

**On the Land, Territory, and Crisis Triad:
*Enclosure and Capitalist Appropriation of the Russian
Land Commune***

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ABSTRACT (academic)

My research examines territorial practices of land enclosure employed to eliminate the Russian land commune in response to the agrarian and economic crises of the late imperial period. Since the land reforms of 1906, the Russian urban periphery became a center of territorial struggle, where complex alliances and strategies, beyond the exclusive control of the state, came together to carry out or resist land appropriation. Using original documentation of Russian land deals that I obtained in the federal and municipal archives, I explore how the coalitions of landed nobility, land surveyors, landless serfs, and peasant proprietors used enclosure as a conduit for extra-legal governance, accumulation of capital, or, in contrary, as a means of resistance. Through critical discourse analysis, I illustrate how the Russian imperial state and territories in the periphery were dialectically co-produced not only through institutional manipulations, state resettlement plans, and husbandry manuals, but also through political and public discourses. I argue that land enclosure exploited practices of customary territorialization in the commune, instigated territorial decentralization of state functions through erosion of the peasant land law, and furthered growing agrarian and economic crises in the countryside. The urban periphery became a strategic and contested territory used for the accumulation of old landed wealth and displacement of two million peasant households, which accommodated capitalist development under the Russian Tsarist and, later, Soviet political regimes. This research reexamines some predominant assumptions about the land, territory, and crisis triad in Russia by positioning the rural politics of the late imperial period within the global context of land enclosure and bringing a territorial dimension into the Russian agrarian scholarship. At the same time, by focusing on the historical reading of territory from a Russian perspective, this study introduces a more nuanced alternative to the traditional territory discourse often found in Eurocentric interpretations.

О Земле, Территории, и Кризисе: *Захват Земли и Капиталистическая Апроприация Русской Поземельной Общины*

Вера Смирнова

ABSTRACT (Russian)

Данное исследование предлагает исторический, географический анализ захвата земли, или так называемого “огораживания,” в контексте экономических и аграрных кризисов в поздней имперской России. Используя оригинальные документы о земельных сделках, полученных в государственных архивах, эта работа изучает коалиции землевладельцев, землеустроителей, безземельных крестьян, и местных собственников и их приёмы использования практики огораживания в качестве проводника для принудительного управления, накопления земельного капитала, или, наоборот, как средство автономии. Используя методологию критического анализа дискурса, данная работа иллюстрирует примеры того, как российское имперское государство и периферийные территории диалектически со-продюсировались посредством институциональных манипуляций, планов переселения и руководств по земледелию, а также посредством политических и популярных дискурсов. В данном исследовании аргументируется факт того, что огораживание способствовало усилению аграрных и экономических кризисов в сельской местности за счёт эксплуатации практик автономного землепользования в общине. Городская периферия стала стратегической территорией, используемой для накопления нового капитала и принудительного переселения двух миллионов крестьянских хозяйств, что способствовало капиталистическому развитию при царском и, позднее, советском политических режимах. Через этот пример, данное исследование критически переосмысляет преобладающие теории о земле, территории и кризисной триаде в России, позиционируя сельскую политику позднего имперского периода внутри глобального контекста апроприации земли при капитализме. В то же время, переосмысляя термин ‘территория’ с российской точки зрения, это исследование вводит более тонкую альтернативу традиционному дискурсу о территории в Евро-центричном контексте.

On the Land, Territory, and Crisis Triad: *Enclosure and Capitalist Appropriation of the Russian Land Commune*

Vera Smirnova

ABSTRACT (public)

My research provides a historical, geographical analysis of land enclosure in the context of economic and agrarian crises in late imperial Russia. Using original records of Russian land deals that I obtained in the federal and municipal archives, I explore how the coalitions of landed nobility, land surveyors, landless serfs, and peasant proprietors used land enclosure as a conduit for coercive governance, accumulation of landed capital, or, in contrary, as a means of resistance. Through critical discourse analysis, I illustrate how the Russian imperial state and territories in the periphery were dialectically co-produced not only through institutional manipulations, resettlement plans, and husbandry manuals, but also through political and public discourses. I argue that land enclosure exploited practices of autonomous land management in the commune and furthered growing agrarian and economic crises in the countryside. The urban periphery became a strategic territory used for the accumulation of new wealth and displacement of two million peasant households, which accommodated capitalist development under the Russian Tsarist and, later, Soviet political regimes. Through this example, my research reexamines predominant assumptions about the land, territory, and crisis triad in Russia by positioning the rural politics of the late imperial period within the global context of land enclosure. At the same time, by focusing on the historical reading of territory from a Russian perspective, this study introduces a more nuanced alternative to the traditional territory discourse often found in Western interpretations.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

RGIA – Russian State Historical Archive (*Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv*);

GARF – State Archive of the Russian Federation (*Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii*);

TsMAM – Central Municipal Archive of the City of Moscow (*Tsentralnyi Munitsypalnyi Arkhiv Moskvy*);

RGAE – Russian State Archive of Economics (*Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Ekonomiki*);

FES – Free Imperial Economic Society for the Encouragement of Agriculture and Husbandry (*Imperatorskoe Vol’noe Ekonomicheskoe Obshchestvo*);

RIGS – Russian Imperial Geographical Society (*Rossiiskoe Imperatorskoe Geographicheskoe Obshchestvo*);

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The ALA-LC Romanization tables for Slavic alphabets published by the American Library Association and the Library of Congress are used as method of transliteration.

Arshyn – land measure equal to 71cm;

Artel – voluntary association of people for work or other collective activities;

Cherezpolositsa – pattern of scattered strips of land as a result of yearly land repartitioning in the commune;

Desiatina – land measure equal to 1.09 hectares;

Druzhina – army collective united under the rule of the *knyaz*;

Dushy – measure of land distribution equal to a number of males in the household;

Khodok – the so called ‘walkers,’ groups of people assigned by the land management commissions or zemstvo institutions to explore areas in Siberia on behalf of new settlers;

Khutor – a type of enclosed farm separated from other villages;

Mir – term used to describe the land commune, or in some cases the union of multiple *obshchina* in one location;

Obshchestvo – rural society, the term used to describe the land commune;

Obshchina – term used to describe the land commune;

Otrub – a type of enclosed farm located in vicinity to the neighbors;

Peredel – land repartition;

Skhod – commune’s assembly;

Uyezd – administrative division in Russian Empire, equal to a province;

Zemstvo – elected assembly of local government;

INTRODUCTION

The Tractor March on Moscow

The first man who, having fenced off a plot of land, thought of saying, ‘This is mine’ and found people simple enough to believe him was the real founder of civil society. How many crimes, wars, murders, how many miseries and horrors might the human race have been spared by the one who, upon pulling up the stakes or filling in the ditch, had shouted to his fellow men: ‘Beware of listening to this imposter; you are lost if you forget the fruits of the earth belong to all and that the earth belongs to no one.’

— Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality* (1755 [1984])

In 1991 peasant families were waiting to obtain a share of communal land that multiple generations worked for collective subsistence, happiness, and prosperity of the nation, including my grandparents Marusia and Ivan Andyshula in the village Gorodok, near the city of Rovno in Western Ukraine. In December of 1991, the Presidential Decree No. 323 declared all collective and state farms would become joint stock companies. Their members would turn into shareholders and receive monetary asset shares and land shares of three to fifteen hectares for free. 99 percent of all land formerly held in the hands of collective farms was distributed among its members in the form of paper vouchers, and only 13 percent of that land was officially held as material private property (Wegren 2014). Land shares could be leased or sold. Yet, exchange of shares for an actual land title was a complicated issue that required time, money, and familiarity with the administrative processes. Territorial allocation of land shares was not specified in the paper, making all land a fictitious commodity and an object of speculations and bare robbery. In 1996 Marusia and Ivan were offered 3.03 hectares of land in shares (See Image 1), yet they only received a land title to the ownership of a physical land plot of 1 hectare. Since the advent of this new land policy, rural post-Soviet space became a disputed frontier where a new landed oligarchy, foreign interests, old landed capital, and landless villagers aligned together either to allow or to resist future

land grabbing as well as new enclosures on a scale not seen since the times of Soviet collectivization and imperial land reforms.



