sent to the governor with the full knowledge of all of the members of the police administration and the police overseers in the city of Tetiushi.

The same day that the police chief filed his report to the governor, the police administration of Tetiushi district filed its report in which it recounted their efforts to evict Urazaev from his apartment in accordance with the decision of the justice of the peace of the first section of Tetiushi district. When the court bailiff and the police chief went to evict Urazaev, he refused to clean the apartment and then police officers began to carry out his things from his

630 NA RT, f. 2, op. 2, d. 3491, l. 22-22ob.
631 Ibid.
632 Ibid.
apartment. Urazaev allegedly took these things from their hands and shouted that the police officers were “thieves.” This was the disturbance of the peace that caused the court to fine Urazaev 10 roubles. The police administration also asked the governor’s office to remove him from the position of village assessor.

The governor replied to the police administration on June 16, deferring to the village any further action about Urazaev as an elected official. The governor asked that the village inform him as to whether or not they agreed with his removal. But, as the police administration responded to the governor, the matter was not so straightforward because Urazaev was elected not by the peasants of the village of Bol’shaia Karlanga, but rather through elections of the entire Tetiushi district during which Urazaev received 66 ‘yes’ votes and 25 ‘no’ votes; among the voters were those from the village of Bol’shaia Karlanga. The administration sought further guidance from the governor’s office as to how to proceed in this case.

Unfortunately, the resolution to the case of the unruly assessor Urazaev is not known; no documents attest to what ultimately happened. Regardless, this case presents an interesting predicament of representation, most clearly seen when that representation is lacking. In this case, the village assessor was elected not directly by his village, yet represented them through indirect election. When his conduct warranted removal from his position, there was no mechanism to do so because the electoral mechanism was not parallel in jurisdiction with that of his constituency. While his removal from office may have served the needs of the village represented by Urazaev, because his election had been indirect, so to were the mechanisms for his removal: a double separation. Indirect voting in this way not only distanced the voters from

633 Ibid.
634 Ibid., l. 23-23ob.
635 Ibid., l. 27-27ob.
the selection of their chosen candidate, it also disenfranchised them when that candidate failed to serve his constituents.

City Peasant, Village Peasant: Proportionate Use of Resources Requires Proportionate Electoral Contributions

In April 1898, the representative of the peasant society of the city of Chistopol’, Aleksei Tarasov Samoilov, wrote to the governor with a question: how should peasants who live in the city be counted in terms of their representatives to the city institutions? The society of peasants Samoilov represented was comprised of 300 male souls who lived in the city of Chistopol’ in 60 homes located on their own city land. They regularly voted for people to serve as village elder, tax collector, and field and forest guards. With regard to police sotskie and desiatkie, they were elected by the peasants of Novaia Derevnia, together with the society of peasants from the city of Chistopol’. Those elected officials performed all general municipal services: kept night watches, served as guards, accompanied those arrested from the police administration to the districts, and formed brigades during fires and other accidents. They paid zemstvo and city taxes and in contrast to those who lived in the village of Chistopol’skie Vyselki, they sent various officials to serve much more often, even though they were smaller in number. Moreover, according to the ruling of the Chistopol’ district police chief, about a month prior to their inquiry, the city peasant society was ordered to elect five more people for new positions that they had never elected in all the time they had lived in Chistopol’: one police sotkii and an alternate, and three police desiatkie, which was considered extremely burdensome due to the small number of homeowners in the society. The head of the society found this improper and had no other choice but to request the protection of the governor and to ask for a ruling of the district police chief,

636 NA RT, f. 2, op. 3, d. 2413, l. 1-2.
637 Ibid.
regarding whether or not it was really necessary for the society to elect the above mentioned officials. 638

The police chief of Chistopol’ district replied to the governor refuting the accusations that his ruling was unlawful in relation to the responsibility of Samoilov’s society to elect sotskie and desiatskie from among themselves. He outlined his reasoning:

The peasants of the city of Chistopol’, who moved from the village of Chistopol’skie Vyselki, comprise a separate peasant society, and have their own village elder and tax collector; the land they use is located in the same area as the peasants of the village of Chistopol’skie Vyselki (Novaia Derevnia) and although that society does indeed live in the city proper, the peasant society that is in the city is not included in the elections for sotskie and desiatskie. [Hence] my requirement to calculate the number of sotskie and desiatskie including them is completely correct. Moreover the society of peasants from the village of Chistopol’skie Vyselki elects from its members sotskie and desiatskie, independent of the Chistopol’ city peasant society, they did not have the requirement to keep those positions. I propose that it is necessary to create these positions … because … peasants from Chistopol’skie Vyselki society, … after they moved to the city, use all of the city’s conveniences as do city residents. 639

In other words, the district police chief felt it only fair that if the peasants living in the city were using the city’s resources, they should contribute to paying for them and staffing those elected positions just as did other city residents, regardless of their number.

The Chistopol’ city board wrote to the governor with direct questions about this issue. Specifically, “Do the peasants of the city of Chistopol’ have a society separate from the peasants who live in the villages of Chistopol’ district? Are they jurisdictionally separate, or do they administratively belong to the village society of the district? By what calculation did they

638 Ibid.
639 Ibid., l. 4.
determine that they needed one *sotskii* and three *desiatskie*.

The Chistopol’ district administration wrote to the governor in response to these questions:

The peasants of Chistopol’ comprise a separate society from the peasants of the village of Chistopol’skie Vyselki, but they use the same land with the peasants of the village of Chistopol’skie Vyselki. Keeping in mind that the peasants of the city of Chistopol’ number more than 300 male souls and live in 70 homes, I propose that it is sufficient to elect from this society one *sotskii* and three *desiatskie*... Moreover, the society of peasants of the villages of the settlements of Chistopol’ elect *sotskie* and *desiatskie* only based on the number of homes in the villages of Chistopol’skie Vyselki.

Technically speaking, if these peasants were not counted among the peasants in the villages, and they lived in the city using the city’s resources, they should be counted as those who needed to contribute to the administration and governance of the city, based on the same calculation as that of the village peasants given that there remained some links between them.

In a letter to the governor’s administration, the land captain (*zemskii nachal’nik*) of the first section of Chistopol’ district stated that in the beginning of 1898, the peasant society of the city of Chistopol’ created a petition about the election of one *sotskii* and three *desiatskie* from among themselves in response to the demand of the Chistopol’ police chief. Further, he explained that,

the peasants of the city of Chistopol’ live in their own homes that are located on land rented or purchased in the city, pay all of the city dues just as permanent residents, and accordingly pay other dues that support the city police. The conditions of the village *sotskie* and *desiatskie*, as members of the police, adhere to laws intended for a village that may not fulfill all of the obligations that are required of city officials that are more developed and more thought-through, and in the majority of cases these officials prepared for their civil service by military

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640 Ibid., l. 5-5ob.
641 The number stated in this document is inconsistent with the number stated in the previous document.
642 NA RT, f. 2, op. 3, d. 2413, l. 6.
But, the issue for the city peasants of Chistopol’ did not seem to be one of a cultural shift from the village to the city, or the difficulty of the required service itself. Rather, the issue for them was relative resources available to be contributed based on the small size of their population.

The resolution was found in officially dividing the groups legally. The Kazan governor’s administration in October 1898 divided the two groups into separate, independent societies “Chistopol’” and “Chistopol’skie Vyselki.” Each of these separate societies was to have a separate office of village elder. Furthermore, the Chistopol’ city peasants were expected to elect, from amongst their midst, sotskie and desiatskie.

CONCLUSION

The majority of historians of the Great Reform era focus on the zemstvos and the reformed city duma, few focus on the elections that continued to occur in the institutions that existed prior to the introduction of the Reforms — the estate assemblies, the Russian Orthodox Church, and other local positions. This chapter has examined this latter set of elections in an attempt to explore how the electoral process evolved in the era of political, economic and social change in Kazan province. What this analysis suggests is that while quite a few of the elements of the electoral practice remained the same, the sentiments of voters following 1864 evolved considerably. Concerns about rights of participation, matters of jurisdiction, the right not to serve, and the legitimacy of the electoral process had become issues of importance to them as they themselves expressed in their own words through their complaints. Together with the

643 Ibid., l. 7-7ob.
644 Ibid., l. 10-10ob.
645 Ibid., l. 13ob.
sentiments expressed by voters who participated in the zemstvo and duma institutions, some of whom participated in multiple elections, they attest to an interest in elections as more than a means of filling needed positions. Elections were also becoming the legitimate means of political participation, and therefore who participated and why was of great interest. Elections were not considered valid, then, when a village was not represented, or when the person elected had not been elected using the proper procedures. Likewise, when a person was elected properly, it was difficult to know how to remove him from his position should he prove to be a poor representative. Conversely, procedures were not always strictly followed, however, when a perceived societal need or desire would not technically allow for the election of the favored candidate, usually due to religious affiliation. Further, if a person was determined to be well-respected or contribute to the society, the technical procedures may have been interpreted to allow inclusion because it was the “right” thing to do. As seen in the actual cases, “rights” of participation may not have always been officially drafted to allow for the “right” thing to be done. This ambiguity and even contradiction caused not only confusion but frustration among local voters and officials, and often led to the resolution of a dispute by local officials and institutions, with the imperial institutions deferring to the local decisions.

The emergence of these new sentiments about rights, representation, jurisdiction and procedure was a part of the new, changing atmosphere ushered in through the Great Reforms. While both existing and new institutions used those electoral procedures largely rooted in earlier practices, voters who participated in elections to these institutions experienced an evolution in how those procedures were understood for individual and collective interests. As the franchise expanded to include large groups of new voters, several issues arose: the desire for greater rights, for more direct representation, for jurisdictional clarity, and for following procedures
correctly along with a desire to ensure the best outcome for the community. This balance required that local needs and concerns be addressed – particularly those relating to ethnicity and religion.

The electoral landscape of Kazan province in the era of Great Reforms encompassed the newly-established zemstvos, the reformed city dumas, the existing institutions of the estate assemblies, those of the Russian Orthodox Church, and various other local positions. That landscape had deep procedural roots in past experience, but also had a new air of an evolving political culture; that culture would evolve still further in the opening years of the twentieth century when those electoral experiences were taken to the national level.
CHAPTER V

THE 1905 REVOLUTION AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS:
ELECTORAL PRACTICES REFLECT NEW POLITICAL REALITIES

Throughout the nineteenth century, local elections occurred in Kazan province in a steady and remarkably consistent fashion in the midst of war, famine, disease outbreak, industrial growth, bureaucratic expansion, and fundamental changes in the political and social organization of society. As the twentieth century began with a new war in the Far East and mounting political opposition to the government, elections continued for officials who served at all levels of local institutions. The accumulated effects of the gradual changes over the nineteenth century and the new pressures that opened the twentieth led to increasingly fractionalized, insistent, and violent demands for the political and administrative participation enjoyed at the local level to become a serious, sustained, and formal part of national governance of the empire. Although there was no unified vision as to how this participation should be extended, to whom, on what grounds, and in what fashion, by the late 1890s few were willing to accept life as it was – the issues of land reform, labor rights, civil liberties, and national expression by the empire’s non-Russian populations could no longer be avoided. Years of sporadic, disorganized, uncoordinated, and at times very violent action by parts of society, including the government, and in nearly every corner of the empire, led to the 1905 revolution and to the establishment of Russia’s first national parliament, the State Duma.

While the elections for the State Duma have attracted considerable scholarly attention since they were first officially announced in October 1905, the local elections held concurrently with the period of the four State Dumas have not been the focus of such extensive study. Further, few studies have attempted to analyze the connections between national and local
elections, either from the perspective of practice and procedure, or from the perspective of the views expressed by voters through those elections. This chapter takes initial steps toward examining local elections through the use of archival documents related to local elections in Kazan province for a host of official positions, and toward analyzing the interactions between the national elections of deputies to the State Dumas and the local elections as seen in the issues raised by the local voters. The primary issues they were concerned with were the rights of participation and representation, the ability to not only follow election procedures properly, but to also ensure that those procedures elected someone who could properly represent the voters. Further, voters in the early twentieth century sought valid elections free of corruption and conflicts of interest. These interests were stated in more direct fashion than in previous decades in electoral complaints as well as in the electoral proceedings themselves.

Brought together, these expressed concerns reflected a desire to have the right to participate or not to participate in local elections that would properly elect representatives who would reflect their individual and collective interests and serve their constituents in addressing the province’s urgent needs. The archival cases examined in this chapter demonstrate that these sentiments reflected an evolving electoral culture that suggest the considerable impact of the significant changes brought by the Great Reforms and the experience of Russia’s first national elections. The concerns of Kazan’s voters remained largely local, even when the political notions they expressed extended far beyond the province’s boundaries.
In the face of the October 1905 strikes and disturbances that were a part of the increasing revolutionary activity across the empire, the Kazan gorodskoi golova, Popriadukhin, was unable to maintain order in the city, as armed “revolutionaries”\textsuperscript{646} took over the city duma building and killed several people. Moreover, Popriadukhin was not able to keep the city functioning, especially the medical department (sanitarnaia chast’) and the city economy (gorodskoe khoziaistvo); the water system also stopped functioning.\textsuperscript{647} This was particularly vital because without the proper functioning of the city water supply, not only were there dangers of disease that resulted from a lack of drainage and cleanliness greater, but fire response efforts were severely hampered when the wells went dry.\textsuperscript{648} The lack of control over the city extended to the police as mobs beat students and others who looked like members of the “intelligentsia.”\textsuperscript{649} The inability of the gorodskoi golova to control the revolutionary situation in the city was severely criticized by the government in a subsequent review of the events conducted in 1908.\textsuperscript{650}

As the events, like those that occurred in Kazan, escalated into revolution across the empire, the government struggled to find a means of restoring order. Various options were considered by the Tsar and his ministers, from a violent police crackdown on one hand, to more political concessions on the other. Left with little choice, Nicholas II issued the Manifesto of October 17 outlining political reforms. The short document obligated the government to:

1.) grant the population the unshakable foundations of civic freedom based on the principles of real personal inviolability, freedom of conscience, speech, assembly,
and union; 2.) without halting the scheduled elections to the State Duma, to admit to participation in the Duma, as far as is possible in the short time remaining before its call, those classes of the population which at present are altogether deprived of the franchise, leaving the further development of the principle of universal suffrage to the new legislative order, and 3.) to establish it as an unbreakable rule that no law can become effective without the approval of the State Duma and that the elected representatives of the people should be guaranteed an opportunity for actual participation in the supervision of the legality of the actions of authorities appointed by (the Tsar).\(^{651}\)

Not unexpectedly given the expressed demands of many for greater political representation and participation, as seen not only nationally, but also in the local electoral documents, the Manifesto was met by near-universal enthusiasm. The creation of the State Duma fundamentally changed the governing structure of the Russian Empire.

For the first time, elections were to be national; those elected were to represent their province \textit{beyond} that province, serving those who elected them and affecting also those who did not. The establishment of a national duma in many respects embodied the culmination of political and social change that had evolved into revolution over the course of more than a century. Electoral practices had also evolved to the point at which the demands and desires that motivated voters who participated in local elections as well as the national elections were fundamentally new, while the procedures of voting were linked to decades of local elections.\(^{652}\)

\textbf{Parties, People, and Platforms: Local Issues, National Politics}

Given the diversity of political activism and involvement, the 1905 revolution may be considered not one, but a series of revolutions. The diverse landscape of political parties formed following the publishing of the October Manifesto is an indication of the multitude of sentiments that contributed to the revolution. Among this spectrum of sentiments, however, were several

\(^{651}\) PSZ III, vol. 25, 26803.

\(^{652}\) For one of the most comprehensive scholarly works, see Emmons, \textit{The Formation of Political Parties}. 
core political perspectives that ranged from liberal and socialist views on the left to conservative and even ultraconservative views on the right. These views also expressed concerns specific to the peoples of Kazan province, namely: a growing national movement among the non-Russian peoples of the province that assumed several variants; agrarian concerns; and, concerns about the governance of the Russian Empire itself.

Religious and National Expression: Cultural and Political Movements

There was considerable concern among the Tatar population of Kazan province about the ability to retain religious and cultural autonomy, perhaps expressed most clearly in the debate over curriculum, language of instruction, and the teaching staff at schools for Tatar students. As with that debate, the spectrum of political views among the Tatar communities varied widely, including the views of those who supported the broader liberal agenda seeking a representative government and calling for freedom of religion, assembly, expression, and conscience. Further, many Tatars in Kazan sought full equality for all citizens of the empire, regardless of ethnicity and religion, and also the right of cultural self-determination, including the right to use native languages in educational institutions, in print, in the press, as well as in official business (e.g. court proceedings). While there was considerable consistency in the overall desires for the protection of cultural and religious autonomy, there was no firm consensus among the Tatar community of Kazan regarding the desired form of these rights and expressions, nor regarding the manner in which these overall aims were sought. As a result, as with the broader spectrum of political views present in the opening years of the twentieth century, so too was there a spectrum of political views among the Tatar community in Kazan.
One of the most prominent political groups among the Tatars of Kazan province, and in particular those who lived in the province’s cities, was the jadidists.\textsuperscript{653} Begun as a cultural movement that supported educational reform, jadidism gradually developed into a political movement.\textsuperscript{654} Jadidists believed that the Muslims of the Russian Empire should embrace new, modern (especially European) knowledge, learn Russian and other European languages, and advocate for political change within the empire, especially for a constitution that would guarantee freedoms for all peoples of the empire. As with any broad political movement, there were internal differences on particular issues, but in general jadidists advocated reform among the Muslim communities and openness to the benefits of modern education, science, and political possibilities. Sadri Maksudi was a product of the educational approach to western subjects – he was a famous scientist, who also taught in Tatar schools, and later became a prominent member of the Muslim political party.\textsuperscript{655}

Among the most prominent jadidists was I. Gasprinskii (a very vocal advocate of reformed schools for Tatars and Muslims);\textsuperscript{656} others included publicists M. Bigiev, K. Tardzhemani, and F. Karimi. These and others were active contributors to the newly-blossoming Tatar press, especially the popular jadid newspaper Tardzheman or Terjuman (The Translator), founded in 1883 by Gasprinskii and published in Tatar and Russian.\textsuperscript{657} Although Gasprinskii’s ideas were extremely influential to the jadid movement, he was not particularly politically active,

\textsuperscript{653} Jadidism, from the Arabic word jadid meaning “new,” is the term used to describe the cultural and social renewal among Muslims of the Russian empire at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, in particular the “new method” of teaching at schools as seen in the previous chapter. For a detailed discussion of jadidism, see Khabutdinov, \textit{Ot obschchiny k natsii}, 88-136.

\textsuperscript{654} Ira M. Lapidus, \textit{A History of Islamic Societies} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 791.

\textsuperscript{655} A. Iu. Khabutdinov, \textit{Lidery natsii} (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 2003), 87-106.


\textsuperscript{657} See Geraci, \textit{Window on the East}, 161.
and chose instead to emphasize religious and cultural affairs.  

Other jadid newspapers included Vakyr (The Time), which was opened in February of 1906, and Shura (Advice), which was opened in 1908.

Shigabutdin Mardzhani (1818-1889) was a prominent jadidist leader/intellectual whose studies in the ethnography and history of Muslims and Tatars were influential to a generation of readers. He believed that “the Tatar world remained related to the rest of the Islamic world, at the same time it was also part of the Russian Empire.” Further, he believed that true knowledge had two sources – God and practical research. He believed, therefore, that reforms were possible in the Muslim world as coming from God. In this sense, his ideas were foundational for the development of jadidism. Rashid Ibragimov (1857-1944), a jadid leader born in Tobol’sk province, took an even more practical approach, “if we cannot solve (our) territorial problems, then the question of autonomy will certainly arise, even if only subsequently.” Still more practical was Riza Fakhretdin (1859-1936), who stated directly, “we need … railroads, Junker schools, cadet schools, a military academy…” These views – theoretical and practical – formed the basis for subsequent political development among not only Tatars but Muslims across the empire. Although there was some conservative opposition to the jadid movement, expressed by the kadimists (conservative mullahs), who were led by Akhmetzian Saidashev and Ishmukhammet Dinmukhammetov, a Kazan merchant and publicist from Viatka province respectively, there was less support for the conservatives than for the liberal jadidists.

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658 Lapidus, A History of Islamic Societies, 794.
660 Khabutdinov, Lидера натции, 28.
661 Ibid.
662 Ibid., 49.
663 Ibid., 63.
664 See Khabutdinov, Ot obshchiny k натции, 107-110.
The jadidists formed an early alliance with the Constitutional Democrats (Konstitusionnaia Demokraticheskaia partiia, or Kadets), the primary liberal political party, to form a very broad-based organization across the empire very soon after the publishing of the October Manifesto. Together, the jadidists sought to advance their liberal program and gain support for national autonomy together with the Kadet’s push for broad ranging rights and freedoms for all peoples of the empire, especially for minority ethnic and religious groups.

Reformers on the Left: Kazan’s Liberals and “Octobrists”

There was a natural affinity between those who were part of or sympathetic to the jadidist movement and other liberals of the Russian Empire – their overall political aims were consistent with one another as were their strategy and tactics for trying to reach those aims. Having developed in the zemstvos and city dumas throughout the decades of reform, the liberals of the empire included those who supported the creation of a constitutional monarchy to bring the principles of self-government to their logical conclusion on the national level. Further, they wanted to ensure respect for individual as well as collective freedoms of conscience, assembly, and religious as well as ethnic autonomy. The most prominent of the groups – and eventually parties – to be formed officially in the fall of 1905 were the Kadets and the Union of 17th of October (Soiuz 17 oktiabria, or Octobrists).665

The organizational committee of the Kadet party of Kazan province was formed in December 1905, and consisted of five people: M. S. Venetsianov, A. G. Bat’, G. G. Tel’berg, A. A. Simolin,666 and A. V. Vasil’ev.667 Among those who financed the activities of the Kazan

665 The Octobrists took their name after the Manifesto signed by Tsar Nicholas II on October 17, 1905.
666 Simolin was involved in an electoral case in 1907 involving his voter eligibility based on inherited land.
province Kadet party were the A. D. and D. D. Chernoiarov brothers, and the I. I. and P. I. Aleksandrov brothers. Prominent Muslim merchants, some of whom were also local elected officials, supported the Kadets, including I. Kazakov, B. Apanaev, M. Galeev, and S. Aitov. Their support was not necessary linked to party membership. The formation of the committee was officially announced in one of the liberal newspapers, the Volzhskii listok, on December 9; in addition, the party was also officially opened to those who shared its views. Kadets were primarily formed from the ranks of zemstvo and duma members and professionals (teachers, doctors, agronomists, and statisticians), university professors, and other intellectuals; given the prominent role played by university professors in the zemstvos and dumas in the province, there was a substantially large number of people who were part of the Kadet party in Kazan.

Among those participating in the early formation of the Kadet party (1905-1908) from the professoriate of the province were 22 professors and 10 associate professors (privat-dotsenty) from Kazan University, one teacher from the veterinary institute, and eight teachers from the higher women’s courses. Likewise, there were many merchants who joined the early ranks of the party: I. G. Stakheev, the A. D. and D. D. Chernoiarov brothers, the I. I. and P. I. Aleksandrov brothers, I. Kazakov, B. Apanaev, M. Galeev and S. Aitov. Kadet party branches were also established in Chistopol’, Mariinskii Posad, Tetiushi, and other cities of the province.

The Kadet party of the province grew so quickly that the organizing committee increased by the end of December 1905, requiring elections for new members as there were more candidates than could be accommodated; 12 were elected in those first local party leadership

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669 Ibid., 44.
670 Ibid., 41.
671 Ibid., 44.
elections. Four of these leaders participated in the All-Russian Congress of the Kadet party in Moscow in early January 1906. As indicated above, from the very beginning, the Kazan Kadet party sought to bring together liberals with similar views, including those from the Tatar and Muslim liberal movements. At the January 1906 national party meeting, they articulated their support for the concerns of the minority nationalities of the empire, first and foremost, those of Tatars and other minorities of the province. This close connection continued into the campaign for the four State Duma elections, despite the changing electoral rules, which altered the ability for such representation from Kazan province.

Similar in many respects to the Kadets, yet supporting a more conservative approach to the liberal reforms, were the province’s Octobrists, who included many zemstvo deputies, large industrialists, landowners, and more of the conservative faculty members of the Kazan University. Likewise, the majority of the Russian merchantry of the province were supporters of the Octobrists; G. A. Krestovnikov, the head of a major chemical factory in Kazan, was also a member of the central committee of the Octobrists. On the province level, one quarter of the party’s members were merchants. On November 10, 1905, a meeting was held in the Kazan province zemstvo board with deputies from the zemstvo, professors from the University, and others, including M. Ia. Kapustin, I. A. Praksin, K. Ia. Zakroev, L. P. Okhromenko, and P. N. Bel’kovich. During the meeting, they decided to establish an organization under the name The Kazan party of the Manifesto of October 17; the main elements of the party platform were consistent with the Union of 17th of October. The Octobrists established their central committee in Chistopol’ in January 1906, and the first chairman was the gorodskoi golova of Chistopol’.

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672 Ibid., 42.
674 Ainutdinova, Liberal’noe dvizhenie v Kazanskoj gubernii, 47.
They established the *Kazanskii telegraf* (Kazan Telegraph) to serve as their newspaper. Among the Octobrist leaders were B. V. Varneke, P. I. Krotov and M. Ia. Kapustin, all of whom were professors at the University.

**Kazan’s Socialists**

As with other parts of the empire, socialist and Marxist views enjoyed varying degrees of support among the diverse populations of Kazan province, and also similarly, the party organizations that developed around these views roughly paralleled those of the capital cities and of other regions. Particular local specificities, for example, the relative strength of the Kazan merchanty, the presence of a major university, and the multi-national population influenced the development of the local branches of these groups.

The first Social Democratic group of Kazan was formed in 1897, and was formalized through the founding of the Kazan city committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers’ party in 1905. Throughout the revolutionary years, the party was active in publishing pamphlets and advocating its views among workers (including organizing strikes) and attempting to appeal to peasants of the province. They also published an illegal newspaper *Rabochii* (The Worker), headed by Ia. M. Sverdlov. In the fall of 1911, the Social Democrats of the province created a Bolshevik group that organized worker’s circles and actively spread their ideas among the workers. In the spring of the next year, however, the police arrested the majority of the group’s members and expelled them from the province. The social-democratic party never had a sizable following among Kazan’s Tatar workers, largely due to their religiosity. There was some

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resonance, however, of social-democratic ideas among the workers, including Tatars, who worked in the province’s factories.676

Kazan’s Socialist Revolutionary party (SRs) was formed by members of the local intelligentsia as well as some members of the peasantry. The first party committees were formed from 1900 to 1903. During the revolution, the SRs conducted a host of armed assaults in connection with peasant uprisings and attempted several assassinations of local leaders. The Kazan SRs’ primary local newspaper was the *Krest’ianskaia gazeta (The Peasant Newspaper)*.

In 1905, a group of young Tatar SRs founded a local group called “Tanchylyar,”677 which became the Volga branch of the SR committee created around the newspaper *Tan iulduzy (Utreenniaia zvezda)* or the Morning Star, edited by the famous Tatar writer Gaiaz Iskhaki; it was only open for six months. The political program of the Tanchylyar group was similar to the agrarian socialists: they wanted to transfer land to the people, to proclaim full civilian and political rights for all, and to declare an eight-hour work day. As with the liberals, they supported full national and cultural autonomy for the peoples of the province and empire, and as a result, they were in principle against the declaration of a single state language and demanded equal status for all languages. They believed that in the event of a revolution, “Tatars would easily gain their rights.”678 Iskhaki was therefore critical of Tatars who did not trust Russians and believed that it was only through close cooperation with Russians that Tatars would be able to destroy the monarchy.679 However, in general, Tatar socialists were not against the state in

676 Khabutdinov, *Ot obshchiny k natsii*, 112-113.
677 This name was derived from Tan, as in *Tan iulduzy*, the group’s newspaper.
678 Khabutdinov, *Ot obshchiny k natsii*, 131-132.
679 Ibid., 132. They also supported mass education and further training of teachers to facilitate this.
itself, and did not believe that there was an overall contradiction between bureaucracy as an aspect of government and local self-government as an elective administrative body. 680

Throughout the opening decades of the twentieth century, the Tatar population of Kazan province largely supported either the liberals – Kadets and Ittifak 681 – or the socialists – primarily the SRs. The liberals enjoyed considerably more support and many of Kazan’s liberal leaders participated in national party organizations, and were elected to the State Duma as seen below. Even when their political views differed, the issues that motivated those views were largely similar and shared by many Russians of the province – education, political reforms, individual and collective rights, the ability to raise capital and economic development, and improved social welfare. The commonality of many of these basic political desires was expressed through the complaints filed in response to local elections, as was articulated by a variety of voters in the archival documents examined below.

NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS IN LOCAL CONTEXT: ELECTING KAZAN’S STATE DUMA DEPUTIES

The mood of excitement and anticipation surrounding the elections to the first State Duma in the spring of 1906 was characterized by the large numbers of people who wished to participate and by the fact that many of Kazan’s non-Russian speaking population completed their voting paperwork in their native languages, something previously unimaginable. 682 Despite the government later clarifying in March 1906 that voting documents must be completed in Russian, the enthusiasm for elections to the State Duma was palpable as Kazan’s diverse groups of voters prepared to participate.

680 Ibid., 133.
681 Ittifak is short for Ittifaq al-Muslimin, meaning The Union of the Muslims.
682 Usmanova, Deputaty ot Kazanskoi gubernii, 12-13.
The electoral law of December 11, 1905 laid out the procedures for determining who those voters would be and how they would participate. While more inclusive than the electoral procedures proposed under the earlier Bulygin project, the elections for the State Duma were still indirect, did not include women, students, or those actively serving in the military; they also were weighted to favor the nobility over all other groups of voters, particularly the peasants. Even with the exclusion of so many people, the electoral law enfranchised approximately 20-25 million citizens. As with the zemstvo and city duma elections, property ownership and tax payments were the primary eligibility qualifications. Divided into four curiae, landowners, peasants, town dwellers, and workers, the voters were to elect electors, either in two stages (landowners, urban voters, and workers) or three (peasants). As a result of the differentiated weight assigned to these curiae, each elector represented approximately the following number of inhabitants: 2,000 landowners, 4,000 urban residents, 30,000 peasants, and 90,000 workers. Together these electors were to then elect 524 deputies to the Duma, beginning with the first stages of elections at the most local levels. It was often at these initial stages of election that the most confusion arose, particularly among peasant voters. A brief examination of peasant elections is illustrative of the electoral process followed by voters of other curiae, although certain variations existed across the groups.

As new electoral institutions were introduced in Russia, so too were electoral procedures and practices to a very large extent built upon those that had been followed for decades. New additions to the local electoral landscape in 1905 included electoral commissions overseen by

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684 It has often been argued that the objections of peasants to voting procedures represented a confusion and a misunderstanding about electoral processes, however, that apparent confusion at least in some cases rather may have actually reflected an alternative view of how and why elections should be conducted.
governor or a gorodskoi golova in each electoral jurisdiction (province, district, and city). These commissions approved voter lists and resolved disputes and complaints as was consistent with the role played by the provincial bureaus for zemstvo and city affairs for zemstvo and city duma elections; likewise, their decisions could be appealed to the Governing Senate in St. Petersburg. Local zemstvos and city boards created the official lists of eligible voters. A majority of votes was required to elect delegates unless there was an impasse that extended to three days at which time a plurality was sufficient for election.

The peasant curia elections followed existing elections for village assemblies of heads of households and for county assemblies. Each county assembly elected two delegates to the district assembly. The number of delegates to be elected at the district assemblies was calculated based on zemstvo taxes paid by the peasants in each district. These delegates in turn elected peasant electors (vyborshchiki) who went on to the provincial assembly; 98 electors were elected from Kazan to the provincial assembly in February and March of 1906. It should be noted that many of the peasants who participated in the elections for the first State Duma did so as members of the landowners’ curia as owners of private plots separate from communal plots. This was consistent with the fact that many of the peasant voters during the first decades of the zemstvo elections also participated in the landowners’ curia. The combined electors at the Kazan provincial assembly from all curiae – 139 in total – elected nine deputies of the total 542 to the first Duma.

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685 Representatives for the county assembly were elected from heads of households, one per every ten households, hence their title desiatidvorniki.
686 The number of delegates elected at the district assembly was calculated based on the number of delegates from counties, which was in turn calculated based on the size of the peasant population in each district.
688 In 1767, 535 of the 564 delegates to the Legislative Commission were elected. There were only seven more delegates elected to the first State Duma in 1906 than were elected to the Commission 140 years earlier, despite the considerable expansion of the empire in terms of size and population.
Going to the Polls, Some Hungry, Some Excited, Some Scared: Parties Campaign across Kazan Province for the First State Duma (1905-1906)

In many ways the core issues that motivated the electoral campaigns for the first State Duma in 1906 reflected the primary concerns behind the revolutionary activities of the preceding years: the land question, the question of expanding the franchise, the protection of religious, ethnic and cultural rights, and the challenge to the monarchy itself. Each of these issues was of importance to the voters of Kazan province as well, but among the most urgent were a host of ethno-confessional and religious concerns, and this influenced the nature of the first national election campaign for the State Duma held in Kazan province.

The first was the longest of the four campaigns, beginning with the announcement by Nicholas I on August 6, 1905, of the creation of a State Duma, concluding in early spring of 1906. Tensions were high across the empire as the election campaign really began in earnest after the proclamation of the October 17 Manifesto (1905). The governor of Kazan received the right to use troops to suppress any real or potential uprisings by deploying troops. He did this often, using soldiers to conduct police functions. On December 12, 1905, there were mass arrests in Kazan. According to police records, from December 20, 1905 – April 1, 1906, 225 people were arrested in the city of Kazan alone. 689

In a less violent, yet still intrusive fashion, the Kazan police forbade the distribution of voter lists from the “left” parties but actively spread list of voters from the “right” published in the newspaper Kazanskii telegraf. 690 As a further expression of the attempt to keep the local elections under control, the governor and the police of Kazan even prohibited a lecture by a

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professor of Kazan University, A. Zavadskii, entitled, “The Electoral system to the State Duma,” scheduled for February 9, 1905, to be given at the teachers’ society. A week later, another of Zavadskii’s lectures was prohibited, “The Technology of elections,” (Tekhnika vyborov). And in his telegram to Minister S. Witte, the chairman of the central committee of the Kadet party, P. D. Dolgorukov, complained about the prohibition of Kadet party gatherings by the governor of Kazan. Numerous voters and candidates were arrested in the run up to the elections, including peace mediator, V. P. Kupriianov, of Kazan province who had been nominated as a candidate for Duma deputy. Likewise the leader of the Kazan Union of Muslims and member of the Kazan Kadet Committee, elector Iu. Kh. Akchurin, was arrested on the eve of the elections. Despite this interference, the Kadet party, together with the liberal Tatars and Muslims of Kazan carried out a very active campaign across the province. Of the 80 electors, 40 were Kadets, 26 of them were Tatar, 11 were supporters of the Union of 17th of October, and three were from the Tsarsko-narodnaia partiia (Party for the Tsar and people).