Image 1 – Land share certificate of Marusia and Ivan Andyshula of the village Gorodok, Rovno region, Ukraine. The certificate states that shares of 3.03 cadastral hectares of the collective cooperative Niva are provided “without specification of the boundaries and physical location of the allotment” (Source: Author’s copy)

Recent decades have witnessed another wave of fostering personal land ownership in Russia through the regime of private property with Putin’s opening-up of Russian land resources to the local and foreign investors with the new Land Code of 2002. One feature, however, remains familiar – common people are still deprived of their land, now in the hands of the few. Russian rural land use is still grounded in the peasant land law, meaning ownership by means of productive use, while most large-scale agroholdings are held by the foreign capital, the state, and Russian private investors that usually await for the bankruptcy of farms and depreciation of the land before selling it for profit. The new protest by the farmers from Kuban, prosperous black earth region of

Russia, that organized a march of 17 tractors driving to Kremlin to talk to the government about the failure of current administration to stop the “land rush and raiding in the pursuit of land plots,” was an ordinary event and yet has marked a recent turning point in the struggle over territory (See Image 2). The state officials often claim to hold a fictional meeting of land-share owners that decide to transfer their piece or a *pai* to a new owner for 30 years, the decision gets registered in Rosreestr (Federal Service for State Registration, Cadastre, and Cartography), and unsuspected villagers are left without land for third of a century:

Our village is the most deprived. There was a collective farm named after Maxim Gorky, that then became SEC [Agricultural Productive Cooperative] “Shkurinsky,” where worked 600 people, there were two and a half thousand head of cattle and three thousand pigs – everything was stolen. All harvest from 2009 worth 200 million rubles, all the equipment, everything was stolen (Gazeta, 22 August 2016).





Image 2 – the ‘Tractor March on Moscow’ from Krasnodar region to the Kremlin on August 21, 2016 (Source: Radio Svoboda)

One way to disentangle this paradox is to trace the genealogy of the Russian land appropriation – its complex origins in Slavic settler culture, the history of Turkic nomadism, borrowed political-legal models of the continental European civil law, and political-economic aspects of communal landholding that date back to the Grand Duchy of Moscow. This dissertation aims to start this tremendous task by exploring the history of capitalist land appropriation and territorial enclosure through the lens of long-neglected events of the late Russian Empire, namely Stolypin land consolidation acts of 1906, 1910, and 1911. These policies displaced two million of families from their land, served as a basis for proprietary capitalism with fictitious property values, and still shape the tradition of territorial struggle to this day.

Land appropriation in Russia is a familiar story, yet it is guided by multiple historical forces of collective land ownership and fictitious private property, centralized state oppression and stateless territorial autonomy of the commune. I make the Russian case a unique avenue by which one can contest the Eurocentric territory debate, usually associated with modernist approaches to state territorial sovereignty over space and its borders. Hence, primarily historical, political, geographic work is in the goal of this dissertation.

On the land, territory, and crisis triad

Traditionally, practices of land enclosure represented objectives related to the advancement of agricultural and economic productivity through consolidation of land holdings to enable farming innovation, promote personal responsibility for land, and, as a result, to encourage agricultural improvement (Perelman 2000; Sevilla-Buitrago 2015; Wood 2002). Yet, not all objectives were related to enhancing productivity, as the enclosure was a key strategy for accessing and opening-up territories which “institutional structure made it difficult to access land ownership through market channels” (Sevilla-Buitrago 2012). As in the pre-capitalist West, the old landed gentry often desired to improve its political position and power by acquiring landed property.

Land is foremost a political category, but it is a finite resource that can be appropriated, distributed, and owned. As Karl Polanyi argued, land is a fictitious commodity – its actual economic, social, and cultural values far exceed the exchange value imposed by the markets (Polanyi 1957). Understanding land as a scarce resource, however, is not sufficient for understanding the struggles over exclusive land occupation, capture, ownership, and control. Here, the concept of territory becomes critical. In the *Birth of Territory* (2013) political theorist and geographer Stuart Elden examines territory as a combination of political-economic and political-strategic forces related simultaneously to land, as a base for landed property, and terrain, as a base for security, management, and administration of the land. For Elden, territory is more than merely land and terrain, it is a specific “rendering of the concept of ‘space’ as a political category: owned, distributed, mapped, calculated, bordered and controlled” (Ibid., 810). Moreover, territory is a political technology. It inevitably constructs the basis for changing the conditions of social reproduction through enclosure, commodification, and dispossession of land. Here, enclosure plays a role of a political strategy for territory, the goal of which is redrawing boundaries, reterritorializing, or in some cases deterritorializing (as seen in the history of forced Soviet collectivization) previous landed relations to achieve specific operational outcomes.

The term ‘capitalist land enclosure’ goes back to the formation of capitalism, or the 16th century England – as represented by Karl Marx to be the classical example of ‘primitive’ or ‘original accumulation’ of capital (1967). Nevertheless, the first practices of land appropriation were

pursued as political projects with a goal of changing the relations of power and the conditions of social production. They could be found in many early settled societies and communities from the Greek city-state *polis*, Roman slave-owning landed estate *latifundia*, Mexican communal farms *ejidos*, to the Russian fifteenth century land commune *mir*. German jurist and political theorist Carl Schmitt notably argued that every settled society was born in, through, and from the land (Schmitt 2003). Land appropriation, redistribution, and production, for Schmitt, are the three main pillars that predetermine the order of the Earth, thus, are primary for the formation of the civil society. Here, Schmittian understanding of the ‘original appropriation’ is parallel to that of Marx, where something chaotic and diffuse, like “a tribe, a retinue, or a people,” becomes territorially “settled or historically situated” through enclosure, in the way of a city or a colony (Schmitt 2003, 70). The process of abandoning certain territorial constructs to allow for new transformed relations, or the territorialization by means of appropriating previous territories is critical to both world’s ‘great land appropriation’ and capitalist ‘primitive accumulation.’

Both, Marxian and Schmittian arguments find their departure point in the private Roman law. In particular, they rest on the Latin term *res nullius*, meaning ‘nobody’s thing’ and referring to any object that can be legally owned. *Terra nullius*, or ‘nobody’s land,’ is an integral part of the international law that was derived from *res nullius* to describe occupation of abandoned territories and unoccupied lands. It was appropriated and radicalized by Carl Schmitt in the twentieth century to describe and legitimize land theft, conquest, invasion, and a ‘civilized war’ over world territory. Explored in the *Nomos of the Earth*, examples of the 17th century Anglo-French and Anglo-Spanish *amity* lines and the initial post-Conquest partition of the world between the Catholic powers along the *raya* lines were used to legitimize and to further territorial division of the world into civilized zones versus those of the ‘state of nature’ located outside the borderline.

The same logic of territorialization, however, can be applied to the territory of property. Property, as an enclosed space, allows for occupation, security of ownership, exclusion of others, and violence outside its borders. *Res nullius* draws a clear distinction between the usufructuary and exclusionary land rights found in civil law, which supported John Locke’s theory of private property (1690). *Res nullius* in socio-economic sense draws upon the measure of the ‘fruits of the

earth,’ or ‘justice by harvest,’ meaning that land, if not productive of value, can be legitimately occupied and appropriated – something abandoned, or that which has no owner, is, therefore, a property of the first taker. This legitimation of private property in land “justified the wiping out and dispossession of ‘unproductive’ indigenous populations to make way for the ‘productive’ colonizers” (Harvey 2014). Historical references to both, *res nullius* and *terra nullius* legitimized the division of space around productive and unproductive land uses or occupied and empty lands, allowing to overdraw customary land laws and justify colonial dispossession on many scales from the home to the nation-state. A similar logic of land appropriation is in the core of the crisis-driven capitalist development today (Rossi 2012).

Crisis can serve as a window of opportunity for the appropriation of land and division of territory. In fact, crisis-ridden production of space has often been one of the core avenues for exploration in geography (Harvey 2004; Lefebvre 1991; Sassen 2014; Smith 2010). Karl Marx (1976 [1887]), in the Volume I of *Capital* explains how the preconditions for ‘original’ capital accumulation arose from the crisis and through enclosure of the land, what he describes as the whole series of “thefts, outrages, and popular misery, that accompanied the forcible expropriation of the people, from the last third of the 15th to the end of the 18th century” in pre-industrial England (Marx 1976 [1887], 507). This capitalist production of space, as French Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre observed, still plays a critical role since capitalism systemically relies upon the ‘creative destruction’ of the old territorial order to appropriate accumulated profit and accommodate economic recovery (1991).

A favorite example of Marxist historiography – the waves of land enclosure by the Acts of Parliament in pre-industrial England – illustrates the workings of this land, territory, crisis triad very well. Enclosure of the ‘commons’ along with colonial expansion and appropriation of distant lands signified an essential fix for the crisis of feudalism. From the 15th century through the dawn of the 19th century, the English gentry slowly started to incorporate vast landed resources for improving their power and economic condition in the wake of the feudal crisis. In this context, land was not merely a limited resource upon which feudal rent could be imposed. It also was the means for a large-scale reorganization of the feudal territorial order through changes in the forms

of land ownership that would accommodate economic instabilities. It is also important to note that the origins of the feudal crisis were partially shaped by the “relation of the feudal system of social production to land” - reinvestments in the land for improving agricultural productivity were undermined by the persistence of feudal rent, thus, generating conditions for severe agrarian crisis (Moore 2002).