Great expense and effort were expended during the first Duma campaign, particularly by the Kadet party. Given the close connections of many Kadets to the Kazan University, the university press was heavily used for printing party and campaign materials. In February and March 1906, the party also organized meetings, pre-election gatherings, and party-campaign banquets. During those meetings and gatherings, and also aggressively through the local press, the Kadets continued to advocate for the main points of their platform, including a reduced work day, the redistribution of agricultural land via subsidized payments to landowners, and reform and change through peaceful means.

691 Ibid., 218.
692 Ibid., 218-219.
693 Ibid., 220.
694 Ibid., 249.
695 Ibid.
The Kadets and the liberal Tatars found themselves to be natural allies. In Kazan province, this substantially contributed to the success of the Kadets during the first Duma elections. In the campaign for the first Duma elections, the demands of those living in Tatar villages were similar to those living in the cities: the guarantee of cultural, linguistic and religious rights, which should be reflected, even if informally, in the proportional representation of members elected for the Duma, and the placement of mektebs and medresses\textsuperscript{696} under the control of local Tatar/Muslim oversight, rather than the state.\textsuperscript{697} Further, among the Tatar supporters of the Kadets were the workers of the Ram and Libikht factories, and the Society of gas and electricity.\textsuperscript{698} As a result of the active discussion of, and support for, the elections to the first State Duma, a large majority of Tatars participated across the province.

The Octobrists also propagated their views in the run up to the election – their main competition being the Kadets. As part of their political attack, the Octobrists twisted a Kadet slogan, “All for the People and through the People!” into “Through the People and Nothing for the People!”\textsuperscript{699} While this may have gained them some votes, given their connection to the monarchy and the governor and to wealthy industrialists of the province, the Octobrists were also open to criticism as many peasants and workers found little in common with their views. Across the various districts of the province, the Octobrists were only able to secure ten electors in those districts where there were more landowners. In the city of Kazan itself, only 15% of the electors were Octobrists.\textsuperscript{700} Those who were opposed to the views of the Octobrists, (e.g, socialists),

\textsuperscript{696} These were Tatar religious schools organized on a local basis that were largely outside of the state-sponsored primary school system.
\textsuperscript{697} Khabutdinov, \textit{Ot obschchiny k natsii}, 124-125.
\textsuperscript{698} Elert, “Revoliutsionno-osvoboditel’noe dvizhenie,” 91.
\textsuperscript{699} Ibid., 87.
\textsuperscript{700} Ainutdinova, \textit{Liberal’noe dvizhenie v Kazanskoi gubernii}, 60.
some peasants, and workers stated in the local press that the Octoberists were in support of the police action against voters and candidates and even supported repression.

Most socialists, in particular the Bolsheviks active in Kazan, chose a different approach to the campaign for the first elections to the State Duma, and to the Duma itself – mass protests and even a boycott of the elections. The SRs of Kazan, although they stated that they would support a boycott, did very little to carry it out, leaving this task to the Bolshevik wing of province’s socialists.  

They were most successful in convincing voters of particular factories, like the Alafuzov factory, to boycott the elections. The decree of March 8, 1906, prohibiting the boycotting of the elections affected other workers who did not follow the boycott or participate in mass demonstrations as they had during the 1905 revolution.  

These parties and other smaller political groups conducted their campaigns in the context of not only national politics and local political, social and economic concerns, but also against the backdrop of two other critical issues that were very much front and center to the voters: hunger and fear. During the winter of 1906, a significant portion of the province’s population was affected by a famine that was brought on by a drought in the summer of 1905, which led to large-scale crop failure. Fear of hunger was coupled with a fear of violence unleashed by the Chernosotentsi (Black Hundreds) throughout the months leading up to the first Duma elections. Together with the central issues concerning the peoples of Kazan, these two additional factors were sources of immediate fear for many in the province.

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701 Elert, “Revoliutsionno-osvoboditel’noe dvizhenie,” 79.
702 Ibid., 91.
The famine of 1906 extended beyond Kazan, but disproportionately affected the peasants of the province, including the majority of Tatar villages. An article in *Volzhskii vestnik* of July 1906 criticized the duma for not doing more to address the needs of the starving: “There are hundreds of beautiful and strong duma speeches on the agrarian question, dozens of Kadet speeches about horse projects, in which, through rose-colored, beautiful ideology there will be a rather bright sunrise of their bourgeoise existence; sigh and groan philanthropists – not in the slightest have the lives of the devastated and hungry Russian villages been improved.” The famine also precipitated the outbreak of disease, in particular typhoid, and left thousands on the edge of starvation. The perceived inaction of the government in failing to assist those starving particularly affected the Octobrists, who were seen as the political party most closely affiliated with officials in charge of famine relief.

The government was also implicated in another of the primary fears of the population – that of the violent acts committed by the Black Hundreds. Many believed that the police actually armed them with the weapons they used against those who were most vocally opposed to the government, Jews, and others, many of whom were just victims of circumstance. They also set off bombs at workers’ meetings and conducted anti-Semitic pogroms. The local leader of the Black Hundreds was V. F. Zalesskii. In addition, the *Tsarsko-narodnoe Russkoe obschestvo* (The Russian society for the Tsar and people), a branch of the *Soiuz Russkogo naroda* (Union of the Russian people), and other similar organizations were opened in Kazan. And although there were not many Black Hundreds in Kazan province, their presence was acutely felt.

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705 Elert, “Revoliutsionno-osvoboditel’noe dvizhenie,” 85-86.
706 Ibid., 88-89.
707 Khuzin et al., *Istoriia Tatarstan*, Chapter 42.
In response to this violence by the Black Hundreds, the Kazan city duma created a city commission to organize the protection of the city, which was to form a series of neighborhood volunteer watch groups. This was replicated in several other cities of the province, including Laishev, Iadrinsk, Chistopol’, Tsivil’sk, and even in the village of Anashevo. Specifically, on July 28, 1905, the Kazan city duma discussed “the need to take measures to protect the personal safety of the city’s residents against the Black Hundreds who are violent toward peaceful citizens.” However, this issue, the gorodskoi golova stated, could not be discussed at the duma assembly because the “Kazan governor… demanded that this question be deleted from the agenda of the duma, since, in his view, it does not relate to the law about the topics that the city society administration (gorodskoe obschestvennoe upravlenie) can discuss.” The city duma then decided that:

1.) the health and lives of city residents are, in the present circumstances of internal politics, absolutely not provided for, as is clearly observable by the evidence of pogroms in many cities, organized against peaceful citizens, that is not prevented by the local police,
2.) the Kazan city police, even when wanting to protect citizens from assaults by the Black Hundreds, in all likelihood will not be in the position to carry out that important task…
3.) the city board cannot be deprived of the right to take measures to protect the health and the lives of the citizens from all dangers, whatever they may be threatened by – and it falls to the gorodskoi golova to protest to the Governing Senate about the petition of the Kazan governor prohibiting the city duma from discussing this question.

On October 20, 1905, the Kazan city duma again discussed the issue of organizing city protection groups.

Given the disorganization of the police, and given that they do such a poor job of providing for the safety of the population and do not provide protection for the

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708 Ainutdinova, Liberal’noe dvizhenie v Kazanskoj gubernii, 40-41.  
709 NA RT, f. 98, op. 4, d. 1924, l. 171ob-172.  
710 Ibid.  
711 Ibid.
personal and property of the citizens, rather the opposite, they incite unrest, which
may give rise to difficulties and disorder, the city duma declares the definite
necessity to begin to organize a city militia, convinced that such a measure will
more reliably and successfully provide for peace and order in the city and allow
the board to request that the already-selected commission immediately carry them
out. Only under this security arrangement and when assistance by police and in
extreme cases by military patrol is provided, can the duma, being forced to do so,
consider taking upon itself the responsibility for the peace and order in the city.\footnote{Ibid.}

One day later, on October 21, 1905, following the publication of the October Manifesto,
the Black Hundreds organized a mass meeting to support the monarchy, at which there were
many religious leaders, merchants and members of the police. They gathered around the
building of the Kazan city duma with icons, and the crowd opened fire on the duma building,
which in turn set off a pogrom in the city.\footnote{Ainutdinova, Liberal'noe dvizhenie v Kazanskoi gubernii, 40-41.} Peace was far from secured in Kazan.

**Electoral Victory for Kazan’s Duma Deputies**

The nine deputies elected from Kazan represented a province that had experienced
considerable upheaval during the 1905 revolution. Not only had Kazan seen a violent takeover
of the city duma building during the October general strike, but also that same month several
students of the Kazan teacher’s seminary were overwhelmed by the events and had to leave
school due to nervous stress; other students had participated in demonstrations and petitions.\footnote{Geraci, Window on the East, 249.}

Hunger and illness affected many more across the province. The increase in political
participation that both led to and resulted from the revolutionary activity of 1905 also involved
the province’s non-Russian communities.

With the April 17, 1905 edict on religious tolerance, there was a surge in conversions
from Orthodoxy to Islam. Tatar and other non-Russian language publications on a wide range of

\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}
topics increased\textsuperscript{715} as did overt expressions of ethnic and religious awakening that at times were also combined with political aspiration.\textsuperscript{716} In August of 1905, an unofficial meeting of the empire’s Muslim merchants and intellectuals was held on the Oka River near Nizhnii Novgorod when they could not gain permission for an official congress of Muslims. During the meeting, the participants called for equal rights for minorities, proportionate representation, and protection of private property all under a constitutional monarchy. Following the publication of the October Manifesto, a similar unofficial congress was held in January 1906 – the All-Russia Congress of Muslims (\textit{Vserossiiskii kongress musul’man}) – in St. Petersburg. This meeting led to the formation of the Union of Muslims, \textit{Ittifak}, which in turn led to the establishment of a Muslim political party as well as what would become a caucus in the State Duma. Given their expressed political views, it is not surprising that during the first Duma, nearly all of the 30 Muslim delegates – over a third of whom were Volga-Ural Tatars or Bashkirs – were allied with the liberal Kadet party.\textsuperscript{717}

It was the third all-empire meeting of Muslims, however, that was the first official Muslim congress, attended by 150 people and held on a boat that floated on the Oka River near Nizhnii Novgorod on August 15, 1906, following the dissolution of the first Duma in June. During the meeting, participants called for the transition of the Union of Muslims into a large political party for all Muslims, and also pushed for school reform that would allow for the use of native languages for instruction even if students were still required to learn Russian. This latter point was a principle that they supported for all of the empire’s minorities. Further, in the resolution passed by the members in attendance that day, they declared:

\textsuperscript{715} Ibid., 265, 268.
\textsuperscript{716} Ibid., 266.
\textsuperscript{717} Ibid., 269.
1. It is necessary and in step with the times to have convergence of Muslims from all provinces of Russia on the basis of societal cultural demands and tasks of modern Russian life.

2. To achieve and implement these tasks, the progressive faction of Muslims, sharing the ideals of progressive Russian society, acts in the sense of establishing in the country a legal order based on the principles of participation of freely elected people’s representatives in lawmaking and in governance of the state.  

In their second resolution, the group advocated for the reorganization of all official religious organizations pertaining to the governance and oversight of Muslims, and that the leadership of those organizations should be elected “from below by good and free will.”

The electoral campaign for the first State Duma occurred in early 1906. The population of the province largely supported liberal candidates who were either in fact or in affiliation associated with the liberal Kadet party. This was largely due to the support of those surrounding Kazan University and the alliance of the Muslim bloc with the Kadets granting the majority of the Tatar vote for the Kadets. As a result, it is not surprising that the liberal party experienced an overwhelming success in Kazan province. The first State Duma, however, did not last even three months. After a very tense standoff between the Duma and the government over the Duma’s proposed reforms, particularly land reforms, the Tsar dissolved the Duma.

The elections for the second Duma were conducted in the fall of 1906 and in early 1907. The results of these second Duma elections for Kazan province were similar to those of the other European provinces in that the primary vote-getters with the Trudoviki (Labor party) and the Kadets. The success of the latter party, as during the first elections, was due in part to the continued alliance of the Muslim factions and delegates with the Kadets. This alliance

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719 Ibid., 83.
demonstrates the simultaneous support for Muslim and liberal priorities, as scholar Diliara Usmanova states: “The Kazan province section of the Union of Muslims called on Muslim electors to give their vote first and foremost to Muslims, and in those cases where they were in the minority, to give their vote to Russian candidates of political parties that supported the principle of equality of all citizens of the country regardless of religion or nationality.”

Many of the Muslim voters, however, were not able to vote at the volost'-level electoral assemblies because they were scheduled for January 12, 1907, which was the Muslim holiday of Eid ul-Adha. Complaints were sent to the governor about this timing, but it was only after January 8 when Muslim mullah electors sent a telegram of protest addressed to the heads of government in St. Petersburg that the elections were rescheduled for January 13. Having overcome this and other obstacles, such as the cold and damp weather of that winter, the multi-stage elections continued into February, producing electoral results consistent with those of the majority of the European part of the empire; the provincial assembly of February 6 resulted in the election of four Muslim candidates by 44 Muslim electors, the maximum allowed by the 1905 electoral law.

Elections were also conducted on January 13, 1907, in the Mamsinsk county assembly in the district of Kazan. Official paperwork filed to document the elections opened with a long and comprehensive list of the local officials who participated, underscoring the importance and seriousness with which the process itself was taken as well as the extent to which such a broad cross-section of people were involved: the county elder, the assistant to the county elder, the chairman of the county assembly, 3 county judges, 20 village elders, 15 tax collectors (sborshchiki podatei), 119 voters from village societies (obshchestva) - in total 160 people.

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720 Usmanova, Deputaty ot Kazanskoj gubernii, 17.  
721 NART, f. 419, op. 1, d. 412, l. 16-17.  
722 Usmanova, Deputaty ot Kazanskoj gubernii, 24.
attended, more than the 2/3 necessary for valid elections. They conducted closed elections, i.e. balloting via voting box and not voice vote as was consistent with previous procedure, and elected Mamsinsk county peasants, Galim Agdul Nafrikov (from village Shiner Kiner), and Safiulla Tokhvatulin (from the village of Porezh Mamse [sic]), both of whom were confirmed to have the required good behavior. These and other electors went on to elect the province’s delegates to the second State Duma, but these delegates were not to be allowed to serve for long.

Early Sunday morning, June 3, 1907, the doors of the State Duma building were sealed, and the rooms used by the Muslim deputies and particular political parties were locked. With this, the second Duma was dissolved in what became known as the coup d’état of June 3, 1907, as a result of the heated confrontation between the Tsar and Prime Minister Petr Stolypin and the Duma over the issue of confiscation of land.

A new Duma would meet, however only after the electoral laws had been sufficiently changed, as Nicholas II wanted, to weaken the Duma and in his estimation, to strengthen the Russian state. The new electoral law was to produce a Duma loyal to the proposals of the government, yet also inclusive to some degree of those groups of delegates elected to the previous Dumas: a delicate balance was to be struck. The overall number of Duma delegates was reduced from 542 to 442, and reallocated to certain regions, groups and minorities in a manner that would favor those who supported the government’s agrarian program.

Elections proceeded for the third State Duma in the fall of 1907 under the altered electoral law: Kazan was among those cities deemed by the government to be “unreliable,” and as a result the population lost some of its representation in the Duma. The increased property qualifications under the law eliminated most of the Tatars from the eligibility lists. Further, the

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723 NA RT, f. 708, op. 1, d. 4, l. 9.
724 Ibid., l. 9-12.
representatives of the central government in Kazan province used the law as a basis for dividing the city electoral assemblies into two sections, one for Russians and one for non-Russians establishing a de facto quota for Russian and Tatar candidates that limited the possible number of elected deputies to a maximum of two non-Russians. The election campaign for the third Duma was a relative success for the progressive bloc of the Kadet party and the left Octobrists, that included Muslim candidates. The left-centrist bloc accounted for more than half of the deputies (three Kadets, two left Octobrists, two representatives of the Muslim party, and one non-party, progressive village priest). Taken as a whole, the delegates from Kazan province for the third Duma were landed peasants, city residents, and a priest; only nine Muslim deputies from the entire empire were elected to the third Duma whereas the second Duma had 39. The fourth Duma would have only seven Muslim delegates, none of whom was from Kazan province.

As winter thawed into spring in 1912, elections were held for what was to be the fourth and final Duma. Motivated to produce what the government would consider to be favorable election results in terms of nationality of Duma deputies, local officials in Kazan province influenced voting by openly supporting particular candidates and eliminating undesirable candidates, at times going as far as having them arrested or charged with dubious allegations. Despite these efforts, it was not clear on the eve of the election which candidates would win. This unpredictability was due in part to the disproportionate weight assigned to the landowning nobility via the revised electoral laws, the uncertainty about the effect of attempts by local officials to influence the outcome, and the apathy of voters that led to higher than previous absenteeism. The delegates from Kazan province to the fourth Duma were: a peasant landowner, the owner of a beer factory, six noble landowners, a priest, and a peasant.
Kazan’s Duma deputies were concerned with many of the same issues that dominated overall discussions throughout the four short Dumas. They were concerned with economic issues that directly affected the province, including greater protection for trade and commercial activities as well as an expansion of the railroad to facilitate the movement of goods. They also were heavily involved in concerns about the agrarian question, the lack of land, and assisting those who suffered from famine. As seen in the positions of the Muslim deputies, Kazan’s deputies supported the rights of citizens and sought to expand the franchise for women. Also, not surprisingly, they sought greater religious rights and educational rights for all non-Russians.725

Overall, the results of the elections in Kazan province for delegates to the four State Dumas were not that dissimilar from the results of other European provinces of the empire in terms of political and socio-economic composition. Delegates to the first and second Dumas were primarily supporters of the Kadet party and held liberal political views. Also consistent with trends in other parts of the empire, Kazan’s elections for the third and fourth Dumas witnessed the increased influence of local officials in an effort to create a Duma supportive of the government’s policies, particularly regarding the agrarian issue of land redistribution. The primary tactic employed by Kazan’s officials was to divide the population into two groups based on ethnicity – Russian and non-Russian. While this resulted in the election of fewer non-Russians in the third Duma, it also resulted in the elimination of all non-Russian and all Muslim delegates in the fourth Duma; it did not rid the Kazan province delegation of those who held liberal views. Further, over the course of the four Dumas, Kazan’s delegation was comprised of an increasing number of men with long experience serving in local government. Table 1 below

725 See Usmanova, Deputaty ot Kazanskoi gubernii, 140-215.
provides a list of Kazan province’s Duma delegates with brief information about their religious and ethnic affiliation, and their socio-economic background.

Table V: Demographic Composition of Delegates from Kazan Province to State Dumas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Social-Economic Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Duma</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iakov Abramovich Abramov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Chuvash</td>
<td>Peasant; worked on the Moscow-Kazan railroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Said-Girei Shagiakhmetovich Alkin</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>Hereditary noble, homeowner; newspaper owner, public figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garif Sirazetdinovich Badamshin</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>Peasant; engaged in trade/commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleksandr Vasil’evich Vasil’ev</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Hereditary noble; professor of mathematics at Kazan University, served in the zemstvo, and city duma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Nesterovich Gerasimov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Hereditary noble; engaged in agriculture, village scribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petr Andreevich Ershov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Peasant; worked in a gunpowder factory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivan Egorovich Lavrent’ev</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Peasant; village school teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konstantin Viktorovich Lavrskii</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Son of a priest; lawyer, publicist, public figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faizel-Kutdus Mindubaev</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>Peasant; mullah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gavriel’ Feliksovich Shershenevich</td>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>Hereditary noble; lawyer, teacher, professor, public figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Duma</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garif Sirazetdinovich Badamshin</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>Peasant; engaged in trade/commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikhail Vasil’evich Baturov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Peasant; engaged in agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikhail Iakovlevich Kapustin</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Hereditary noble; health officer (sanitarnii vrach), professor at Kazan University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dmitrii Alekseevich Kushnikov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Son of a priest; zemstvo doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadretdin Nizamutdinovich Maksudov</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>Peasant; attorney’s assistant, public figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safiulla Tazetdinovich Maksutov</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>Peasant; mullah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gumer Musich Musin</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>Peasant; engaged in agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grigorii Ivanovich Petrukhin</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Peasant; engaged in agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinovi Mikhailovich Talantshev</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Merchant; factory owner, public and political figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleksandr Fedorovich Fedorov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Chuvash</td>
<td>Peasant; engaged in agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third Duma</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleksandr Nikolaevich Boratynskii</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Hereditary noble, landowner; Kazan district marshal of the nobility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from ibid., 424-435.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aleksei Stepanovich Terenin</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Hereditary noble, landowner; doctor, docent of Kazan University, honorable magistrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dmitrii Stepanovich Smirnov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Priest; professor at the Kazan spiritual academy and Kazan University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleksei Stepanovich Iukhtanov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Peasant; country elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaisa Khamidulloevich Enikeev</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>Hereditary noble; director of Russian-Tatar school, served at a state bank, director of cloth factory, chief steward of charitable organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikolai Prokof’evich Efremov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Honorary, hereditary citizen, landowner; lumberer, gorodskoi golova of Cheboksary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikhail Iakovlevich Kapustin</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Hereditary noble; health officer, professor at Kazan University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vasili Aleksandrovich Karakin</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Kazan merchant (first guild), landowner, factory owner; bread merchant and factory entrepreneur, deputy of Kazan city duma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleksandr Larionovich Lunin</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Peasant; lumber merchant, landowner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satiulla Tazetdinovich Maksutov</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>Peasant; mullah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikolai Aleksandrovich Mel’nikov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Hereditary noble, landowner; provincial zemstvo deputy and head, zemstvo insurance inspector for the province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikolai Dmitrievich Sazonov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Hereditary noble, landowner; honorary magistrate, zemstvo deputy, district and provincial marshal of the nobility, vice-president of Kazan charitable society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ioann Iassonovich Sokolov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Rural parish priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Duma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Il’ia Alekseevich Bazhanov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Peasant, landowner, lumberer; grocery merchant, deputy in Kazan district zemstvo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavel Fedorovich Bychkov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Honorary hereditary citizen, owner of brewery; deputy of Koz’moden’insk city duma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivan Vasil’evich Godnev</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Personal noble, landowner; doctor, docent of Kazan university, honorable magistrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fedor Nilovich Kazin</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Hereditary noble, landowner; zemskii nachal’nik (land captain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vladimir Vladimirovich Markovnikov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Hereditary noble, landowner; district and provincial zemstvo deputy, chairman of the Kazan province zemstvo board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ippolit Aleksandrovich Kindskovskii</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Hereditary noble, landowner; land captain, tituliarnyi sovetnik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dmitrii Nikolaevich Sverchkov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Hereditary noble, landowner; land captain, member of the Kazan branch of the peasant land bank, deputy of the Kazan province zemstvo assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleksandr Vasil’evich Smirnov</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Priest; professor at the Kazan spiritual academy and Kazan University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dmitrii Stepanovich Terenin</td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Hereditary noble, landowner; land captain, member of Simbirsk peasant land bank</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Influenced by the decades of change brought by the Great Reforms and the revolutionary spirit that reverberated across the empire in the early twentieth century and throughout Kazan province, it is not surprising that the sentiments expressed by those who participated in local elections were reflective of the evolving electoral culture. Among those sentiments expressed were the demand for the elected official to represent his constituents in spirit, not only that he met the official qualifications for candidacy. Further, for elections to be considered valid, increasingly voters demanded that all constituencies be represented at the elections. Conversely, if one chose not to participate, he was to have the right not to do so. Finally, as professionalism in service increased, there was openly less tolerance displayed for corruption and conflict of interest. The electoral practices of the early twentieth century reflected the evolutionary changes toward greater personal and social expressions of open participation in formal politics based on ideas of representation, willingness to serve, and a certain lack of tolerance for the violation of perceived rights, either by technical error and/or by the intentional denial of that participation, especially among those whose full participation was so long circumscribed.

**Getting Elections “Right”: Determining Who Had the Right to Vote**

Despite the years of electoral experience and the associated accumulated knowledge about electoral statutes and procedures, as the following related cases indicate, determining who had the right to vote was never clear; local realities and life occurrences at times combined to confuse matters.

Elena Mikhailovna Iashina, a noble woman, wrote a letter to the Laishev city administration on November 15, 1905, noting serious mistakes in the list published in *Kazanskie*
gubernskie vedomosti of those eligible to participate in the upcoming elections for her city’s duma delegates. Seven dead people were on the list (Kruglov, Morozov, Makashin, Mentov, Pozdniakov, Sosov, and Chugakov), and peasant Mikhail Andreevich Beloglazov was included although Iashina did not believe that he met the property requirements. Elena Mikhailovna asked that these errors be corrected prior to finalization of the voter lists. On November 22, 1905, the Laishev city board met and considered Iashina’s complaint, and concluded that it “is very likely that the list includes those who have died, because the board does not have any information about people who have died, and it goes without saying that upon receiving proof of the death of the people listed by Iashina, they will not be included in the final list of eligible voters.” Beloglazov, however, was to be included, the board found, because he did meet the property requirement. The final list of voters eligible for the February 15, 1906 elections to the Laishev city duma did indeed contain Beloglazov, as well as Nikolai L’vovich Iashin, Elena Mikhailovna’s son.

In a similar case, Aleksandr Aleksandroviich Demert, a small landowner from Chistopol’ district, was actually not dead, but had been eliminated from the list of voters eligible to vote in the first State Duma elections because it was believed that he had died during military service. It seems that during the compilation of the lists for the election of zemstvo deputies, it was determined that Demert was no longer alive and that his land had gone to his heirs. As a result, the voting rights that were associated with his land, 334 desyatiny, were also believed to have been passed on to his elder sons – Vladimir, Nikolai, and Valerien, although only Vladimir and Valerien were included on the current eligible voter list because Nikolai himself was at the

727 NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 385, l. 1-2.
728 Ibid., l. 5-6ob.
729 Ibid., l. 18.
730 NA RT, f. 651, op. 1, d. 2, l. 11.
time on active military duty. The Chistopol’ district zemstvo board made the appropriate revisions once realizing that Demert was indeed alive, and sent the new list for review to the election commission on February 1, 1906.

Because voting rights were directly linked to property ownership, and property ownership was directly linked to inheritance, the right to vote was often inherited along with property: one could inherit the right to vote if and when one inherited land. But as the division of land through inheritance was not always straight-forward, creating stress on the land itself as well as the economy, so too was the inheritance of the vote complicated. This was the case for assistant professor at Kazan University, baron Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Simolin who had appealed to the Cheboksary district zemstvo board on July 18, 1907, to have his name included on the list of eligible voters for the third State Duma elections in the small landowners’ curiae. His mother, baroness Elena Nikolaevna Simolina, had left him her land, he claimed, when she granted him power of attorney status. The Cheboksary board refused to acknowledge this, however, because they believed that the land of the baroness had actually gone to Aleksandr’s brother Pavel. After having presented several pieces of supporting evidence, Aleksandr was apparently unsuccessful in his attempt to be added to the voter list because of the specifics of how his mother herself initially received the property, and how, in turn, it was to be passed on. Simolin’s case demonstrates what was a common problem that arose due to the complicated and direct link between property and voter eligibility: the two were often inherited together.

731 Ibid.
732 Ibid., l. 11-12ob.
733 Simolin was a founding member of organizational committee of the Kazan province Kadet party.
734 NA RT, f. 708, op. 1, d. 8, l. 84-85.
735 Ibid.
736 Ibid.
The confusion over eligibility to participate in elections for the State Duma was not limited to individuals. In preparation of the first State Duma elections, the Chistopol’ commission on oversight for the proper conduct of elections wrote to the chairman of the trading company “Bernd and Blumberg.” In verifying the lists of voters, the commission found that “Bernd and Blumberg,” listed as number 21, was improperly included since “the representatives of such cooperatives do not participate.” They were eliminated from the list. The State Duma, unlike other local bodies, including the zemstvo, did not have representatives of organizations as participants and voting members; this change initially caused some confusion to Kazan’s voters, particularly in light of the fact that other institutions, for example parts of the Orthodox Church, could participate in Duma elections as an organization. Those Russian Orthodox churches that owned land were eligible to vote based on the December 1905 electoral laws, and therefore, were allowed to send representatives to participate in the district electoral assemblies under the landowners’ curia. In preparation for elections to the second State Duma, a list of churches that held land was drawn up to be included with the other eligible landowners. In total, 47 churches from Kazan district were included, and all but two churches listed the priest as their representative. As noted above, both a parish priest and a village mullah were elected as delegates from Kazan province to the third State Duma.

The right not to participate in the 1906 Arsk city elections was actually more important to a group of six meshchane, than the right to participate, and this led to their call for invalidation of the June 17, 1906 city elections. Whereas those in the previous cases examined above were

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737 NA RT, f. 651, op. 1, d. 2, l. 6.
738 Ibid., l. 6-7.
739 Ibid., l. 7.
740 NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 435, l. 2-2ob.
741 Ibid.
742 NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 468, l. 7-8.
concerned with the proper inclusion of eligible voters so that they and only they would have the right to vote, the six Arsk meshchane who appealed all the way to the Governing Senate did so on behalf of those who were absent when the elections were held. It seems that “no less than five of the people elected” during the city elections “were not there, so they did not have the chance to refuse.” The six found this an objectionable violation of the rights of those elected in absentia. The issue of non-participation in elections, which they were appealing, also raised the related issue of who could issue a complaint. Could those who did not participate in elections complain about them? After petitioning all the way to the Governing Senate, it was determined that in fact “the right to bring a complaint about irregularities during elections… should be given to all individuals who had the right to participate in the elections and who are interested in their correct implementation.” In other words, one did not have to be present at an election to be considered interested in the proper conduct of that election – and if those persons chose, they had the right to file a complaint. Given that candidates could be and often were nominated in absentia, many were elected who were not interested in serving. The six meshchane were successful in having the 1906 Arsk city elections invalidated. Perhaps given the unusual nature of their complaint, the verdict, however, was not received until more than two years later on September 30, 1908. New elections were to be called immediately thereafter.

This is the first case found in the archival documents that explicitly argues for the rights of those who wished not to participate in elections. Previous cases of disinterest or unwillingness to serve were either those in which the person elected demonstrated his eligibility to serve – usually on the grounds of insufficient property or illness – after having

743 Ibid.
744 Ibid.
745 Ibid.
746 Ibid., l. 9-9ob.
been elected in absentia, or simply asking for permission for temporary absence from which the person never returned. The case brought by the Arsk meshchane attempted to address the issue upfront on different grounds, and they were successful. Moreover, the right to have made the complaint was clearly extended not only to those who did not participate, but also to all those who could have participated and all those who were interested in the proper conduct of the elections – this latter phrase could have conceivably extended to all persons. Rights, then, were not only to allow participation but also to allow for willful non-participation.

He Doesn’t Know Our Life: Representing Personal, Local, and Group Interests

Unlike in other cities of the empire, the artisans of Kazan formed a legally independent estate (remeslennoe soslovie) that was separate from the merchant soslovie (estate). They held regular elections for elder and for master artisans (starshiny tsekhov) from among their members. The artisan elder had the responsibility for overall supervision of the artisan self-administration (samoupravlenie) and levying dues on the society, and the master artisans had the responsibility of seeing that his subordinates properly fulfilled the rules of the society.\textsuperscript{747} On November 23, 1900, the artisans elected Ivan Andreevich Mitrofanov as their new elder as of January 1, 1901. But in a letter to the provincial bureau of zemstvo and city affairs, the artisans stated that he had actually been elected incorrectly.\textsuperscript{748}

Subsequent to the elections, it became known to the society that neither Mitrofanov himself, nor his relatives, were actually artisans or performed any artisanal work. “Rather,” the letter to the governor stated, “the profession of Mitrofanov is entirely comprised of paperwork and he, as it became known, previously served as a hired scribe in various organizations, and

\textsuperscript{747} NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 335, l. 1.  
\textsuperscript{748} Ibid.
before the election as (elder), he was a reporter for local newspapers.” Mitrofanov, in the eyes of the artisans, “(did) not have the slightest understanding of the needs of our estate and is completely foreign to the interests of our society, and to the position of elder, the assembly (skhod) elected him not knowing that he was not an artisan but a writer; the one thing that attracted them was that he was willing to serve for free because he probably has sufficient material means from his reporter’s articles.” Since he was clearly not an artisan who did not understand their needs and concerns, the artisan society asked the governor to immediately remove the 37-year-old Mitrofanov and call for new elections.

To add insult to injury, a follow-up letter to the governor stated that the artisans had just learned that Mitrofanov had been added to the society’s registers in 1876 at the request of his aunt, the widow and member of the Kazan artisan society, Matrena Stepanova Mitrofanova, as the illegitimate son of her late sister, Kazan merchant Avdotia Stepanova. They also learned that in addition to being a writer, Mitrofanov was said to also be a “mediator for the collection of various debt obligations.” The members of the society did not believe that Mitrofanov could represent them as their elder. Granting their request, the governor removed the newspaper-writer and debt-collector I. A. Mitrofanov from the position of elder of the artisan society on February 14, 1902.

Similarly, the voters of the district of Kazan were equally concerned with choosing an elector who could fully represent them in further voting for the second State Duma in September 1907. In a letter to the chairman of the Kazan district commission on elections to the State

749 Ibid.
750 Ibid.
751 Ibid., l. 1 and 8.
752 Ibid., l. 14-14ob.
753 Ibid.
754 Ibid., l. 16.
Duma, the land captain (zemskii nachal’nik) of the fourth section of the district asked for further clarification as to whether or not peasant Sadretdin Maksudov actually had a household or land in his village or whether he was absent. 755 Peasant Miftakhutdin Nigmatullin was also concerned about Maksudov’s election for other reasons and sent a letter nine days earlier to the commission stating that those authorized to participate in the district electoral assembly had elected peasant Sadretdin Nizametdinovich Maksudov to proceed in the voting for delegates to the Duma. “Maksudov,” however, Nigmatullin claimed, had “for 15 years not lived in the village and does not participate in grain production and does not have a home or farm property. Maksudov’s lifestyle, of his own volition, is completely foreign to that of our peasantry and therefore in no way can be considered a representative of the peasants.” 756 Maksudov had not lived in any village for 15 years, but rather had “lived in Kazan and abroad, and only last year returned to Russia and was completely illegally elected to the second State Duma.” 757 Furthermore, “after the dissolution of the second Duma, Maksudov went abroad and returned to Russia only on the eve of the elections for representatives (to the third Duma), declaring his wish to be elected.” 758 Given his tenuous ties to his village, and his lack of knowledge of village life, the voters of the fourth section of Kazan district considered it completely inappropriate for Maksudov to be allowed to participate in the elections, and they sought to exclude his name from the list of representatives from Kazan district and from further elections.