The frontier of feudalism became at once the space for accumulation “of new merchant capital for old rentier landowners and also a space of exploitation, in which emerged a new army of dispossessed populations, totally dependent on the sale of their labor power” (Sevilla-Buitrago 2012, 213). Institutionalized privatization of common land served as the outlet for an allocation of surplus profits, and it allowed feudal proprietors to overcome economic stagnation in the 16th century. This historical moment can be seen as a primary model for examining the proto-capitalist formations of territory and contextualizing crisis management through land since land was a primary cause and a solution to the crisis of feudalism (Perelman 2000).

Capitalism is a crisis-prone system, and overaccumulation crises are one of its structural elements (Arrighi 1994; DeAngelis 2007; Harvey 2011). Marx saw capitalism’s internal contradictions as embedded within its own modes of production (1967). Capitalism encounters limits to its compound growth and expansion due to the tendency of the falling rate of profit, underconsumption, and overaccumulation of capital, labor, and commodities. To avoid devaluation of overaccumulated wealth, capitalism needs to recycle, re-appropriate, or reinvest this wealth through the new market channels. Intensified economic instabilities and uncertainty paired up with the increasingly limited availability of ‘cheap nature’ today have generated a renewed interest in land as a potentially liquid asset (Moore 2014). In recent decades, these interests were matched by a rising inflow of local and international speculative capital directed towards urban and agricultural land and associated resources that had lost their market value during the recent economic recession (White et al. 2012). The current situation repeats a historical example – land is still a measure of power and economic prosperity, and its territorial division becomes a goal of political-economic policies today.

Land enclosure, is instrumental to crisis management at least in three ways: 1. it releases un-commodified and under-commodified resources that are difficult to obtain through the market, but not through the intervention of the state, thus creating new outlets for investments, 2. it secures higher profit returns upon land and land-based resources by releasing them more cheaply during the times of crisis, and 3. it creates conditions for proletarianization by making landless communities rely on wage labor. The consequences of this process can be highly destructive in the long run since they inaugurate the creation of an internal local periphery, or on a larger scale, the global frontier, to enable strategic territorial change for the reorganization of capital production, accumulation, and circulation. This process often shifts economic risks and uncertainties on to the most vulnerable. Turning peripheral land into contested territory makes it into a site of struggle, where the mutual coexistence of poverty and wealth are crucial for reproduction of capitalist relations.

Enclosure also encounters contradictions when all land and land-based resources are possessed. This opens up new horizons for the repossession of already commodified land and new rounds of enclosure and forced evictions – to say, reaccumulation by dispossession or ‘accumulation by repossession’ (Castree 2003; De Angelis 2007; Moore 2011). Moreover, enclosure contributes to intensified socio-economic inequalities due to the parallel processes of land reinvestment and degradation, privileging certain areas for economic development, while holding other areas in reserve for the new cycles of commodification to come (Hodkinson 2012; Vasudevan et al. 2008).

The twenty-first century has witnessed a number of economic, agrarian, and financial crises, in which land appropriation again played a critical role. These events contributed to the emergence of studies on new enclosures around the world (See Midnight Collective 1990 for discussion on the term ‘new enclosures’). Scholarship in geography has advanced this discussion with works that treat economic instabilities and political turbulence as impetus for either opening-up new spatial outlets for capital accumulation (Harvey 2011; Smith 2010; Sassen 2014) or the preservation of a political order and integrity of the state through delineation of territory (Gottmann 1973; Sack 1986; Soja 1971). These avenues have been widely explored through empirical examples of land enclosure as they relate to the temporary crises, like the 2006–2008 waves of agricultural land

grabs associated with the Great Recession, or the overlapping crises of capital over-accumulation starting in the 1970's (Borras et al. 2012; Hodgkinson 2012; Levien 2012; McMichael 2012; White et al. 2012). Few works, however, examined land enclosure as a continuous strategy or an ontological condition of global and local capital (Castree 2003; De Angelis 2007; Heynen et al. 2007; Vasudevan et al. 2008; Rossi 2012). Fewer still inquire into the spatial rationalities and territorial techniques of land enclosure under capitalism and its various manifestations throughout history (Sevilla-Buitrago 2015).

This predominant focus on land enclosure as a spatially and temporally bounded event, in my view, brings about a threefold problem – 1) treating enclosure as a temporal occurrence undermines its continuous character as an everyday technology of power, 2) treating enclosure as a bounded spatial phenomenon reproduces a limited knowledge of its multiscale nature of operation in discursive, cultural, and corporeal ways, and 3) seeing land enclosure through the lens of agricultural productivity undermines the complexity of territorial disputes over calculation, repartition, and exclusive control of property.

With these limitations in mind, many have turned to rework Marx's idea of primitive capitalist accumulation as a clear-cut temporal and spatial measure. They utilize different interpretations of Marx's work by Vladimir Lenin, who examined primitive accumulation as a historical premise to capitalist development, or Rosa Luxemburg, who, thought of primitive accumulation as a one-place, one-time event, yet argued for its ongoing continuity within the most modern societies. By combining these theoretical interpretations, scholars are to view primitive accumulation as a continuous phenomenon in everyday current political-economic conditions, and a necessary component of capitalist crisis management (De Angelis 2001; Perelman 2000). An important number of works studies this continuous character of primitive accumulation through land enclosure in the contexts of land acquisitions in the Global South seen as the 'last frontier' of capitalism (Ince 2014), new imperialism of the US foreign policy (Harvey 2003), or agrarian commodification of labor in the post-Civil War world order (Walker 2004).

Yet, the multiscale territorial dimensions of land enclosure—formation of borders, legitimation of property regimes, and exclusive ownership through territorialization—still need to be scrutinized

in more detail in relation to capitalist development and its crises. Moreover, land should be seen not as a mere political economic property of territory, but, as my research demonstrates, as also a deeply spiritual and social practice grounded in historical customs of land cultivation. Land is a quality of the natural world. It influences and corresponds to human and non-human lives in corporeal ways. Land cultivation in the Russian land commune, for example, directed peasant activities in spatial and temporal matters, making peasants more controllable in a short period of land cultivation and harvest from May until August, but also rebellious during seasons of food scarcity.

Territory is a crucial component in this discussion, it is not a mere measure of land or terrain, but it is a strategic technology of power that uses land or terrain to achieve certain political outcomes. Territorial delineation of space opens opportunities for secure ownership and occupation, but it also legitimizes violence beyond its borders.

Research rationale: Three properties of territory

Trying to understand different patterns of capitalist development, Ugo Rossi identifies distinct ‘ontologies of capitalism’—or capitalism’s natures of being—that mobilize specific apparatuses or technologies that support capitalist development throughout history. Rossi refers to them as ‘ontological *dispositifs*,’ in reference to Foucault, and distinguishes three main apparatuses that instrumentalize and legitimize capitalist development, these are the ontological *dispositifs* of embeddedness, dispossession, and subsumption. This approach, as Rossi argues, requires looking at different ‘foundational moments’ of capitalist development and processes of capitalist expansion “through the encounter with its outside environments” (Rossi 2012, 350). The ‘outside’ has been a crucial component of capitalist economic development throughout its history. From the imperial practices of enclosure of the Russian land commune to the post-Soviet land grab after 1992, the collective, or the pre-capitalist ‘outside,’ was appropriated, enclosed, and dispossessed in order to release space into more productive uses.

Capitalist land enclosure is one example of such phenomenon, enclosure delineates territory to achieve certain outcomes, it “designates capitalism’s mobilization of diverse configurations and

significations of space to deprive people of what they create in common” (Sevilla-Buitrago 2015, 3). The ‘outside’ for enclosure, in the capitalist context, is the ‘common.’ Following this logic, enclosure is an ontological *dispositif* of capitalism, it is a technology of power that uses the logic of private property to appropriate spaces that are outside of private property and to open them up for new territorial scenarios.

Against the ever-blooming variegation of communal regimes, enclosure’s logic operates as a “universal territorial equivalent”, a spatial rationality that (1) sustains a movement of spatial abstraction and commodification by subsuming non-capitalist social spaces under the value practices of capital; (2) orchestrates the diverse spatialities involved in the dispossession of material and immaterial, social, cultural and affective commons; (3) articulates interventions in the spheres of production, social reproduction and social ordering through a strategic domination of space; and (4) functions across a range of different scales and time periods, adopting various forms under historically specific regulatory regimes (Sevilla-Buitrago 2015, 3).