Through investigations into the status of Maksudov’s connections to the village, the county elder, Tazudit Adaev, learned that Maksudov did have a house joined with his brother Salakhutdin Maksudov, and in the village “he has a household both in the registers (po

755 NA RT, f. 708, op. 1, d. 5, l. 121.
756 Ibid.
757 Ibid.
758 Ibid.
raskladochnym prigovoram) and in the insurance notes (po strakhovoi vedomosti) in the name of his older brother, and neither of them personally is engaged in grain production, but work the land they rent, and upon his return, he has conducted his household with his brother."

The elder also found that “Maksudov was born in this village, and lived there until he was 15, receiving his education at home, and from 16 years old he lived in Kazan for another seven years to get his education; during the summers and vacations, he returned to his village, (and he spent) five years away to receive his university education in Paris, where he lived for four years until 1906.” In June 1906, “he returned to live and was elected as an elector for the elections to the State Duma, and was elected a member to the second Duma. After the dissolution of that State Duma, he lived at home for approximately two months, and then he went abroad, from where he returned in August, and again on the 8th of September he was chosen as a elector for the elections to the third State Duma, as is verified by the 33 people who signed the electoral document [including at least one Tatar].”

Having read this report from the county elder, the governor did authorize new elections on September 26, 1907, but on the following day he had not heard whether or not the Kazan district electoral commission had decided to rerun the elections. The governor had no time to wait for the rerun as his paperwork was due in St. Petersburg that night; he suggested an emergency session of the district commission to finalize the issue. It is not clear from the archival documents that have survived whether the elections were rerun, but Maksudov was not re-elected as a delegate to the State Duma.

759 Ibid., l. 125-126.
760 Ibid.
761 Ibid.
762 Ibid., l. 131-131ob.
763 Ibid., l. 132.
The peasant voters from Kazan district did not find Maksudov a suitable candidate because, from their perspective, he did not sufficiently understand their village life, and therefore could not adequately represent them as peasants. Living in Kazan and living abroad in Paris to acquire an education had separated him from them in the eyes of the voters; his experiences in those other capacities and places were a detriment rather than an asset. Representation, believed the voters who filed the complaint, was possible when the candidate could be said to really understand their lives from the inside. Leaving the village disqualified the candidate from the ability to relate, and therefore from the ability to represent. While Maksudov may have met the technical requirements for eligibility as a candidate, he did not meet the other, non-codified requirements of the voters for representation of their interests and needs.

Representatives were to not only understand the needs and interests of those whom they represented, but they were also to be of sound judgment and good behavior. For many voters, candidates who were under investigation were not able to appropriately or fully represent them based on these latter grounds. This concern was what prompted peasant Nikolai Alekseev to send a petition to the governor on July 9, 1910, calling into question the ability of scribe Durandin to represent them as a deputy to the Tsarevokokshaisk district zemstvo from Mokrinsk county.  

Alekseev wanted Durandin disqualified from the elections because he was alleged to be under legal investigation. Having looked into the matter and restating the requirements for voters including “having knowledge of the area (krai), the needs of the people, and knowledge of the economic and material life of the people,” the Kazan province bureau for zemstvo and city affairs found that the accusations against Durandin were not true, and Alekseev’s request was dismissed.

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764 NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 875, l. 1.
765 Ibid., l. 2a-2aob.
Similarly, peasant Nikolai Semenov did not find Dmitrii Aleksandrov qualified to represent him or his fellow villagers as even an alternate deputy in the Tsivil’sk district zemstvo, due to his inappropriate behavior, and petitioned the governor on August 18, 1910 for his removal. He began his petition by recounting the August 10 elections:

On August 10, in the building of the Tsivil’sk district assembly, the election was held for the zemstvo deputies for three-year term from the present year. In those elections, against my expectations and those of many, Dmitrii Aleksandrov took part and was elected as the Shibylginsk county alternate, who – as is being comprehensively investigated by our local land captain – took bribes during the election.766

Semenov took pains to state that his concern with Aleksandrov’s election was not motivated by personal interest, but rather by his “being appalled as any person would be who seeks and wishes for greatness for our peasant population (ishchet i zhelaet blaga dla svoego krest’ianskago naselenia), … decided … to bring this matter to the attention of Your Excellency (the governor).”767 Semenov argued that given “the decisions that are important to many of us peasants,” a person like Aleksandrov is not worthy of his position.768 “(Aleksandrov) is young and lived for many years outside (na storone) of the city of Tsivil’sk (in the zemstvo warehouse), he did not interest himself in our peasant life, which I doubt he is familiar with through his own life (po sobstvennomu khoziaistvu), since he doesn’t live it.”769 Semenov closed this appeal to the governor for Aleksandrov’s dismissal by underscoring the nature of the zemstvo as a self-governing body, and the need to “eliminate such undesirable actions” from it.770

In a letter to the governor in response to his request for clarification on the matter, the land captain confirmed that “after the first elections on June 21, 1910 in Shibylginsk county, it

766 NA RT, f. 419, op. 2, d. 826, l. 1-2.
767 Ibid.
768 Ibid.
769 Ibid.
770 Ibid.
was brought to the attention of the county administration that during the election of alternate zemstvo deputy, peasant Aleksandrov took bribes.\textsuperscript{771} Using a technique not previously reported as having been used in investigating electoral disputes, the land captain “took interviews from a whole range of witnesses who confirmed that (Aleksandrov took bribes).”\textsuperscript{772} The land captain concluded, however, that because no charges were filed by the district assembly that would send Aleksandrov to court, he was “not able to eliminate him from the new elections on July 18,” and, indeed, Aleksandrov was again elected as Semenov’s complaint stated.\textsuperscript{773} In response to Semenov’s appeal to the marshal of the nobility for assistance in removing Aleksandrov, the marshal of Tsvil’sk and Iadrinsk districts found that although it may be true that Aleksandrov was not familiar with peasant life, there was no evidence of any action that would warrant taking him to court, and therefore there were no grounds for dismissing him. Semenov sought to enforce his right to have a representative who was respectable and who understood his peasant life, but absent legal charges, Aleksandrov’s rights to serve as a representative were secure over those sought by Semenov.

Further, one could only represent one’s village or fellow voters if one had been at the electoral assemblies. Absence from these assemblies meant the absence of the perspectives and interests carried forward by the elector. The initial stages of the electoral process for the first State Duma were held in spring 1906. Spring was a notoriously difficult time for travel in provincial Russia due to the mud-filled impassable roads created by the spring thaw. In his complaint to the Chistopol’ district commission on elections, zemstvo insurance agent Ivan

\textsuperscript{771} Ibid., l. 6-6ob.
\textsuperscript{772} Ibid. Jane Burbank concluded in her survey of township (county or \textit{volost’}) courts, that in more than half of the cases, witnesses appeared. Given that participation in and knowledge of these courts was frequent among the peasants, it is likely that the experience of calling witnesses for court cases influenced those who asked for investigations of electoral irregularities to also include the interviewing of witnesses. Jane Burbank, \textit{Russian Peasants Go to Court: Legal Culture in the Countryside, 1905-1917} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 60.
\textsuperscript{773} NART, f. 419, op. 2, d. 826, l. 6-6ob.
Nikolaev Kozhevnikov stated that due to the terrible spring roads, not all of the electors “had the opportunity to arrive in the city and take part in the elections.” As a result of the absence of electors, essentially only electors from the city could attend, therefore Kozhevnikov considered the March 21, 1906 elections “unlawful,” and asked the district commission to “cancel those elections and hold new elections not earlier than April 9-10, 1906.” On March 27, 1906, the Chistopol’ district commission on electoral affairs for the State Duma sent a letter to the Staro-Mokshinsk county administration and, without addressing the content of the complaint, declared the complaint dismissed on the grounds that it had arrived after the allowable term for filing complaints. Many voters were not represented because their electors simply could not reach the assembly.

Other forces beyond the weather kept some electors from participating in the electoral assemblies for the State Duma. In an August 15, 1910 petition to the governor from alternate deputies to the Iadrinsk district zemstvo assembly, peasants Pavel Petrov Shmelev and Dmitri Ivanov Bryzgalov stated that on August 7 and 12, in the building of the Iadrinsk zemstvo board, the session for the alternates deputies from all counties was called. They were to elect from amongst themselves the required number of deputies. Neither Shmelev nor Bryzgalov were in attendance on August 7 and 12, however. Shmelev, having not received information about the invitation to the assembly, was at the Nizhnii Novgorod fair until August 13. Bryzgalov was not out of town, but also did not receive an invitation to the assembly. As a result, they wrote that, “from our Chuvashsko-Sorminskaia volost’ not one alternate to the deputy was at the assembly.” Their county was left entirely without representation by an alternate deputy, and

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774 NA RT, f. 651, op. 1, d. 2, l. 24.
775 Ibid.
776 NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 821, l. 1.
777 Ibid.
therefore they felt that the elections were invalid. Moreover they believed that rather than having elected 12 people from Iadrinsk district, the assembly was to have elected 13, which was another oversight. On these grounds, they asked that the elections be cancelled, that new elections be called, that they include all deputies who had a right to participate and that alternates be informed in a timely fashion.

In its response to the governor about the claims of Shmelev and Bryzgalov, the Iadrinsk district zemstvo board stated that the first confusion in communication occurred between the county administration and the zemstvo board. The assistant to the marshal of the nobility of Tsivil’sk and Iadrinsk districts sent Shmelev an invitation to the assembly through the county administration, however, the county administration did not inform the board about having sent the invitation, so it was not initially clear whether or not an invitation had actually been issued. Further investigation revealed that the invitation had in fact been given to Shmelev’s steward, Evstignei Vasiliev Malinin, on August 11, 1910, only one day before the assembly met. As pertained to Bryzgalov’s not having received an invitation, the Iadrinsk district zemstvo board informed the governor that this was due to the fact that while two alternates had been elected, only the one who had received the most votes was actually elected to represent the county at the assembly, and this was Shmelev, meaning that Bryzgalov was not to have received an invitation in the first place. The governor declared that since the invitation had been sent to the appropriate alternate, Shmelev, and since Bryzgalov, according to the rules was actually not entitled to an invitation, their request for a cancellation of elections and for the calling of new elections was not granted.

778 Ibid.
779 Ibid., l. 2.
780 Ibid., l. 5.
781 Ibid., l. 3.
While perhaps accurate from the perspective of procedure, the response to the two peasants from *Chuvashsko-Sorminskaya volost’* did not address the essence of their complaint. Because they, as rightfully elected representatives of their county, were not included in the assembly, their entire county was left without representation. If one alternate was not found, the other could have been invited to provide a means of representation to the county, but this was not part of the official procedure. Distance, bureaucratic miscommunication, lack of sufficient advanced warning, and other factors prevented the representation sought by the peasants who participated in the electoral process. They understood this and articulated their response through the formal process of complaints available to them, expressing a clear sense of what they thought was right and a clear sense of what they believed should be done about it. Their main concern was that somehow their county should have been represented, and because it wasn’t, the elections themselves were invalid.

Peasant from the village of Koshlousha in Toisinsk county, Iadrinsk district, Aleksei Grigoriev Smirnov, had a very similar experience. He was elected at the end of June 1910 in his county assembly as an alternate elector for the three-year term of the district zemstvo assembly. In a letter to the governor, Smirnov recounted that on August 12, the Iadrinsk zemstvo board elections were called, but he “was not informed” about the date of the meeting, and therefore did not come to the election. Smirnov was clearly upset by his exclusion from the assembly and told the governor, “that type of behavior by the zemstvo board to electors I consider to be against the law. … I ask that the elections of deputies of the Iadrinsk zemstvo board that took place on August 12, 1910, to be considered invalid and new ones called, inviting all individual electors of the deputies.” Smirnov had a very clear sense that he was to have been at the meeting, but had

782 NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 820, l. 1-10b.
783 Ibid.
not been properly informed, leaving not only himself out of the proceedings, but also all of those whom he represented.

The Iadrinsk district zemstvo board sent its explanation of events to the governor on September 7, 1910. The board stated that Smirnov “had not been invited to the electoral session for alternates to elect deputies to the Iadrinsk district zemstvo assembly due to the fact that in the Toisinsk county assembly there were two alternates elected. The one who received the largest number of votes was invited. This was peasant Ivan Stepanovich Niaga, alternate from the village of Iangorchino, Toisinsk county.” In other words, Smirnov received fewer votes than did alternate Niaga, and therefore was not invited to the district assembly. This verdict was confirmed by the provincial bureau of zemstvo and city affairs that investigated the case during its session on September 25. In light of this explanation, Smirnov’s request was not granted. In Smirnov’s eyes, however, he was a legitimate participant in the zemstvo assembly as an alternate, and was rightfully entitled to receive an invitation to attend. It is not clear whether the confusion lay in Smirnov’s lack of understanding of the electoral rules, or, as was seen in other cases presented peasants, Smirnov had reason to believe that he was justified in his view of the situation based on what he believed to be right. Given the frequency of such “misunderstandings,” and the articulate and impassioned defense of their views, it is reasonable to consider that what was once thought to have been peasants’ lack of electoral experience and understanding about legal procedures and processes may actually have been a form of resistance, of opposition from within the existing institutional frameworks, and even of alternative notions of justice and law based on social norms rather than legal code alone.

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784 Ibid., l. 3.
785 Ibid., l. 6-60b.
Calling for a Dignified Process: Corruption Directly Called Out

On March 10, 1908, an extraordinary session was held of the Laishev zemstvo assembly to elect the chairman of the Laishev zemstvo board to replace outgoing chairman Vladimir Bel’kovich. Vladimir Bel’kovich was a land owner and factory owner and also a participant in the local zemstvo to which he was elected to serve from 1905-1907 and 1913-1916. He also served on the provincial zemstvo board from 1908-1910. He was the initiator of a business project to build a bentwood furniture factory, and also developed machines for bentwood furniture production. He represented Kazan province in the international industry exhibition in 1909, and also participated in other empire-wide congresses and meetings of artisans and entrepreneurs. While it is not directly evident what motivated Vladimir’s involvement in his brother’s candidacy, it is reasonable to suppose that the family’s considerable financial interests in the province may have been among the primary factors.

As the report to the governor by the Laishev district police chief indicated, there was considerable concern about the fairness of the March 1908 elections; at issue was the perceived undue influence by the Bel’kovich family and by one group over peasant voters. “Stubborn rumors” had been circulating in the district for some time prior to the election about the nearly assumed succession of Nikolai Bel’kovich, Vladimir’s brother, to the position of chairman of the Laishev zemstvo board – despite the fact that Nikolai had not even been elected as a deputy to the district zemstvo in 1907. The elections, it seems, were the subject of considerable influence by the Bel’kovich brothers in an effort to ensure Nikolai’s victory. Further rumors spread just before the meeting of the assembly that March 10 had been intentionally chosen as election day by Vladimir Bel’kovich, knowing that deputy S. S. Tolstoi and Tolstoi’s supporters would not be

786 Chuvashskai entsiklopedia, ed. V. S. Grigor’ev (Cheboksary, Russia: Chuvashskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 2006), s.v. “Bel’kovichi.”
at the assembly that day. All peasant deputies were, however, in attendance, making up “together with the other left deputies the considerable majority against the noble deputies.”

Given their strength in numbers and therefore their potential power as a voting bloc, they were the target of intense persuasion by the Bel’kovich brothers. “The fact that his brother Nikolai was elected is evidence of how strong the deplorable agitation by V. Bel’kovich was among the peasant deputies for the election of his brother.” The police chief cited as evidence of this influence the fact that N. Bel’kovich was elected by the majority of delegates “despite being almost completely unknown and unfamiliar to the deputies,” and second despite “being in direct violation” of the independent property ownership requirements. When objection to the latter violation was raised by deputy Evsev’yev, which called into question the validity of the elections, the objection was stricken from the official minutes of the meeting. Corruption in this case was not monetary but rather that of political influence over peasant voters as a voting bloc. It nonetheless raised questions among the participants in the elections about the validity of the elections themselves, as did the alleged outright manipulation of the date of the elections by the outgoing district zemstvo chairman.

In a similar case, Ignatii Arkhipov, a peasant from the village of Perednii Pogash, Pokrovsk county, Cheboksary District, was outraged at the conduct of the county assembly elections for members of the district zemstvo board. On June 18, 1910, a peasant from the village of Togaev, Pokrovsk county, Mikhail Ivanov Vinogradov, was elected as a zemstvo deputy board member. Arkhipov stated that while the elections occurred “under the guise of the Law Code,” they actually were conducted under the influence of not only those who were at the

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787 NA RT, f. 1, op. 4, d. 3536, l. 1-2ob.  
788 Ibid.  
789 Ibid.  
790 Ibid.
assembly, but also under the influence of money. In light of this, Arkhipov asked that the validity of the elections be reviewed and that a ruling be issued at the conclusion of the inquiry. Moreover, Arkhipov suggested that witnesses be called as part of the investigation. He listed several people in particular whom he believed should be contacted as witnesses:

the peasants from our Pokrovskaya county, from the village of Sin’ial, village elder Petr Trifonov; from the village of Srednii Pogash, Mikhail Nikiforov; from the village of Chekur [sic], the village elder Nikolai Ivanov; from Voskresensk county, county elder ... Grigoreev Iaishinkov, and; steward of the wine store (prikazchik kazennoi vinnoi lavki) from the village of Pokrovskaya, the name is not known to me...  

Arkhipov argued that witnesses should be interviewed because they could “confirm the fairness of the elections for deputy of Mikhail Ivanov Vinogradov.” With these interviews, in fact, it would be concluded, Arkhipov believed, that the elections were actually unlawful and should be invalidated. The records about the inquiry into the lawfulness of the elections and about whether or not the elections were invalidated did not survive in the archive, therefore it is not certain what happened with Arkhipov’s duly-filed complaint. But, what did survive in the existing documents is Arkhipov’s link between monetary bribes and incorrect elections, and the link between the proper conduct of an investigation and the need to call witnesses – which itself is most likely an influence from practices of the peasant courts. Arkhipov was an illiterate

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791 NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 817, l. 1-1ob.
792 Ibid.
793 Ibid.
794 Ibid.
795 Ibid.
796 Burbank notes the legitimacy that witness testimony bore in township courts. “If witnesses were, collectively, for or against the plaintiff, this tended to decide the case. ... Judges frequently cited witnesses’ testimony in their verdicts. ‘Proven by the testimony of the witness’ and ‘proven by the confession of the accused’ figured often in recorded decisions.” Burbank, Russian Peasants Go to Court, 191. Perhaps Arkhipov estimated that were witnesses interviewed in the investigation of the complaint he filed, this may have increased the legitimacy of his case.
peasant, but the arguments he presented about the illegality of the elections and his proposed response were far from ignorant or uninformed. 796

Similarly, the inappropriate election of Cheboksary zemstvo board member Makarychev prompted zemstvo deputy Petrov to appeal to the governor in an effort to have the former relieved of his responsibilities. Petrov argued that although at the time of election in mid-1910, Makarychev was not under indictment, “it was not possible to pronounce him not guilty.” 797 In addition to accusations of Makarychev having previously withheld financial information from the zemstvo assembly, during his time as a member of the zemstvo board he apparently channeled a contract for the building of a zemstvo school in Iakimov through his relatives. Petrov was concerned that “there is no way that this cannot reflect (negatively) on the zemstvo.” 798 The actions of its members reflected on the institution as a whole.

Makarychev’s questionable behavior did not end with the alleged preferential granting of contracts to his own relatives. His profession, in Petrov’s estimation, prevented his ability to perform his zemstvo responsibilities, rendering him an ineffective or even poor representative of the zemstvo. Makarychev was a big lumber dealer in Astrakhan, which required him “to either be (in Astrakhan) or to spend time on his business while in Cheboksary, taking him away from his zemstvo responsibilities… It was impossible to expect him to actually fulfill his responsibilities.” 799 Petrov, in closing his petition to the governor, took pains to state that his complaint was not motivated by personal interests, but – as a Cheboksary zemstvo deputy himself – was motivated by a concern for the “interests of the zemstvo.” 800

796 NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 817, l. 1-1ob. The letter sent in Arkhipov’s name was signed by his proxy.
797 NA RT, f. 419, op. 1, d. 870, l. 1-1ob.
798 Ibid.
799 Ibid.
800 Ibid.
In response to the governor’s request for more information about the case,⁸⁰¹ the marshal of the nobility from Cheboksary and Koz’modem’iansk districts, who also served as the chairman of the Cheboksary zemstvo board, concluded that Petrov’s motives were not entirely selfless nor was his petition entirely “consistent with the facts.”⁸⁰² Petrov, it seemed, had for a long time wished to serve on the zemstvo board, but was not elected from among the assembly deputies, and therefore wished to undermine Makarychev’s position on the board. Be that as it may, Makarychev’s behavior was not entirely without suspicion, and had been part of a larger investigation into corruption on the zemstvo board. During the 43rd regular session of the Cheboksary zemstvo assembly, questions were raised about the “inappropriate actions of its board members, including Makarychev, with respect to the conduct of the zemstvo’s agricultural business (sel’sko-khoziaistvennoe delo), … specifically, the zemstvo’s retention of an agronomist on staff for three months for the verification of and conduct of cash goods in the storehouse,⁸⁰³ and ultimately for the cancellation of that position.”⁸⁰⁴

During that session, the issue of the contracts for the building of the Iakimov zemstvo school was raised. An investigation into the matter found that:

Indeed, there were several (contracts) that were put in by Makarychev, but at that time he still had not been elected either as a member of the board, nor as a deputy to the zemstvo assembly. The conditions under which the Iakimov school were to be built were decided by Makarychev on June 21, 1910, and he was elected as a deputy only on July 6. … On February 6, the board permitted work remaining under the contracts that Makarychev had begun, but there were only 300 roubles worth of work to be done. In February the incomplete work, by decision of the board, was transferred from Makarychev to another person to finish, and as such all of the expenses with the board regarding the building of the Iakimov zemstvo school associated with Makarychev were completed nearly one month before his acceptance of the position of member of the board on March 4.⁸⁰⁵

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⁸⁰¹ Ibid., l. 2.
⁸⁰² Ibid., l. 3-4ob.
⁸⁰³ This person was “to check and to inform the authorities about thefts from the storage.” Ibid., l. 5-7.
⁸⁰⁴ Ibid., l. 3-4ob.
⁸⁰⁵ Ibid.
Having, in his opinion, appropriately addressed the concern raised by Petrov in terms of the board’s management of contracts and other economic/business affairs, the chairman turned to what he considered to be a much more serious matter, “a new and a completely exceptional instance for the Cheboksary district.”

Until Petrov presented his petition to the governor, “when zemstvo deputies did not agree with the actions of the assembly, they did not allow themselves the inappropriate action of complaining, but usually expressed their protest in the assembly in the accepted fashion: the path of personal expression, the path of filing a dissenting opinion by not signing a decision, etc.” Deputy Petrov, however, violated these norms. Following the election of Makarychev as a member of the board, Petrov actually signed the election ballot and did not object at the time of election, nor did he object at the time of Makarychev’s confirmation in the position.

Furthermore, the chairman found Petrov’s subsequent objection directly to the governor rather than to the board “especially unflattering,” in light of “the conversations circulating amongst the deputies about what would happen if one of the elected members of the board, based on their own livelihood, did not need to serve [i.e., did not need the official salary], and therefore turned down service. [Were this to be the case], new elections for the vacancy would be called and all deputies who were on the ballot in the regular assembly could run, including Petrov, who was a primary alternate for election.” Petrov seemed to have misjudged, in the calculation of the chairman, the politics of the moment and by going around the accepted norms of complaint, took himself out of any serious consideration for election to the board should a vacancy, presumed to be left by well-to-do Makarychev, arise. In conclusion, the chairman reiterated that Petrov had

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806 Ibid.
807 Ibid.
808 Ibid.
not followed proper procedure for filing his complaint because one could only launch a complaints as an individual if one’s individual rights had been violated, which “without any doubt were not violated.”

Perhaps not surprisingly, Petrov’s complaint was dismissed, and no action was taken against Makarychev. Regardless, his petition and the response by the Cheboksary district zemstvo board chairman reveal several competing notions of rights and justice. In Petrov’s consideration, if taken on face value, elected representatives should not be corrupt, should not engage in favoritism in conducting the business of the zemstvo, and were also to be present and attentive to the business of the institution over their own personal business. Elections were, from Petrov’s perspective, considered invalid not only if the process itself was followed incorrectly or was somehow compromised, but also if the results of the election were inappropriate, undesirable, or led to other illegal or inappropriate behavior (favoritism in granting contracts, and/or absenteeism by elected official). In other words, the process was considered valid only if the result was seen as appropriate, morally/socially sound, and/or in the interests of the institution and the people it served.

Moreover, Petrov felt he had the personal right to object to what he believed was a violation – on multiple grounds – of appropriate representation by an elected official. However, this assertion was resoundingly rejected by the chairman of the zemstvo board who not only defended the actions of the board collectively, but also of its members individually according to the letter of the appropriate (and cited) statutes. Moreover, the chairman rejected Petrov’s assertion of personal rights expressed through a personal complaint about an individual board

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809 Ibid.
810 Again, this seems to be consistent with the notions of justice expressed through the jury system introduced into the local court system during the Great Reforms. For example, juries of peers may dismiss a defendant who was guilty and had often admitted their own guilt, if they sympathized with the reasons for crime having been committed.
member despite proving that his personal rights had been violated. The proper electoral procedures had been followed when Makarychev was elected, and Petrov had not objected appropriately at the time, therefore no violation of his rights had occurred from the perspective of the chairman. Actually, the opposite, it was Petrov who had violated not only the procedures for complaint, but also the spirit of service to the zemstvo by taking on an individual member in his petition, particularly in light of what was cited as the atmosphere of generosity reflected in “rumors” about board members who might forfeit their own personal gain for others who may be in greater need of the board member’s salary. Petrov’s complaint in this context was seen as particularly injurious to the board as a whole and to the members themselves. The views of Petrov and the chairman, as expressed in their letters to the governor, reveal competing notions of representation, service, and appropriate behavior of elected officials. Elections were for both, however, a means of justly finding the best person to serve as they understood it.

ELECTIONS AS COMMON PHENOMENA: PRACTICES AND PROCESSES AS A ROUTINE PART OF URBAN ADMINISTRATION, EXAMPLES FROM THE CITIES OF SPASK AND TETIUSHI

In the midst of the First World War, in what were the closing years of the empire, local electoral practices, which extended to nearly all aspects of local political and administrative life, had become frequent, in places of administrative significance and for positions arguably of less urgency. While the front pages of the local newspapers were filled with reporting on the war detailing military advances, retreats, successes and losses, local elections continued. News of the latter was found only in print smaller than that of the war news, and less prominently featured on the inner pages and inner columns of the press. For example, the lists of those elected to

811 For example, the vast majority of the issues of Kazanskie gubernskie vedomosti for 1915 had war news under a large-typed heading “Voina” (“War”) on the front page, at times continuing to the second page. See, for example, “Voina,” Kazanske gubernskie vedomosti, January 3, 1915, 1.
serve in the Tsivil’sk district zemstvo were listed together on page two with the lists of those who had the right to vote and to be elected in the Kazan district zemstvo. There was no discernible discussion of the impact of the war on local elections, although the pressures on the population to produce food and war supplies as well as to continue to address the needs of the local population were no doubt great, potentially causing a strain on the already limited number of people who chose to be candidates for office in some of the province’s local elections. This need for more willing candidates is apparent in the cases from Spassk and Tetiushi explored here.

The journals of the city dumas from Spassk and Tetiushi, spanning from 1914 to 1916 and numbering close to 50, reveal the regularity and consistency with which elections occurred, their rhythms, patterns, problems and solutions. From elections for the gorodskoi golova to those for members of the duma board to elections for the directors of local banks to those for members of a host of local committees and commissions, the qualified residents of the city and their representatives regularly participated in elections to choose officials to address their concerns and manage their needs as urban dwellers with surprisingly little difficulty.

The consistency of the records from Spassk and Tetiushi reveals more than just regularity of process. They reveal an approach to solving local problems that involved establishing targeted and focused commissions to which duma members were elected and for which outside experts were hired. Often the same members were elected to serve on multiple commissions while retaining their primary position as members of the duma or of the board; in many cases they created careers of serving in these local positions, some of which even led to service in the State Duma. They were often viewed by their communities as local leaders and served for many

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812 " ‘Spisok lits imeiushchikh pravo byt’ izbrannymi v prisiazhnye zasedateli po Kazanskomu uezdu na 1915 g.,” Kazanskie gubernskie vedomosti, January 22, 1915, 2; and “Ocherednoi spisok lits izbrannykh v prisiazhnye zasedateli na 1915 g. po Tsivil’skomu uezdu,” Kazanskie gubernskie vedomosti, January 22, 1915, 2.
years if not decades. There were times, however, when the tasks seemed too numerous and too
great to consistently attract sufficient candidates to all of the needed positions. At such times,
elections were still considered the primary means of resolving the issue and were rerun until the
positions were filled. The Spassk and Tetiushi city dumas provide useful examples of electoral
normality in late imperial Kazan province.

On February 25, 1914, 17 deputies were present at the Spassk city duma assembly where
they elected the new chairman of the city duma, D. S. Moshkin, by unanimous vote after having
received 16 nominations (his opponent, S. A. Ulitin, received one nomination and no votes).\textsuperscript{813}

Less than a month later, on March 11, 1914, elections were held in the Spassk city duma for the
duma’s representative on the Spassk district education council. Although six candidates were
 nominated, it was Moshkin who received the most votes, 13-6, and as a result, he was re-elected
as the Spassk representative to the council, a position he had held since 1910.\textsuperscript{814} Moshkin had
accumulated years of service in the local community, which seemed to lead to his assumption of
the position of chairman of the city board; his career was advancing.

The next day, March 12, 1914, the city board met to elect the leaders of the Spassk city
society bank for the new term - the director, the deputy director, and alternates. Perhaps in
response to previous experiences, during these elections in Spassk, great lengths were taken to
try to avoid conflicts of interest. The Spassk city duma journal of March 12, 1914, stated clearly
that

the position of director and his deputies and alternates are not (to be held)
concurrently: 1. with the title of deputy of the city duma; 2. with the positions of
gorodskoi golova, members of the city board, the secretary of the city duma and
those serving in the city society administration who receive a salary, and 3. with
the positions in other credit institutions state (gosudarstvennye) or public
(obshchestvennye) and private (chastnye). The members of the administration of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{footnotes}
\item[813] NA RT, f. 1, op. 4, d. 6133, l. 1-1ob.
\item[814] Ibid., l. 5-5ob.
\end{footnotes}
\end{footnotesize}
the bank and alternates may not at the same time be: father and son, grandfather and grandson, biological brothers, father-in-law and son-in-law, and also participants in the same trade company. In the same way, individuals who are relatives or who have commercial relations may not at the same time hold positions of gorodskoi golova or member of the city board and the position of director of the bank or his deputies.  

This same paragraph stating the conflicts of interest to be avoided was repeated in nearly every one of the journals pertaining to elections for positions associated with financial responsibility.

Perhaps it was the level of responsibility associated with running the Spassk city society bank, or perhaps there were other reasons, but whereas five people were nominated for the position of director of the bank, only the person elected, F. A. Ulitin, remained on the ballot. The other four nominated declined to have their names listed. This pattern held for the positions of deputy director and alternates to the directors.  

When in 1915 Ulitin died, elections were once again held to serve out the remainder of the term for the director of the bank. Prior to the elections, further clarification (in addition to those listed previously) about who could not serve as director due to conflicts of interest were outlined: “he should not be at the same time a deputy of the city duma and gorodskoi golova, a member of the city board, secretary of the city duma and serve in the city society administration, receive a salary from or have responsibility in any other credit institutions - state, society or private.”  

Nine people were nominated, three of whom had been nominated during the 1914 elections, and none declined. Characteristically, the person who received the majority of the nominations also received the majority of the votes: E. V. Kolsanov. 

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815 Ibid., l. 10-10ob.  
816 Ibid.  
817 Ibid., l. 65-65ob.  
818 Ibid.
On March 26, 1914, the Spassk city duma determined that elections should be postponed to the next session.\textsuperscript{819} However, in preparation for the election, the city board outlined the rules governing the elections:

1. On the basis of articles 115, 116, 117 and 124 of the city statute of 1892, the position of member of the board coincides with the election of the (State) Duma, therefore it is suggested that more than one alternate for the position be elected.
2. Not only deputies, but other people who have the right to vote in city elections may be elected.
3. During the election for these positions, individuals of the city society administration should be observant so that for one and the same institution individuals (who are directly related by kin or by marriage) do not serve at the same time.
4. The elections should be conducted by secret vote.
5. Elected individuals are those who received the majority of votes.\textsuperscript{820}

These rules were previously not listed in full in earlier electoral documents; conflict of interest as defined here was also understood in terms of undue influence of a single person or family.

Voting was also held that day in the city duma to determine the salary level for the gorodskoi golova, which was set at 600 roubles per year.\textsuperscript{821} Perhaps this was insufficient to attract candidates, because during the first attempt to collect nominations, all those who were nominated, seven in total, declined to have their names listed on the ballot.\textsuperscript{822} A ten minute break was announced to try to convince someone to run. This did not work – when nominations were collected a second time, only four people were nominated, none of which agreed to list their names on the ballot. This prompted the deputies of the city duma to postpone elections until the evening session.\textsuperscript{823} The next day, March 27, 1914, during the evening session, 19 deputies were in attendance, and they nominated five people. Consistent with previous elections, the person whose name was by far most frequently nominated was that of F. M. Zhurin, and he

\textsuperscript{819} Ibid., l. 21-21ob.
\textsuperscript{820} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{821} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{822} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{823} Ibid.
was indeed the only person who agreed to have his name added to the ballot; he was elected as the gorodskoi golova for the city of Spassk for the term from 1914 to 1918.  

Given the difficulties in finding someone who would be willing to be elected to serve as the gorodskoi golova for Spassk, perhaps it was unfortunate that a little over a year later, the electoral process was again called upon to fill the remainder of the position vacated by F. M. Zhurin due to illness. On July 14, 1915, the city duma called for nominations and received eight, all of whom refused to have their names added to the ballot. Following a break, the process was repeated, yielding again eight nominations, six of whom had been nominated in the first round, and again no one wished to list his name on the ballot. For the third time nominations were requested and three were received, all of whom had been nominated in earlier rounds but only one of whom allowed his name onto the ballot. L. V. Bublik, the lone candidate, was therefore elected as the gorodskoi golova for the remainder of the four-year term.  