As Rossi continues, these ontological *dispositifs* of capitalism always must “imply a process of subjectification, that is to say, they must produce their subject” (Rossi 2012, 350). This process of subject making refers to a complex set of discursive, cultural, and corporeal relations in everyday practices which allow the processes of capitalist accumulation to develop and maintain their functioning. In case of enclosure, subject production refers to various disciplinary practices that are set to encourage the image of a strong individual, a new subject that is more productive and advanced than the previous one. The study of the territory of property illustrated this logic well – property regime relies on enclosure and exclusion from what is outside its boundaries to secure ownership. The regime of private property becomes only legitimate in relation to its outside, or to that of non-property. Hence, it requires complex means of subjectification, from various legal and extra-legal practices to activate the creation of such aphysical walls and barriers.

The primary focus of this study is, therefore, to examine various territorial *dispositifs* of capitalism, whereby capitalism relies on enclosure, subjectification, and dispossession of spaces, bodies, and things achieved through land appropriation. This concept reveals the new and old “colonizing logics underlying the expansion of capitalism across the globe” (Rossi 2012). In order to develop this analysis, one needs a more thorough theoretical inquiry into the territorial techniques of

dispossession: *What mechanisms are involved in the process? How are they manifest through different moments of economic and political crises in capitalism? How does this process of crisis-driven capitalist development through enclosure differ from the daily manifestations of land struggle?*

To undertake these tasks, I examine the bundle of political technologies and properties of territory that accommodate the regime of enclosure and operate through different mechanisms and apparatuses of dispossession. Three pillars of territory, namely, land, sovereignty, and space, are considered in this dissertation as the lens through which to view various apparatuses of capitalist development, and the avenue to follow in decolonizing and decentralizing the Western political geographic territory debate.

This dissertation argues that in case of Russian land enclosure, land contains social and ideological relations that exceed Western regime of private property and social contract (Chapter 2), sovereignty, in contrary to the European state power, also defines collective territorial autonomy in the commune that held *dominium* over land and *imperium* over its people (Chapter 3 and 1), and strategic spaces of dispossession in the Russian case do not necessarily remain confined to the national frontiers (Chapter 4). Whereas Chapter 1, a primarily philosophical and theoretical study, provides a detailed historical background by reviewing these properties of territory in the history of the Russian political and legal thought in contrast to that of the West.

Each chapter represents a complete manuscript, starting with my theoretical readings of a topic in the Western political thought, followed by the discussion of archival research findings that either support, contrast, or contradict the prevalent theory, concluding with the relevance of the topic in the current political-economic situation in Russia. This dialectical reading of the properties of territory from both colonial and subaltern perspectives creates interesting opportunities for deconstruction and decentralization of the prevalent properties of territory.

Land and political-economic properties of territory

Operating within the critical traditions of ‘primitive accumulation’ and ‘primary division of land,’ developed in works of Karl Marx and Carl Schmitt, this chapter offers an interpretive framework

for exploring the role of land in the formation, management, and reproduction of agrarian, economic, and financial crises of the late Imperial Russia. It employs original results of two land surveys conducted in the land commune by the Free Imperial Economic Society and the Imperial Russian Geographical Society in 1890 and 1910, with a goal to contextualize a genealogy of landed relations in Russia's early efforts to transition to the capitalist economy.

I explore the role of land in the 'land commune', or *obshchina*, and the role of the land commune in capitalism through a historical, geographical account of the regulatory and informal techniques of enclosure in response to the crises of the late imperial period, while briefly contrasting it with the new waves of enclosure during Soviet collectivization that put an end to the land commune at last by transferring all land possessions to the state. In particular, this chapter examines customary everyday techniques of land repartitioning in the land commune—its historical legacies since the times of the Great Duchy of Moscow—by providing rare descriptions of local land measures and everyday land division by the peasants themselves, as found in both surveys. These local techniques of land repartitioning served not only as a core of commune's identity but were appropriated by the state and non-state actors to accommodate the reforms.

I argue that the Stolypin land consolidation acts of 1906, 1910, and 1911 exploited customary practices of local land organization in the commune to legitimize enclosure, furthered growing agrarian and economic crises in the countryside, and led to the impoverishment of the dispossessed via intensified struggle over the rights to land. The enclosed commune simultaneously became a strategic and contested place intended for the accumulation of old landed wealth and the exploitation of landless populations in need of wage labor, thereby accommodating capitalist production of space under both the Russian Tsarist and Soviet political regimes.

Sovereignty, territorial regulation, and juridical-political properties of territory

Since the imperial land consolidation reforms of 1906, Russian periphery has become a center of regulatory and institutional struggle where complex alliances of various actors and strategies, beyond the exclusive control of the state, stitched together to carry out or resist land enclosure. This chapter reviews territory as not merely a geographical notion, but primarily a juridical-

political one, as ‘the area controlled by a certain kind of power’ (Elden 2013), or the ‘appropriation of space in pursuit of political projects’ (Halvorsen 2018). Drawing on discourse analysis of imperial higher orders, petitions, state decrees, and verbatim records of Stolypin’s public speeches, this chapter examines how the coalitions of peasant proprietors, church, landed nobility, land surveyors, and later, landed oligarchy used land enclosure as a conduit for extra-legal governance, accumulation of capital, or in contrary, as a means of resistance.

In some cases of enclosure, the involvement of the state is seemingly inevitable, because states have an ability to release resources that are not obtainable through the market, thus guaranteeing high returns on investments. The state’s own functioning and legitimacy are strongly tied to management and resolution of crises of capital accumulation (Offe 1976). Here, the economic crisis has a danger of being displaced into the institutional space of the state, thus, signaling a tendency to state’s own ‘legitimation crisis.’ While this chapter considers states as significant actors in land mobilization, from enabling accumulation via land enclosure to managing the resulting dispossession, it argues for decentralizing the concept of territorial regulation and revealing the complexity of actors involved in land enclosure.

Through the analysis of political discourses, I explore how territories in the periphery and the Russian imperial state were dialectically co-produced through economic reforms, educational programs, resettlement plans, and, in another vein, political and public discourses. Moreover, this chapter examines the ways in which the state was decentralized in the periphery through the bottom-up strategies of local actors such as local land management commissions, communal assemblies, and peasant *zemstva* assemblies, hence undermining the hierarchical and hegemonic role of the nation-state in the production of territory from a Western perspective. Relying on the theoretical cues offered by Lefebvre on state territorial mode of production in times of capitalist crisis and Agamben’s account of state’s extra-legal means of operation, this chapter identifies blind spots in the Eurocentric contribution to the ‘territory debate,’ usually associated with state’s exclusive control over space, to provide for a more nuanced understanding of social agency in the production of territory from a decentralized perspective.

Geographies of dispossession and political-strategic properties of territory

Each historical stage of capitalist development privileges certain scales, territories, and agencies for operationalizing different waves of territorial reorganization. Drawing on my archival research, this chapter explores a role of the frontier as a political-strategic component of capitalist development. In particular, it views enclosure as a practice of extra-legal ‘exception’ – a ‘decision’ that the ‘sovereign’ makes upon exclusion of spaces, bodies, and things from the law and by the law itself to preserve the political order and integrity of the regime. This chapter interrogates the ways exception operates in space through enclosure and, as a result of this dynamics, explores how frontier territories are actively produced through different discursive and bordering practices.

This chapter starts with situating the idea of a frontier through the history of the rise and fall of empires and states to the marginalization of urban periphery. Then, it examines three subsequent temporal and spatial scales of dispossession found in the evolution of Russian capitalism, where the urban frontier around imperial Moscow and other central cities accommodated alienation and dispossession of customary rural way of life through popular discourses and husbandry manuals, while Siberia, a national frontier, became a contested territory intended for the exploitation of peasants who were forcefully resettled in search of new profits and accommodation of imprisoned subjects. At another scale, Russia, seen in this study as a frontier of global capitalism, found itself entangled in a complex set of relations allowing for a globalized seizure of land and resources throughout the late imperial period – the roots of today’s land legislation established in 2002. From this account of the geographies of dispossession, frontier is illustrated as a political-strategic property of territory, a place of struggle, where mutual coexistence of poverty and wealth is crucial for reproduction of prevalent power relations.

Methodological notes on archival research in Russia

This dissertation contextualizes historical, genealogical account of the land, territory, and crisis triad through comparative analysis of political-economic, political-legal, and political-strategic rationalities of land enclosure in late imperial Russia. ‘Genealogy,’ as delineated by Michel Foucault, in this work is seen as a method of historical analysis that aims to avoid a linear reading of history. Genealogy offers an opportunity to question the ideas and concepts that seem to have ‘no history,’ to explore the circumstances of things becoming what they are today. Fundamental

to capitalist economic development conceptions like ‘state,’ ‘territory,’ or ‘land,’ seem to be present across the entire history of our society, and thus, are often mistaken to have preserved a similar meaning throughout time. Genealogy helps to uncover the everyday production of concepts through their historical transformations and struggles over their identity.

Moreover, the use of the term of territory, or that of land, enclosure, or the state, in public discourse should also be examined in detail – “which concepts are implied by words, and which words are used to describe which concepts” (Elden on Koselleck 2013, 7). This so-called ‘conceptual history’ of territory is also an important objective of this work (Koselleck 2002). In addition to examining the political, geographic aspects of enclosure, this work pays particular attention to the language and specific conceptualization used by the state, urban intellectuals, and the peasants themselves in describing and legitimizing territorial enclosure. With this situation in mind, this dissertation examines the history of land enclosure not for the sake of reconstructing the idea of territory from a Russian historical perspective but with a goal of exposing its deep societal contradiction explored in material and conceptual ways.

Scholarship in geography frequently appropriates a metaphorical application of theories and shallow historical analysis that treats enclosure as a metaphor for privatization, alienation, dispossession, or displacement (Castree 2003; Sevilla-Buitrago 2015). Yet these categories of enclosure, that give it capitalist characteristics cannot be considered in separation. The processes of divorcing communities from the means of production, eliminating the means of their subsistence, and subjecting them to proletarianization – are all representative of capitalist land appropriation and should be studied together, not interchangeably. With this in mind, this dissertation argues for conceptual clarity and sensitivity to theoretical nuances—territorialization or reterritorialization, dispossession or displacement, exploitation or proletarianization, the commune or the commons. While at the same time, I recognize my failures in trying to maintain this clarity throughout the chapters. I also recognize that an entirely objective reading of the events and deciphering their interpretation in public discourses is rarely possible and the role of the researcher is paramount in making this happen. My cultural awareness of the local context and knowledge of Russian language serve a tremendous help in this task.

Since this work is addressed to an English-speaking academic audience, the research sections that are built on the original archival records pay particular attention to the linguistic dynamics of the terms (*oshchina* vs *obshchestvo* vs *obshchii*) with the aim to explain linguistic nuances that would help to make Western interpretations of the subject more culturally sensitive and historically situated, thus avoiding reproduction of universal concepts. The reader of this work should, therefore, be prepared to see excerpts from different historical decrees, orders, monthly agricultural periodicals, and, most importantly, speeches of the principal officials of the reforms. Selecting a representative sample of archival sources from 1906 to 1917 can also be a challenging task. I hope that chosen resources would help to make a reader a little more familiar with the complexities of stories and discourses that framed land enclosure in late imperial Russia and still shape the struggle over land and territory today.

Collection of historical data for this project is a complex and sensitive issue. Russian archival data on the topic is underutilized, and its analysis is rare in Anglophone scholarship. Statistical information and records on land deals after 1991 are not always available for public use, which limited the choice of the temporal scale of this study to the late imperial period. In particular, information on the new land deals that involves inflow of foreign capital, feeding upon bankrupted farm enterprises after 2000, is even less transparent, but could, in fact, be a significant addition. Nonetheless, archival resources on land appropriation prior 1917 are well preserved and readily available in a number of federal and provincial archives. Moreover, there has been a vast amount of archival data analyzed and published in various monographs, periodicals, and academic papers. This gives an opportunity to trace the initial sources that these works draw upon, which assisted greatly in my archival search. Some data sources have been located with the help of archival catalogs and frequent conversations with the staff.

Various statistical estimates, such as the amount of redemption payments, the value of peasant labor services, the value of land rents, or established prices for land parcels after Stolypin reforms were obtained through a number of evaluation sheets conducted by the local governorates. Since no quantitative analysis was used in this work, the bigger, yearly estimates of the same parameters were taken from the secondary literature in order to gain relevant background information. For

instance, Visser, Mamonova, and Spoor compiled a rich collection of information related to the practices of land acquisition by foreign capital in the post-Soviet Russia (2012). Obtained from the websites of various investing companies, Visser et al. assembled a dataset that contains information on the amount of land parcels ‘grabbed’ by foreign shareholders through their Russian intermediaries. Even though ownership of land by foreign actors was still illegal in the 2000’s, foreign investments in land were still encouraged by various government subsidies and tax breaks. As another example of secondary data collection, Allina-Pissano, through her connection to the Harvard Davis Center of Russian Studies, extensively studied post-Soviet processes of forced evictions of local communities from the former state and collective farm enterprises that she analyzed and published in a book on *Potemkin Villages in the Black Earth Region* (2007). Among others, Steven Wegren conducted an elaborate survey collected by him in the year of 2002 to evaluate behavioral responses of the rural periphery to the series of land reforms in the post-1990’s Russia (2014). All this data can be a useful substitution for the archival collections for my future research on the post-Soviet land enclosure.

All primary data for this dissertation was collected during the winter of 2017 in four central state archives located in Moscow and Saint Petersburg:

1. TsMAM – Central Municipal Archive of the City of Moscow (*Tsentralnyi Municipalnyi Arkhiv Moskvy*), Moscow
2. GARF – State Archive of the Russian Federation (*Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federacii*), Moscow
3. RGAE – Russian State Archive of Economics (*Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Ekonomiki*), Moscow
4. RGIA – Russian State Historical Archive (*Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv*), Saint Petersburg

The following format was used to allocate original documents and request them in an archive, the same format was used to cite the locations in text: for example, *TsMAM, State Archive of the City of Moscow; Pre-1917 Collection; Department #743 (fond); Case #54 (delo); Inventory #7 (opis’); Page #56*, with a corresponding in-text citation: “*TsMAM 743.54.7, 56*”. Since a large number of

different sources, forms, and kinds of information were located, there was a need to categorize them. Accordingly, I allocated all information under three main categories that shape this research in different ways and at different scales. These are institutional structures, discursive constructs, and geographies of dispossession which inform this work throughout the chapters.

Institutional structures: decrees, petitions, and orders

Law and legal practices are socially and culturally embedded in people's everyday life. Legal decrees, petitions, and surveys are also disciplinary practices that subject individuals to a specific social order (see *Chapter 3, Section 3.4.2*). These orderly practices were the primary instrument of Stolypin land reforms, on the side with popular discourses that I review in the following sections. Other examples of state's extra-legal coercion (see *Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1*) of the commune to the enclosure logic were applied through practices of daily policing in the commune, exemplary farm movements, educational reforms, and development of new land surveying techniques that justified land enclosure along the lines of advancement in agricultural productivity.

With this data in hand, this work asks: *How new institutional structures of land control through the creation of Land Settlement Commissions were promoted and created in the commune with the aim to deliver and promote reforms from within and how contradictions related to land enclosure and privatization were institutionalized by the state through policies, regulations, and legal practices?*

Typology of data	Title of the original document	Location
1. Supreme decrees	Various decrees are located across most of the repositories (see links in text)	
2. Petitions	Petition on the provision of new land plots for settlers in Siberia, Department of Resettlement, Ministry of Internal Affairs	RGIA 391.3.219

3. Progress reports	Reports on the progress of Land Settlement Commissions, Committee for Land Settlement Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs	RGIA 1290.6.97
	Reports on the progress of Land Settlement Commissions, Moscow Govenorate Land Settlement Committee	TsMAM 369.4.35 TsMAM 369.4.88
4. Reports	Reports about the duties of Land Settlement Commissions, Moscow Governorate Land Settlement Committee	TsMAM 369.4.1
	Reports about the duties of Land Settlement Commissions, Zemstvo Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior	RGIA 1291.119.40, 41, 42
5. Higher orders	Highest Order of November 9, 1906, application in Moscow governorate, Zemstvo Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior	RGIA 1291.120.71

Table 1 – List of legal and organizational documents collected in TsMAM and RGIA.

Discursive constructs: peasant grey mass, urban intellectuals, and the state

To explore discursive techniques employed by various actors to rationalize, legitimate, or resist enclosure, I analyze public and political narratives found in a number of monthly periodicals and newspapers on agricultural life, administrative announcements displayed in public spaces, transcribed speeches of state officials, and storied reported by peasants themselves through complaints cases and answers to the Free Imperial Economic Society survey. Some of these outlets that published peasant complaints and calls for action contributed to spreading resistance to enclosure in the countryside (See *Chapter 3, Section 3.3*), while others promoted negative discussions on the commune among the separators to ease the transition to private property (see *Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1*). In addition, rare drawings showing villages and their plans before and after enclosure that were found in the journal ‘Land Management’ (*Zemleustroistvo*) are also used in this research.

Among the major outlets that published articles of state officials explaining the backwardness of the commune and the necessity for enclosure were the Land Management magazine (*Zemleustroistvo*). The first major volume celebrating the work of the Committee for Land Settlement Affairs was a report of the first four years of its operations that was published in the journal throughout 1907–1910. The report contained statistical tables showing the numerical results for each type of land reorganization embarked upon in the provinces and the number of households which had reached the transition from communal to independent farm.