Throughout the lengthy process of identifying someone to serve, the electoral process was followed by local officials, and was utilized by those who participated, either through nomination and election or through its avoidance.

In January and February 1916, elections were again held for deputy director of the Spassk city society bank because those who had been elected in 1912, G. I. Tashirov and F. K. Sergeev, were completing their terms. In the duma journal, rules stating at extension of eligibility for candidates: “Those individuals who do not have the right to vote in city elections may be elected to the positions of deputy director and alternate if there is no objection to their election as stated

824 Ibid.  
825 Had the vacancy occurred in the last year of the four-year term, an alternate would have been found to fill his position.  
826 NA RT, f. 1, op. 4, d. 6133, l. 71-72.  
827 Ibid.  
828 Ibid.
in articles 32 and 33 of the city statute.” ³²⁹ No individuals were forthcoming, however, and one of the outgoing deputy directors, G. I. Tashirov, was reelected to another four-year term on January 20, 1916.³³⁰ Elections to replace outgoing deputy director F. K. Sergeev were held at the Spassk city duma on February 9, 1916. Three nominations were received, and the person who received the most nominations, P.A. Solov’ev, was elected.³³¹

The elections in the Spassk city duma were as routine as the elections in the city of Tetiushi for many of the same positions over the closing years of the empire, even when there were few candidates. What the journals of the Tetiushi city duma also indicate was an expanded use of commissions and committees, to which members of the duma were elected. At times, these positions were so numerous that duma members had to serve on multiple committees at the same time in addition to fulfilling the responsibilities of their other elected offices and their own professions.

In an extraordinary session of the Tetiushi city duma on March 27, 1914, elections were held for several positions in the city: gorodskoi golova, members of the Tetiushi city board, and city secretary. Elections for the first position, gorodskoi golova, proceeded with the collection of nominations, for which there were three. As with the Spassk city elections, the person who received the most nominations and votes, S. A. Volkov, was also the only person who agreed to add his name to the ballot. It should be noted that while the elections were being conducted for this position, the chairmanship of the duma was transferred to another duma deputy to avoid influence of the current chairman on the process – a small procedure, perhaps, but one that indicated a progression in the professionalization of electoral procedure over time. Following the election for gorodskoi golova, the other two elections were held. For the position of member

³²⁹ Ibid., l. 117-117ob.
³³⁰ Ibid.
³³¹ Ibid.
of the city board, nominations were received for three people, and again, the person who had
received the most nominations also received the most votes as he was the only one listed on the
ballot - the other candidates refused to have their names listed - and the duma determined that the
other candidate could not be listed. The winner had run unopposed.\(^{832}\)

This was not the case, however, for the position of city secretary. Two people expressed
their wish to be considered for the position: Tetiushi \textit{meshchanin} Egor Stepanovich Vladimirov
stated that he would like to become the city secretary, and inquired as to whether or not there
was a reason that he could not be elected – it was determined that there was not.\(^{833}\) Pavel
Fedorovich Kulagin, assistant to the secretary to the Tetiushi district zemstvo board, also wished
to be elected. Vladimirov’s name was allowed to be added to the ballot, whereas Kulagin’s was
not; there was no explanation given as to why he could not be added. When nominations were
collected for the position, only two names were supported, Vladimirov’s and I. S. Lapaev’s;
Lapaev refused to have his name added. Therefore, while there was more than one person
interested in the position, Vladimirov also ran unopposed and was elected.\(^{834}\)

When in December 1915, \textit{gorodskoi golova} Sergei Anufrievich Volkov was dismissed
from his position due to illness, an election was held to replace him. Nominations were received
for his position, and in an interesting twist, Volkov was among those who were nominated, as
was Lapaev. Of the five people who received nominations, only Lapaev was present and agreed
to have his name added. The journal of the Tetiushi city duma found it inappropriate that an
absentee candidate be added to the ballot list: “P. Polosukhin, who received one nomination, was
absent, and therefore the city duma by majority vote did not find it proper (to include him).”\(^{835}\)

\(^{832}\) NA RT, f. 1, op. 4, d. 6132, l. 18-20.
\(^{833}\) Ibid.
\(^{834}\) Ibid.
\(^{835}\) Ibid., l. 78-78ob.
This was far different from many earlier experiences when those absent were often nominated and elected to positions, either to subsequently avoid service by one means or another or to fulfill the obligations with less than full enthusiasm. Voting for the gorodskoi golova resulted in Lapaev’s election via 15 ‘yes’ votes and three ‘no’ votes.\textsuperscript{836} Lapaev provides an example of someone who made his career in the self-governing organizations of Kazan province. A peasant-owner (krest’ianin-sobstvennik) of the city of Tetiushi, Lapaev was 49 years old, and had served for approximately 30 years on the city board starting as a hired scribe and then, the document notes, he served for 20 years in elected positions as secretary, holding these positions simultaneously.\textsuperscript{837} Lapaev, the district police chief noted, “has done nothing reprehensible in terms of politics, and in regard to behavior and moral qualities nothing has been noted, he hasn’t been sued nor is he under investigation, and he has not served on the city board or the city society bank with his relatives.”\textsuperscript{838}

Meeting on January 19, 1916, the Tetiushi city duma conducted elections for the position of alternate deputy director of the Tetiushi city society bank of hereditary honorary citizen Petr Vasil’evich Serebriakov. Receiving ten ‘yes’ votes and two ‘no’ votes, peasant of the village of Bol’shaia Turma, Iusup Tokhvatullovich Muskeev, was elected.\textsuperscript{839} Exactly two months later, on March 15, 1916, the city duma held elections to replace outgoing bank director, peasant Egor Danilovich Fokeev, and his deputy directors, Nikolai Ivanovich Krupin and Grigorii Lazarevich Zabiiakin.\textsuperscript{840} Unanimously all three were re-elected to their positions.\textsuperscript{841}

\textsuperscript{836}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{837}\textit{Ibid.}, l. 90.
\textsuperscript{838}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{839}\textit{Ibid.}, l. 98-98ob.
\textsuperscript{840}\textit{Ibid.}, l. 113-113ob.
\textsuperscript{841}\textit{Ibid.}
term of an alternate to the deputy director, Aleksandr Ivanovich Pushkov, expired, and at those elections Pushkov was reelected.

Also in positions of financial responsibility, members of the Tetiushi city board were elected to serve on various committees and commissions. In June 1914, the city board elected six members to the audit commission: M. I. Shitukhin, V. D. Zhurin, A. I. Serebriakov, I. L. Zabiiakin, S. A. Serebriakov, and A. I. Makarov. When in November their terms ended, V. D. Zhurin and A. I. Serebriakov were re-elected along with D. Ya. Ashmarin, who was elected for the first time, allowing for continuity on the commission. These three were also re-elected on November 16, 1915. It was noted on July 12, 1916, however, that actually there should have been four people elected to the audit commission rather than three: additional elections were held, and Tetiushi meshchanin Ivan Dorofeevich Nerfil’ev was elected and added to the commission.

Tetiushi also elected members to a special budget commission in June 1914, to a commission on fighting alcoholism, to a commission on setting the rent rate for vessels crossing the rivers in Kazan, to a commission to provide a motorized well that would help fight plague, to a commission that would help provide affordable firewood to the people of the city, and to a commission on how to avoid famine by buying and storing the right amount of

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842 Ibid., l. 36.
843 Ibid., l. 59.
844 Ibid., l. 121.
845 Ibid., l. 164.
846 Ibid., l. 38-38ob.
847 Ibid., l. 41-48ob.
848 Ibid., l. 51-51ob.
849 Ibid., l. 102-102ob.
850 Ibid., l. 105a-105aob.
flour. Many of these people served on multiple commissions simultaneously while they also fulfilled the responsibilities of their primary elected position and their own profession.

The needs of the local populations were serious and intensifying, particularly into the second decade of the twentieth century. Along with a growth in these local needs, and the commissions and committees established to address them, the number of people who devoted their lives to trying to address these needs also grew. Even prior to the Great Reforms, there were many dedicated people who spent long years in the bureaucracy of the city, the district, and/or the province, attempting to improve lives. As a result of their dedication, professionalism in the ranks of bureaucrats and in the estate bodies improved markedly, as is seen in the paperwork produced for these many elections.

**“Sweet Dreams” Unfulfilled?**

With the issuance of the October 17 Manifesto in 1905, the population of Kazan prepared with excitement to elect delegates to Russia’s first State Duma: “the Duma of the people’s great hopes.” They gathered in record numbers across the entire province – peasants, merchants, city dwellers, nobles – to continue the wave of political participation heightened by the revolutionary spirit that began to emerge in 1904 across the empire with the devastating losses in the war with Japan. Given Kazan’s diverse population, political opposition expressed frustration over the agrarian question, the unmet demands of Kazan’s growing worker population, and the desires of restless students for greater autonomy within Kazan University, it also expressed a hope for a better future. Connected to the flowering of cultural expression in the form of non-Russian language publications and to official religious tolerance, political opposition was also

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851 Ibid., l. 109-109ob.
often linked to the growing demands for equal rights for non-Russian minorities – the right to
provide education in native languages and to equally participate in political life regardless of
religious and/or ethnic affiliation. The sentiment of excitement and hope that brought crowds of
voters into the overflowing streets in the early spring of 1906 would later be remembered “as a
sweet dream of youth.”

In many respects, the experiment of the State Duma that fundamentally changed the
governing structure of the empire failed to actualize the potential for participatory politics for
which many had hoped. Yet, as the local electoral documents examined above demonstrate, in
that very experiment itself one can glimpse expressions of representation, obligation to and an
interest in service, nimble negotiation of complex local societal realities, and multi-layered
understandings of legal and social rights. The experiential bases for the elections of delegates to
the State Duma were found in the decades of local elections conducted in the ratushas, city
dumas, estate assemblies, and zemstvos. These elections were held for officials who served at all
levels of local administrative and judicial posts – from the village level to the provincial level.
This experience fed directly into the State Duma elections and also continued throughout the
early twentieth century at elections for estate assemblies, district and provincial zemstvos, city
dumas, the numerous committees and commissions they established, and for local economic
institutions.

Fundamentally altered by the traumatic experiences of the 1905 revolution and its
aftermath, Kazan’s voters drew extensively on past electoral experiences, now infused with new
hopes, new demands, and perspectives formed by the evolutionary processes of change that were
accelerated throughout the period of the Great Reforms. How these evolutionary and

853 Ibid., 19.
854 Ibid., 15.
revolutionary trends were woven into Kazan’s complex local electoral history is seen by examining archival sources, specifically complaints about election irregularities. Meeting minutes from the provinces’ many local administrative bodies also reveal the basic routine patterns of electoral behavior as well as expressions of original and thoughtful analysis. In many respects the sentiments expressed by local voters in Kazan province in the opening decade of the twentieth century reflect both the accumulated experience with local electoral processes as well as the expression of desires for direct representation of individuals, groups and locations, and rights both to participate and to not participate in the electoral practice.

CONCLUSION

As the archival documents analyzed here demonstrate, the electoral processes that had continued and developed for over a century, and particularly since the introduction of the Great Reforms, reflected the previous roots in earlier practices, but also signaled a fundamental break with earlier experiences, resulting in a qualitative change in the sentiments expressed by those who filed formal complaints about specific elections. Their primary concerns included the right to elect representatives who were not only technically eligible to be elected, but who also could represent the constituents in spirit. As a result, increasingly valid elections were those that not only were conducted properly, but also those which produced satisfactory results. Likewise, valid elections were perceived as those in which all people were represented – many believed that no village or place could be excluded or omitted for the elections to stand. Elections were considered by voters to be invalid if the electors or deputies from their village or area were

855 This should not, however, be understood as always doing the “right” thing. Social norms often included behavior like the pursuit of personal profit or gain via public office. This was also true in many other historical and even contemporary contexts, across a diverse set of countries.
excluded due to road conditions, undelivered invitations, or failure to inform participants about elections, because this by definition resulted in the exclusion the representation of their perspective and their interests from the vote. While some wished to serve in elected office over the span of a career, and if others chose to not even participate in the elections, they should have the right not to do so. Regardless, no elections should be the subject of corruption, undue influence, or conflicts of interest. Ensuring that elections were a means of not only filling positions, but of identifying people who wanted to serve and who were eligible to serve according to the letter and the spirit of the election statutes was not easy, but the existing procedures which included the filing of official complaints aided this process.

Among the compelling expressions of group, corporate and social rights are the complaints about improper elections based on representation, or more accurately, the lack thereof. Increasingly complainants expressed the desire to elect someone who could represent them personally and represent their group interests. Therefore, candidates were considered ineligible if they could not understand, and therefore could not properly represent voters’ concerns. Someone who had been away too long no longer knew the village ways, and someone who had a different profession could not represent voters’ professional concerns – these candidates, while perhaps possessing the technical qualifications outlined in electoral statutes for participating in elections, were nonetheless often viewed by voters as unacceptable because they could not represent their personal or group interests.

If corruption or other improper influences interfered with elections, the process of expressing one’s personal or group interests through the choice of electing a candidate to represent them was often considered invalid. Moreover, as political participation qualitatively differed as a result of the cumulative effects of evolutionary change of the Great Reforms and the
revolutionary events of 1905, overt corruption and external influence was less tolerable to many voters, which resulted in more explicit complaints about this improper behavior. The electoral process itself was taken seriously and increasingly so too were those instances when it was hindered by real or perceived improprieties.

Over the course of the nearly half century since the introduction of the Great Reforms, notions of service to the community were coupled with an increasing sense of professionalism among many of the people who participated in local administration. Many became zealously committed to local efforts to improve life at its most basic foundations of education, health care, agricultural production and sanitation. Serving for decades on numerous committees to address the urgent needs of fire control, gas lighting, clean well water, disease control, and the prevention of deforestation, these elected officials committed their lives to Kazan province many continued their service in the State Duma.
CONCLUSION

ELECTIONS BEFORE DEMOCRACY:
RUSSIA’S IMPERIAL ELECTORAL EXPERIENCE IN COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

In the era following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a small but growing number historians from a diverse set of countries and regions have sought to understand “elections before democracy,” as a means of addressing questions that are not always directly related to the process of democratization, and that broaden the definition of electoral studies to include campaigns, parties, and all aspects of the evolution of the franchise. Still fewer are those historians who have written works seeking to place these individual, national or subnational analyses of elections in comparison and contrast with one another. The most extensive contemporary work of this sort published thus far is Elections Before Democracy,\(^{856}\) which includes chapters on Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, England, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, and Spain. With the exception of the much earlier 1918 landmark work of Charles Seymour and Donald Paige Frary that surveyed a large portion of the world’s elections,\(^ {857}\) Russian, and indeed nearly all, imperial electoral experiences are absent from recent comparative analysis. Much can be gained from not only more comparative analysis, but also from the incorporation of new areas and perspectives into that analysis, such as the history of elections in empires, and the history of elections in areas beyond the west or western colonies to include Asia, Africa, and the Middle East – in short, by examining elections held in unlikely places.

\(^{856}\) Posada-Carbó, Elections Before Democracy.
\(^{857}\) Seymour and Frary, How the World Votes.
unlikely places in which elections occur are not only historical but also contemporary in what political scientists sometimes call, “transitional democracies,” or “electoral authoritarianisms,” or “hybrid regimes” – those countries in which the type of government and political system is not easy to categorize as either entirely democratic or entirely undemocratic but rather somewhere in between. \[859\] Do elections still matter in contexts that are not entirely democratic and difficult to categorize? If so, what role do they play in these states? How do they affect the description of the political regimes in these states? As scholar Staffan I. Lindberg argues in his study of democracy and elections in Africa, “elections in newly democratizing countries did not signal the completion of the transition of democracy but rather foster liberalization and have a self-reinforcing power that promotes increased democracy in Africa’s political regimes.” \[860\] In order for elections to be a full and functioning part of a democracy, those in power must be willing to accept the results of competitive elections, realizing that there is more to gain by participating in free and fair elections than by trying to circumvent, undermine, or delegitimize them.

In the historical context of the Russian Empire, elections did not bring about democracy; neither the monarchy, nor the Bolsheviks who succeeded imperial rule were willing to participate in elections that may not have secured their ability to stay in power. However, as Lindberg found in his research, there is evidence in the complaints filed by voters in Kazan province about election irregularities suggesting that elections did foster deeper liberalization that contributed to increased calls for greater democratic governance. Through formal complaints, the expanding printed press, and, after 1905 through political party activity, many voters in the Russian Empire

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859 Some have called these types of regimes “adjectival democracies,” due to the fact that they can often most accurately be described only by qualifying the nature of their democracy. See David Collier and Steven Levitsky, “Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research,” _World Politics_ 49, no. 3 (1997): 430-451.

expressed their desire for more appropriate and full representation as individuals and as members of groups, a reduction in corruption and self-interested candidates, and expanded rights of participation and non-participation in the political process through elections. While elections do not constitute the only essential aspect of democracy, they do contribute to the development of an electoral culture that sought more direct participation in government.

The study of historical elections can provide a number of insights relevant to the field of history and perhaps beyond. When studied on a local level, the wide range of elections that occurred over many generations in imperial Russia reveal a great deal: 1) how people of various religious, ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds participated in the governance of their territory through elective institutions; 2) how elections have often been a mechanism for negotiating life amidst such a diversity of people, balancing the demands of the central imperial government with the realities of the local context, and; 3) how local elections created experiences and practices that contributed to evolving notions of rights, participation, and representation.