The *Russian Wealth* magazine (*Russkoe Bogatstvo*) – called initially *Journal for Industry, Agriculture, and Science*, was published in St. Petersburg in 1876-1878 years three times a month and contains interviews with peasants on urgent local issues post-emancipation. While the magazine *Speech (Rech)*, a daily newspaper and the central organ of the Constitutional Democratic Party 1906-1917, on the other hand, published defensive articles supporting the need for reforms (#21, #22 May 1911, #9 October 1911).

The most information about consequences of Stolypin’s reforms of 1905 can be found in a comprehensive survey collected by Kofod and Lukoshin through the Free Economic Society in 1909. Chernyshev’s analysis of the Imperial Free Economic Society’s survey of the post-1906 commune (*Obshchina Posle 9 Noiabria*) can also be useful in retrieving peasant complains about reforms. The survey itself carries a name - Private Peasant Land Ownership in Moscow Region in 1907-1912 (Lichnoe krest’ianskoe zemlevladienie v Moskovskoi gubernii v 1907–1912, Glavnoe upravlenie zemleustroistva i zemledeliia (Moscow, 1913)).

Typology of data	Title of the original document	Location
1. Peasant complaints	Complaints cases filled by peasants about forceful land consolidation, Committee for Land Settlement Affairs of the Ministry of Agriculture	RGIA 408.1.196
	Complaints cases filled by peasants about land scarcity, Moscow Govenorate Land Settlement Committee	TsMAM 369.4.133

	Complaints cases filled by settlers to Siberia about the length of the settlement process and bureaucracy, Moscow Govenorate Land Settlement Committee	TsMAM 369.4.27
2. Police reports	Cases of agrarian movement in Moscow governorate, Special Division of Police Department	GARF 102.116.42
3. Transcribed speeches	Speeches of the ministers Witte and Stolypin are found in online portals of the Russian State Library	Russian State Library
4. Monthly periodicals	“Land Organization” (<i>Zemleustroistvo</i>), “Russian Wealth” (<i>Russkoe Bogatstvo</i>) “Russian Herald” (<i>Russkii Vestnik</i>)	British Library, Russian State Library, other
5. Circulars	Confidential circulars between Stolypin and the Ministry of Immigration about deficiencies in resettlement campaign, Council of Ministers	RGIA 1276.3.484
	Confidential circulars about forceful consolidation of farms into <i>khutora</i> , Committee for Land Settlement Affairs of the Ministry of Agriculture	RGIA 408.1.153 RGIA 408.1.272
6. Anonymous reports	Report titled Land Disorder, anonymously redistributed in the countryside	RGIA, 408.1.153

Table 2 – List of monthly periodicals, transcribed speeches, and other reports collected in RGIA or through online libraries and secondary sources.

Material techniques and scales of analysis: surveys, manuals, and frontiers

Different political technologies operate on different scales. Land enclosure, in the process of turning land into private property, requires the availability of the ‘outside,’ or ‘empty’ areas which to transform. Such process requires prescribed territorial techniques to normalize the outside to the new way of life, from physical and social marginalizing the unproductive households within the commune (see *Chapter 4, Section 4.3* and *Chapter 2, Sections 2.5-2.6*) to promoting the new

property regime across the national frontier (see *Chapter 4, Section 4.4*). However, as this work shows, frontiers, or areas outside of primary political order, are also spaces of escape, where subjects use land enclosure to protect their territories and customs (See *Chapter 2, Section 2.4*). This material transformation of frontier spaces into property is reviewed through examples of land surveys, agrarian instructions and manuals, agronomist progress reports, and confidential circulars that accompanied these measures.

The primary geographical areas for this research are chosen in relation to the center of power, or Moscow. In particular, the primary focus is made on two places: the periphery around the city of Moscow and the Russia's Far Eastern national frontier in Siberia. These were chosen to reveal the gradient of power operating on different scale and to illustrate different techniques of enclosure employed across the territories with the aim to keep both, the local and the national frontier, subordinate to the state land policy.

The Moscow region of the late Russian empire is known for its rapid process of transition during Stolypin land reforms. Most peasants already pursued seasonal jobs in the city prior the legislation being passed and sold extra land plots rapidly afterward. Due to limited data sources about the participation of Moscow in the reforms, my work uses examples from other land communes in the Central Russia, that seem to share similar climatic, political economic, and cultural characteristics. This circumstance is considered, however, the main limitation of this research (see *Conclusion*).

Siberia was not a primary subject of Stolypin land policy, yet, it was subordinated to the reforms through a new resettlement program launched by Stolypin and Krivoshein, the Minister of Agriculture (see *Chapter 4, Section 4.4*). As they thought, new settlers in Siberia, or former members of the land commune from Central Russia, would bring a free spirit of an independent farmer with them. Settlers received land plots in the Far East that they were allowed to transfer into their personal possession. Along with the resettlement practices followed the whole range of new land surveys, agricultural manuals, and reallocation of agronomists in order to help the settlers to privatize 'virgin lands' of the Far Eastern frontier.

Typology of data	Title of the original document	Location
1. Surveys of the land commune	Survey of the land commune launched by the Free Imperial Economic Society and the Russian Geographical Society in 1890	Data published in a report, Barykov et al., 1880
	Survey of the land commune launched by the Free Imperial Economic Society during the Stolypin reforms in 1910, published only in 1918 after elimination of the Society	Data published in a report, Chernyshev, 1917
2. Agricultural manuals	Report of Andrey Kofod about the technologies of land settlement in the commune, Committee for Land Settlement Affairs of the Ministry of Agriculture	RGIA 408.1.272
3. Guidelines	Guidelines about territorial organization of <i>khutor</i> and <i>otrub</i> farms	TsMAM 396.4.34
	Theses of Andrey Kofod about new techniques of land management	GARF 5518.1.1
4. Minutes of the meetings	Minutes of the meetings of the Russian Agronomist Society	GARF 5518.1.79
5. Posters, announcements	Public announcements of money collection displayed in churches	TsMAM 369.4.106

Table 3 – List of original sources, mainly circulars, surveys, manuals, and progress reports collected in archives and monographs that published original data.

CHAPTER ONE: Territory in a Russian Historical Perspective: Borders, Sovereignty, and Property Violence

1.1 Introduction

It is through a historical, conceptual examination that moving beyond “the territorial trap,” rather than simply skirting around it, is possible.

— Stuart Elden, *The Birth of Territory* (2013)

The concept of territory has been systematically understudied in comparison with other categories of analysis like space, scale, or landscape, as earlier argued Jean Gottmann, Robert Sack, and Edward Soja that pioneered the first studies of the origins and development of the term territory (Gottmann 1973; Sack 1986; Soja 1971). Recently, however, there has been a surge of critique with works that argued that a current territory debate stems from an exclusively European colonial context. This debate has been articulated by scholars that reasoned against treating territory as a fixed, sovereign container of state power (Agnew 1994) and argued for acknowledging its fluid and multiscale nature of operation (Blomley 2017; Brenner 1999; Painter 2010; Taylor 1994).

Stuart Elden’s genealogy of territory is steadily becoming a ‘classic’ in geography with its tremendous historical and linguistic material that positions the birth of territory in the history of Western political thought and practice from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment (2013). Seeing territory as a ‘political technology’ for ‘measuring land and controlling terrain,’ Elden overcomes statist theorizations of space and opens up the term for further decentralization and decolonization, since his book has already generated a great debate with a potential to advance and further historicize human geography (Antonsich 2009, 2010; Del Biaggio 2015; Ince 2012; Painter 2010; Schwarz and Streule 2017; See also *Political Geography* Review Forum (2015) with comments from Minca, Crampton, Bryan, Fall, Murphy, Paasi).

1.1.1 Decentralizing the debate

Geographers have engaged in the project of decentralizing the territory debate, provoked by various disagreements with seeing territory as a defined politico-institutional space delimited by a bounded system of governance, “through which a governing body and its various bureaucratic and coercive apparatuses regulate and control those settled in, or passing through, a defined geographical region” (Ince 2012, 1647). In the world with growing complexity of geographic scenarios and uncertainty of borders, one can identify many territorial forms that are not necessarily bounded in any administrative or institutional way. This reasoning has been adopted and applied in many empirical projects that engaged with cases of anarchist territorial organizations of the UK labor unions (Ince 2012), areas of protest and social organizing in Latin America (Halvorsen 2018), or squatting spaces in London (Vasudevan 2014), calling for a more autonomous and relational reading of territory.

This is not to say that territory is not defined by the institutional constraints or bureaucratic efficiency and calculation, in fact, Russia’s case of enclosure shows a substantial involvement of agricultural manuals, surveys, and agronomist consultations, promoted by the state to develop a new measure of the land against which to evaluate peasant agricultural productivity. Decentralizing the territory debate doesn’t undermine the role of the state per se. This is especially true in the context of the late Russian Empire when the territorial space of the nation-state was intentionally established to create and maintain a new national identity for the imperial government that was undergoing the legitimation crisis.

Russia’s unique character of imperial relations offers an interesting lens through which to build an alternative reading of territory. As Geoffrey Hosking notably stated, “Britain had an empire, but Russia was an empire and perhaps still is; our [British] empire (with the major exception of Ireland) was a distant and profitable appendage, from which we could detach ourselves without undue distress,” meaning that Russian Empire was a land-based entity, in comparison to the Western European empires and states and their maritime character. Here, Russia inherited the dichotomous territoriality of a ‘homeland’ and a ‘colony.’ The geographical proximity of the colonies to the center of Russian imperial power made imperial identity a personal one, where “the ‘natives’

mixed inextricably with the Russians in their own markets, streets and schools as indeed they still do” (Hosking 1995).

Building off this geographical-determinist proposition, influential and notably anti-communist historian Richard Pipes argued in his short essay titled *Weight of the Past*, that Russia’s main difference with its Western counterparts was that Russia’s empire and the nation-state arose concurrently and not consequentially as in the West; this fact, “made for close identification between national and imperial identity” (Pipes 1996). This dialectical process occurred with the reign of Peter the Great and his ‘revolutionary’ administrative and legislative reforms, primarily inspired by and borrowed from Western Europe. Reviewing this situation, Alexander Etkind notes that building the nation required to follow different insights unlike those for building an empire – “while the essence of the former consisted in the elimination of internal differences, imperial administrations sought to maintain and institutionalize them” (Etkind 2012, 2017). This debate about Russia’s unique territorial identity generated a great breadth of academic scholarship, that was later termed the Golden Age of Russian Jurisprudence, which adopted the ideas of Grotius, Hobbes, Locke, and other Enlightenment thinkers to justify the absolutist power of the state, hence producing fractured territorialities which serve as the object of analysis in this dissertation.

1.1.2 Decolonizing the debate

Other geographers started to engage with the concept of territory in different postcolonial contexts through empirical and historical analyses to provide an alternative to the Eurocentric spatial paradigms (Del Biaggio 2015; Ince 2012; Routledge 2015).

To produce a decolonial knowledge of the subject requires at minimum engaging with marginalized experiences from the post colonies and exploring alternative territorialities they generated within the hierarchies of colonial regimes, which renders decolonization as an “ethnopolitical as well as an analytical project” (Radcliffe 2017). The goal of decolonization, in this case, is producing knowledge that challenges the universal hierarchies of power – colonial and subaltern, oppressive and oppressed – that have been naturalized in academic scholarship.

While I try to delink the Russian history of enclosure from that of the West, I use a decolonial framework to reveal marginalized voices of the subjects of Russia's internal colonization. However, I recognize that Western frameworks of political thought have been intentionally internalized in Russian Empire—consider Peter the Great's Beard Tax as an example—yet, I try to untangle these interconnections and highlight the nuances in the Russian political and legal studies, that are often omitted and overshadowed by the studies of post-socialism today. I apply this idea of decolonization and that of decentralization, to explore the Russian colonial territory discourse and to offer an alternative view to the non-Western understanding of the concept.

What is colonial and what is not in the history of Russia is still a contested subject open for debate. While Russia of the Tsarist and Soviet periods can be considered as an empire in its own colonial right, as Morozov argues, Russia also should be seen as a subaltern empire, as he states, “having own colonial periphery does not prevent a country from simultaneously being incorporated in the hegemonic order as a subaltern who retains its sovereignty and thus is not colonized in the formal sense” (Morozov 2015, 4). As a matter of fact, the share of foreign capital allocated in Russia constituted eight billion rubles by 1914, or 43 percent of all Russian industrial, banking, and trade capital and considerable ownership of Russian land, mines, and manufacturing enterprises.¹ Referring to this dramatic transformation Theodor Shanin described that “by 1914, Russia had gone a good part of the way toward becoming a semi-colonial possession of European capital” (Shanin 1985, 188). As describes Etkind (2013, 18), it was the Slavophile Aleksey Khomyakov who portrayed the educated society of Russia as ‘a colony of eclectic Europeans.’ This dual characteristic of Russia as a colonial and a subaltern empire presents a paradox – using the subaltern discourse on European oppression of the Russian people, consolidates and legitimizes the “oppressive authoritarian regime within Russia and thus reinforces its imperial order” (Morozov 2015).

Arguably, Russia's internal colonization practices followed the same administrative, regulatory, and discursive methods as those applied to the outer colonies in the West. The borders between internal and external colonization were fluid and ambiguous, defined not by geographic distances but by the artificial production of cultural differences. Paradoxically, as argues Russian cultural

historian Alexander Etkind following Said's concept of Orientalism, "in the official imperial discourse and especially in literary works written from the imperial point of view, ethnic and cultural differences between the East Slavic peoples were denied or minimized, and class distinctions between rural, urban and noble-people were described as deep, close to racial" (Etkind 2012, 37). For Etkind, what makes the Russian post-colonial history so unique, is that Russia 'orientalized' its peasants within its central regions in a manner of the Western maritime empires and their colonies.

An ethnic Russian peasant or worker, who would qualify as a subaltern beyond any doubt by merely looking at their social status and material situation, could still represent the empire in a colonial war in the North Caucasus or as a settler in, say, Estonia or Latvia once under Soviet rule (Etkind 2012).

The Russian land commune, for Etkind, was the very institute of internal colonization, taking control over peasants' social reproduction from within (Ibid.). This surge for cultural identification of the Russian internal and external colonies drew many urban intellectuals to study the land commune as something 'forgotten' but also 'foreign' (See *Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1*), from this interest and curiosity was born both surveys on the Russian land commune conducted by the Free Imperial Economic Society and the Imperial Russian Geographical Society in 1890 and 1910 that I examine in this dissertation (see *Chapter 2, Section 2.4-2.5*). "Missionary work, ethnography and exotic travel – characteristic phenomena of colonialism, in Russia was turned inside their own people" (Ibid.). Russia's internal and external colonization produced what Gerard Toal frames a 'contested geopolitical field' that is still in the core of its post-Soviet ideology today (Toal 2017).

Unlike the romantics of Western Europe, the Russian novelist-intellectuals, who collected folklore and discovered the village community, perceived the extra-urban space is not only as a "forgotten one," but also as "someone else's." They found in the internal regions of Russia strange sects and brought to the capital collections of freaks and rarities. Missionary, ethnography and exotic travel, characteristic phenomena of colonialism, in Russia more often all were turned inside their own people. This people were their own, he spoke in "our" language and was the source of "our" prosperity - and still, it was exotic. Russia colonized itself, mastered their own people" (Etkind 2012, 38).

Can we create a comparative analysis of “similar historical experiences even if some of them belong to the ‘classical’ colonial spaces while others seemingly occur at the core of the imperial state”? Can this be done without essentializing issues of indigeneity, as common in post-colonial debates? Russian complex qualities of its internal colonization, external imperial expansion, and being a subaltern empire concomitant to the Western political order, offers a fertile ground for exploring these questions.

As I argue in this work, exploring Russia’s colonial territorialities both “as an empire (*vis-à-vis* its external and internal frontiers) and as a subaltern (*vis-à-vis* the globe)” can introduce useful friction into the decolonial debate on territory. This approach allows to recognize Russia’s complexities of uneven internal development and, most importantly, observe “local structures of oppression as conditioned by global inequalities” (Morozov 2015, 2). Finally, conducting an alternative reading of contested space/power relations offers a ground for cross-national comparison.

This doesn’t mean, however, reversing colonial practices of knowledge production and undermining the Anglophone tradition of territory, which would be counterproductive, but it entails examining the coexistence of complex practices and technologies of power that shape territory beyond the colonial practices of the European state (Santos 2014). Russian case has a potential to introduce a careful deconstruction of the Eurocentric reading of territory, though, it is unquestionable that Russia “doesn’t possess any other type of consciousness other than Eurocentrism” (Morozov 2015, 5). A starting point for this decolonial analysis of territory is, as Halvorsen proposes (2018), to render territory as a “historically and geographically contingent process” comprised of colonial, postcolonial, and subaltern struggles over space and its meanings².