These conclusions about the importance of studying elections in imperial Russia are consistent with many of those found by scholars whose recent work has focused on nineteenth century Latin America and elsewhere. As scholars Eduardo Posada-Carbó states, “Studies on the development of citizenship, on the diverse forms of political representation, on the politics of subaltern sectors, or on electoral history elsewhere in the world have encouraged the reexamination of the study of electoral practices in the region.” These works join those that focus on the development of what are considered today the “advanced democracies” of England,

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France, Germany, and the United States.\textsuperscript{862} There is also a small but important body of works that focuses on other areas such as China and the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{863} In many ways, these two latter examples are arguably more applicable in comparison with Russia, challenging the accepted notion that elections under autocratic or authoritarian regimes are little more than rubber stamps or simply a show of participation and representation leaving people (with the exception of the rich and connected) with little choice or say in the governance of their lives.

The authors of a small but growing number of works seek to study elections before democracy providing a more nuanced understanding of elections as processes – broadly defined – in unexpected places.


Early Elections in Latin America: Relevance beyond the Colonial Experience

Individual studies of early Latin American elections are perhaps the most numerous and diverse outside of those on early European elections. Covering a wide range of topics from the involvement of indigenous peasants in political activity to various forms of corruption to the development of political parties to the role of elections in the establishment of independent institutions, these studies provide a rich basis for the further expansion of the comparative history of elections. The following conclusions drawn from these works provide useful bases for cross-national comparisons and present important findings that may challenge our understanding of elections elsewhere in the world, including in Russia.

Peter Guardino argues in his paper on peasants in Mexican elections from 1808-1850 in Oaxaca, that what seems like passivity among the peasants, “should not be construed as evidence of political ignorance or disengagement with the new political norms or citizenship and equality emergent in the nineteenth century. Indigenous peasants,” he continues, “engaged these innovations, including elections, in different ways. They also continued to use older forms of politics like legal petitioning and riots.” Electing representatives was an innovation in Spanish America, “but the form of the election and the basis of representation were both purely Old Regime.” Guardino’s conclusion that peasants were not as politically inactive as once believed simply because they were not involved in elections for as long as or as extensively as

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866 Ibid., 8.
their urban counterparts, and that they embraced the new opportunity to participate in elections while not forgoing earlier forms of political involvement, offers an important comparison with that of Russian peasant involvement in local provincial elections. Specifically, in rural Mexico, as in Russia, peasant involvement in elections was restrained not by their lack of involvement in political activity itself, but rather by mechanisms of indirect voting and the practice of restricting voting in traditional elections to elders.\textsuperscript{867} By adding elections to the broader set of political activities in which they engaged, peasants were, Guardino argues, more, not less, engaged.

Eduardo Posada-Carbó’s study of elections in Colombia from 1886-1930 focuses on electoral competition, the role of government influence in elections, the degree of involvement of the opposition, and whether or not elections encouraged political awareness.\textsuperscript{868} Given the fact that there were often too few candidates in Russia’s local elections, understanding why and how degrees of involvement differed elsewhere may provide greater insight into Russia’s experience. In this regard, one of Posada-Carbó’s findings resonates with a finding presented implicitly in this study of Kazan’s local elections: “elections involved a larger number of people than those who actually cast their ballots.”\textsuperscript{869} As I have shown, women were involved in elections via their proxies, electoral assemblies often were witnessed by members of the public who sat as an audience to the proceedings, and the process of officially complaining about elections involved many more people in the electoral process than may be initially evident. Posada-Carbó concludes, “by readdressing the meaning of elections between 1886 and 1930,” there is a “need to incorporate more fully the history of elections in any broader study of the development of

\textsuperscript{867} Ibid., 22.
\textsuperscript{869} Ibid., 260.
Colombian political culture.” It is this notion of elections as part of political culture that is also important for further studies of Russia’s imperial elections.

In his study of Argentine electoral history from 1810-1880, Eduardo Zimmerman seeks to make a connection between how elections functioned in nineteenth century Argentina and the processes of democratization by taking on one of the primary criticisms of early elections particularly in Latin America, that of corruption. He concludes that “despite the recurrent episodes of fraud and violence, the early adoption of a wide suffrage and the relative frequency of elections… signal the centrality of democratic mechanisms in nineteenth century Argentine politics.” In Russia, and everywhere that elections have historically occurred, corruption has also occurred. However, like Zimmerman I have found evidence that despite this corruption, the value of elections was not discredited, and in many respects, the complaints about corruption illuminated contemporaries’ thinking about the proper functioning of elections and about the importance of elections more generally. Contemporary complaints about corruption and conflict of interest did not undermine the elections themselves, but rather validate the electoral process via those complaints. When participants chose to not accept perceived improprieties, they were confirming the value of the process that they wished to safeguard from anything that might cause them to be invalid or a less than a legitimate means of expressing their choices about representation, interests, and rights.

Zimmerman also widens the lens of involvement in political mobilization to include those who were not in power as well. This broadening of the definition of electoral participation

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870 Ibid., 249.
872 As one might expect, not all scholars agree on the significance of factors beyond those of the structure and apparatus of elections. Anne L. Potter argues that the structure of institutions constrained the possibilities of elections for democratization, and ultimately proved to be dominant in the failure of Argentine democracy. This may be explained by the difference in time periods studies, differences of scholarly bias, or actually, as Russia’s experience indicates, both practices and institutions could
provides a useful means of analysis by going beyond the usual subjects of study such as the elites, political parties, or leading government officials: this is the same approach I have followed in analyzing electoral complaints submitted by a wide group of people, including those who did not participate directly in elections themselves.

Another issue often studied in the electoral history of elections in Latin America is that of political parties and associated campaigning. Ulrich Mücke’s analysis of the 1871-1872 presidential election in Peru aims to shift the study of elections from strictly the act of voting itself to all that encompasses the election cycle, specifically the campaign preceding the actual elections. In doing so, he points out an important contradiction:

To study elections in nineteenth-century Peru is to study a contradiction. On the one hand, elections were held often and formed an integral part of the political culture since independence. Elections played an outstanding role in each of the many constitutions passed in the nineteenth century. The importance of the elections was due, in some part, to the need to legitimate the independent state and its political leaders. … On the other hand, election procedures went against the basic principles of what is today considered democratic decision making. Generally, the opposing parties and factions fought violently on election day.

Not unlike Russia’s or other countries’ electoral experiences in the nineteenth century, political practices that today are perceived as contradictions were not considered as such at the time. In Peru’s case, legitimization of political leaders was not considered contradictory to the violence that accompanied the legitimizing elections. Likewise, the fact that in Russia many elections were held when there was a lack of willing and/or qualified candidates, leaving many people to volunteer or be volunteered for certain positions, did not negate the importance of the practice of the election itself.

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874 Ibid., 311-312.
China’s Local Elections

The case of contemporary China is often cited as particularly relevant to the study of historical elections, including those in imperial Russia, due to the autocratic nature of the Chinese Communist party, and due to the fact that there is an apparent disconnect between local electoral behavior that is often more liberal, and national-level politics that is more controlled – as was the case in imperial Russia. 875

In a recent article on elections in rural China, Pierre F. Landry, Deborah Davis, and Shiru Wang challenge the standard political science convention that contested elections, defined as multi-party elections in which there is true competition, are essential for democratic politics. 876 They find that indeed, some element of competition in elections is important to increase participation and the perceived legitimacy of those elections, but that competition need not be linked to political party involvement. 877 Their research found that “voters seemed to be satisfied even with elections that are heavily controlled and offer only a limited degree of choice. This suggests that elections are not only a means of increasing accountability, but also an instrument that with little political risk the regime can use to bolster popular confidence in the fairness of political institutions.” 878 In other words, the very involvement of voters in elections strengthened confidence in those elections as important mechanisms of choice, even in the single-Communist-party dominated state. In this regard, there is an instructive link between Russia’s imperial elections and China’s contemporary elections: participation in elections itself is critical to reinforcing the legitimacy of elections as mechanisms of representation. This legitimizing

875 Dr. Harley Balzer first pointed me to the relevance of comparisons between contemporary Chinese local elections and local Russian imperial elections. I thank Dr. Balzer for bringing this comparison to my attention and for introducing me to the work of Mayling Birney who studies village elections in contemporary China.
877 Ibid.
878 Ibid., 782.
mechanism then in turn is the foundation upon which further representation is sought; even – and perhaps even especially – in controlled contexts (imperial Russia or contemporary China), elections in practice have been and can be processes contributing to greater and greater popular participation and legitimization of that participation.

Given that political parties were illegal in Russia until the early twentieth century, the fact that Russia’s local elections were perceived as legitimate absent parties may provide some insight into how contemporary local Chinese elections may be competitive and legitimate without multiple parties. Likewise, in both cases, one may ask: What role, in these two contexts of competition, does having multiple candidates from which to choose play in electoral legitimacy? Understanding more fully how choices were made in imperial Russian elections may provide new means of considering relative competition in Chinese local elections.

Political scientist Lily Tsai’s research on the provision of public goods in Chinese villages finds that local accountability is essential for ensuring that the needs of the public (e.g. clean and sufficient water, good roads, etc.) are addressed. In the case of rural China, those communities which have what Tsai terms “solidarity groups,” there is greater provision of public goods. This is largely due to the fact that those groups, most prominently formed around village temples, village churches, and lineage groups, are able to “award (local officials) moral standing” for providing those public goods. Absent the ability to influence officials through formal political mechanisms, such informal means, Tsai found, was effective for local communities. In Kazan province, similar groups existed throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, whether based on religious, ethnic, or geographical principles.

880 Ibid., 358-359.
881 Ibid., 356.
Understanding how such groups operated in Kazan – both formally and informally – and how their informal efforts to influence the provision of public goods compared to formal means of doing so may provide productive insights into the role of elections in the broader political local landscape.

The conclusion that electoral practices are important, even in unanticipated and imperfect contexts, is consistent with the findings of Jennifer Gandhi and Ellen Lust-Okar in their study of elections under authoritarianism.\textsuperscript{882} “There is some evidence that elections may contribute to democratization from the ground up.”\textsuperscript{883} They cite Chinese local elections as evidence that “elections promote ‘creeping democratization.’”\textsuperscript{884} As I have stated, it is not my aim to demonstrate how Russia’s local elections either did or did not lead to a potential democracy in Russia. Rather, as stated for the case of contemporary China, Russia’s experience with elections, Gandhi and Lust-Okar state, “may (have) influence(d) citizens’ relationship with the state and their expectations about it, eventually leading to higher levels of democratic engagement.”\textsuperscript{885} It is the nature of this electoral engagement itself, rather than whether or not it led to democracy, that has been the subject of this study, and will remain a fruitful subject of further comparative history on elections, particularly in autocratic regimes, including the Ottoman Empire, which in many ways is perhaps an even more analogous case for comparison with the local elections held in the Russian Empire.

\textsuperscript{883} Ibid., 415.
\textsuperscript{884} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{885} Ibid.
Elections and Empire: Ottomans’ Experience with Voting

The 1876 Constitution and its subsequent reinstatement in 1908 are critical points in the development of Ottoman history. It was the 1876 constitution that established elections as an important aspect of the constitutional regime. Scholar Hasan Kayali argues in his article on Ottoman elections, that they reveal much about the development of Ottoman political culture in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{886} As with the Great Reforms in Russia, the Ottoman public had gained some experience with representative local government after the reorganization of provincial administration in the 1860s: the new millet general assemblies were partially elected.\textsuperscript{887} In 1908, the Electoral Law for the first general elections changed the basis of provincial elections from one based on Muslim and non-Muslim quotas to one based on overall population – one deputy for every 50,000 men with no quotas.\textsuperscript{888} While the Electoral Law was very detailed in its description of how elections were to be held, complaints about compliance with the Law were frequent, as were the complaints following many of Russia’s local elections.\textsuperscript{889} These limited local assembly elections and the 1908 general elections were the foundation for the 1912 general elections that were a landmark in their ability to mobilize voters and in their contributions to the development of the “public sphere.”\textsuperscript{890} Campaigning, wide use of the press, and petitions filed by individuals and groups in favor of various positions, increased widely across the Ottoman Empire.

Kayali concludes that “regardless of electoral flaws and the number of actual voters, the elections served both to legitimize the constitutional representative system and to promote

\begin{small}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{887} For a detailed description of these provincial elections, see Davison, Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 136-171.
\item \textsuperscript{888} Kayali, “Elections and the Electoral Process in the Ottoman Empire,” 268.
\item \textsuperscript{889} Ibid., 270. These complaints filed with the Electoral Commission could provide an interesting source base for comparison with local elections in the Russian empire, particularly in multi-ethnic, multi-confessional provinces such as Kazan.
\item \textsuperscript{890} Ibid., 273.
\end{itemize}
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political citizenship in the empire.” Kayali notes several ways in which this occurred: they demonstrated that Ottoman subjects were people whose political activities were “institutionally recognized” and that could not be ignored; they mobilized people beyond simply going to the polls; and they expanded the “public sphere” in the Middle East. In this regard, elections in the Ottoman Empire, as in the Russian Empire, were essential to laying the foundations for greater political involvement, starting with local elections and culminating in national elections.

In his analysis of reform in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, Roderic H. Davison examines “how the representative principle came to be applied to various organs of government in the Ottoman Empire.” My research into the local elections of Kazan province in the Russian Empire over the course of more than a century has similarly indicated that local elections revealed essential aspects of local political culture in the context of a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional empire.

The principles of representation, normative as well as legal rights, participation and abstention, and the expression of individual and collective interests were evident in the context of the broad range of local imperial elections that occurred over a long period of time. Such expressions demonstrated an evolution of political engagement often obscured in previous historiography by a focus on particular elections (such as those for the zemstvos and city dumas) or by perceived lack of ability by voters and others to express their choices in a less than fully democratic context.

The experience of local and subsequently national elections in the multi-ethnic, multi-confessional Ottoman Empire offers an especially apt comparison with the Russian Empire’s local, and eventually, national elections. Building on my research and that of Davison and other

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891 Ibid., 282.
892 Ibid.
contemporary historians of the Ottoman Empire, a detailed comparison of local elections in the two empires would make a contribution to the histories of both empires as well as to electoral history “before democracy” overall. The findings of such research may be surprising to critics who take the position that these imperial ‘experiments’ with representation were little more than hollow efforts at maintaining order and resisting change. However, Russia’s long experience with local elections leads me to concur with Davison’s conclusion about the Ottoman electoral experience: “Despite its many imperfections, the representative principle seems to have taken root in Turkey in the nineteenth century and to have been capable of growth thereafter.” 

**ONE LOCAL VOTE AT A TIME: EVOLVING LOCAL ELECTORAL CULTURE IN KAZAN PROVINCE**

What these cases of comparative history have pointed to, and indeed what I have suggested throughout this dissertation with the case of imperial Russia, is that when and where people were given the ability to participate in local and eventually national elections, regardless of constraints imposed on that ability, they did so through a host of electoral practices reaching many more people than those who actually cast votes. In doing so, they expressed a developing electoral culture that included the principles of representation, normative as well as legal rights, participation and abstention, and the expression of individual and collective interests. When examining cases as disparate as those in nineteenth century Latin America, early twentieth century Ottoman Empire, and contemporary China, one finds that the study of elections, first on a local, sub-national, and national level, and then on a comparative basis, leads to new insights: the degree of involvement of groups of people often perceived as not being involved (e.g. such as

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894 Ibid., 108.
peasants, and ethnic or religious minorities), and that elections importantly include the process of voting as well as the rules and procedures that determine who gets to vote.

Indeed, there are many aspects of early elections that remain to be studied. Frank O’Gorman, scholar of English elections, has raised the following questions: what was the size of the electorate and what was its rate of growth over the years? How did the growth of the electorate affect the mechanisms and extent of such control? What was the electorate’s political consciousness? To what extent did the electorate identify with the parties or with groups and/or ideas such as the church, mosque, or religion in general? To these I would add, How did the electorate view the importance of elections? Were elections preferable to other means of selecting representatives and officials? Why or why not? How were elections viewed in relation to other aspects of local political culture such as village and/or urban organizations?

I have aimed to provide initial answers to many of these questions throughout the preceding chapters. By placing Russia’s experience with local and eventually national elections in a larger comparative context, these developments can be seen in a fuller, more complete light of broader, global electoral experience with both the differences and similarities that characterize human experience generally.

In examining electoral processes in imperial Russia as they were practiced in Kazan province over more than a century, this dissertation has addressed critical themes central to Russian imperial history more broadly, that of the tension between the realities of local administration in an ethnically and confessionally diverse province and the desire of the imperial government to maintain control over the provinces. The actual practices of local governance involved over time an increasing degree of local autonomy and local self-government that maintained a balance of the needs of a diverse population and that of the imperial state.
Elections were an essential mechanism by which these needs, at times competing and at times complementary, were balanced. Elections, commonly considered inconsistent or incompatible with autocracy, in reality were an important part of local governance of the Russian Empire. And, although not intended as such, they became ingrained in the habits of local political practice that over time came to contribute to the challenge of the very imperial governance of which they were a part.

The processes followed in local elections, repeatedly practiced, created a foundation of experience that facilitated the development of political culture over the course of more than a century. One vote at a time, Russia’s imperial electoral experience came to be a powerful means of political participation on the local levels, and eventually, if only for a short time and in a limited fashion, on the national level.
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