To trace this shift of Russian territorial identity from the West, one needs to examine where and when the rise of the Russian empire and the sovereign nation-state began and how this process shaped the formation of the Russian discourse on territory, especially considering that the main classic works of the European political thought travelled to Russia and were appropriated in ways different from that of the West. With this in mind, this chapter sets up the central questions and theoretical backgrounds that will situate this dissertation in a set of historical, geographic, and philosophical contexts: *What is the origin of the idea of exclusive ownership of land in Russia and*

what roots does it have in different historical lineages and philosophical traditions? How land becomes the object of governance through enclosure in Russian imperial context? What institutional structures shape the idea of territory and that of property, its legitimation and maintenance throughout the moments of crisis? And finally, how enclosure of land unfolds on multiple scales of operation from the internal periphery to the external and national frontier?

“To control territory requires the subjugation of the people; to govern the population requires command of the land” (Elden 2010a). Territory emerges in the Russian political and legal thought relatively late, appearing as a key theme of administrative rule in the seventeenth century, seen as a means of sovereignty (spiritual, institutional, economic), security (military, social), or exclusive ownership (land, bodies). Sovereignty, terrain, and land, as highlights Halvorsen in reference to Elden’s work, are three lenses through which to review the historical geographic conception of territory and to open up the dialogue with its Eurocentric counterpart.

1.2 The space of territory in Western political thought

Where it is defined, territory is either assumed to be a relation that can be understood as an outcome of territoriality, or as a bounded space, in the way that Giddens described the state as a “bordered power-container.” In the first, the historical dimension is neglected; in the second, the conditions of possibility of such a configuration are assumed rather than examined. Both take the thing that needs explaining as the explanation.

— Stuart Elden, *The Birth of Territory* (2013)

Roman Empire’s most original contribution was its law written in the fifth century BCE and rediscovered in the West in 1077, providing the basis for the civil law on the entire continent. As Elden describes, with the fracturing of the empire, Roman law became “tied to the citizenship or identity of the individual, not to the political system he or she lived under” (Elden 2013, 213). The emperors found in the Roman law legal provisions justifying their claims to absolute power that were later used in the struggle against the church and the feudal lords. That power was reinforced through the ownership of all land. The Roman law underlined full possession of the property by the emperor, while those who used the land didn’t exercise the right of exclusive ownership but the right to extract economic benefits – to cultivate, to receive fruits, to hold, and to possess (*uti*

frui habere possidere). The rediscovered Roman law would later give rise to the legal scholarship so much acclaimed by Carl Schmitt in the *Nomos of the Earth*, particularly of the Spanish theologian and jurist Francisco de Vitoria (1492–1546) and his legitimation of the ‘great land appropriation’ of the New World and a Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), whose justification of an acceptable or ‘just war’ was one of the cornerstones of Schmitt’s work.

As Schmitt describes, Vitoria rejected theological interpretations of the ‘other’ and argued that “a Spaniard professing Christianity had no direct right to appropriate the land of non-Christian princes and peoples; the right to appropriate land arose only indirectly, and then only by way of arguments favoring just war” (Schmitt 2003, 105). Grotius, in the same manner, examined the dilemma of when a war was acceptable and how the imperium could be acquired over territory formerly held in common possession – “each should appropriate to himself, by right of first possession, what could not have been divided...the division of land produced a new sort of right” (Elden citing Grotius’ *De jure belli ac pacis* 2013, 241). Free appropriation, for Grotius, was a moral right of a person. By nature, he argued, an individual has only ‘just claims to things,’ hereby he acts lawfully according to the principles of natural law. These theoretical propositions certainly served as a basis for the Schmittian triad that, in his view, constituted and pre-determined the political order of the civil society through primary division, distribution, and production of land (2003).

Elden reflects on Vitoria and Grotius’s broader theoretical concerns and concludes that they were inherited from the work of an earlier Italian legal thinker Bartolus de Saxoferrato (1314–1357), the successor of the Roman law who theorized land as a resource belonging to a specific entity, or what he called the *territorium* – the object to which law applies. *Territorium*, as continued Elden, becomes the “very thing over which political power is exercised” (Elden 2013, 220). Bartolus describes territory as a ‘terrifying force,’ similar to Grotius’s *terrendi jure* or the ‘right to terrify,’ where “exercise of authority becomes *de facto* – an occupying force, because it is terrifying, can treat the land as its territory” (Ibid., 222). Most importantly Bartolus’s scholarly work distinguishes the varieties of political rule over territory, as an object or empire of a territorial state. Here, he claims that some territories are distinct, and not all of them are under the rule of the sovereign:

“while cities are *de jure* subject to the Empire, they are *de facto* independent for day-to-day tasks; internally they recognize no superior, but externally relations are still subject to the empire” (Ibid.).

Civil law, understood as the exercise of political jurisdiction, was the privileged form of power within the empire, the kingdom, or the independent *civitas*, but its very basis was that it was restricted to the territory in which it was exercised (Elden 2013, 235).

Jean Bodin (1520-1596), a French jurist and political philosopher, too advocated for the absolutist form of the government in the disposition of its citizen. Stressing the “political partitioning of space into separate units, each of which ought to be a strong realm,” Bodin was anticipating the transition from the “medieval universality founded on the unity of faith to the coexistence of the multiplicity of sovereign states based on the diversity of geography and of religion” (Gottmann 1973, 43).

The seventeenth century saw the beginning of the territorial plurality of Europe with the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648 having to abandon the universal Roman law. The sovereignty of the prince was removed and confined to the established territorial area over which the state held jurisdiction and offered security to its population (Gottmann 1973, 49). Territorial sovereignty required regulation and normalization of people’s behavior in the name of the public good and needed a strong centralized agency to accommodate this process. Sovereignty was based on the control over territory; hence territorial delineation acquired more significance – “territory became the physical and legal embodiment of national identity” (Ibid.) – the issue that was later adopted in the works of Tomas Hobbes.

We could reconstruct the major forms of power in the West in the following way: first, the State of justice, born in a feudal type of territoriality and broadly corresponding to a society of customary and written law, with a whole interplay of commitments and litigations; second, the administrative state, born of a territoriality that is no longer feudal but bounded, that corresponds to a society of regulations and disciplines; and finally, a state of government that is no longer essentially defined by its territoriality, by the surface occupied, but by a mass; the mass of the population, with its volume, its density, and for sure, its territory over which it is extended, but which is, in a way, only one of its components (Gottmann 1973).

However, for a long time, the understanding of territory as *dominium* prevailed, territory as an object of possession, the property of a monarch or another sovereign. Not only through the Middle Ages, but even in the 19th and early 20th century, this theory remained dominant.

1.3 Situating territory in the Russian geographical determinism

Formation of the Russian political thought started as early as in 11th century in the context of the unification of East Slavic ethnic groups under the rule of Kiev after the adoption of Christianity in 988. Early political-legal thought in the 9th to 15th centuries was based on the image of the prince's or *kniaz*, who was seen as a mythological and religious identity, and on the image of the commune or *obshchina*, that organized collective life and shared the responsibility of the individuals among each other (Plokhii 2006). Political and legal thought until the 19th century was developing within Orthodox religious traditions prioritizing the interests of the monarch and the commune, while in Western countries prevailed a focus on the civil society and individual freedoms, and the process of secularization was completed already in the 16th century.

Russia's unique geographical positioning between the West and the East led to borrowing ideas from both Western and Eastern traditions of thought. After the adoption of Christianity, the influence of Byzantium was more noticeable. Then, the strengthening of the Caesarist, autocratic tradition took place during the 250-year-old Tatar-Mongol rule, which changed the institutions and methods of government (Syrikh 2012). However, starting in the 17th century, the influence of the West increased, which was reflected in the emergence of the ideological and political movement of the Westerners, who borrowed the liberal values of European civilization. This ideological complexity didn't mean that Russia did not try to find its own path of development, its own ideal. The search for a national image was one of the central objectives of political and legal theorists, which was later reflected in the formation of various academic movements of the Slavophiles, Westerners, Populists, Communists, or Anarchists that would attempt to identify and reinstate the unique Russian identity in their own ways.

1.3.1 Emergence of the nation state: The imperial and the subaltern

Many historians of Russia come to the consensus that the formation of the Russian empire and the nation-state happened concurrently in the era of Peter I (Cracraft 1988). It is during the time of Petrine political and administrative reforms that the Russian imperial and national identity was firmly formed in the popular and political discourse. As James Cracraft describes by building on the work of the most influential Russian historian Sergey Solovyov, “it was Peter’s “genius” to grasp that it was his duty to raise his weak, poor, virtually unknown nation from its sad state by means of civilization, the civilization of the West” (Cracraft 1988). In the process of state building, Russia was seeking for its new national consciousness in contrast with that of the West, consciousness of nobility and non-noble educated men, which, as argues Liah Greenfeld, “implied the fundamental redefinition of the Russian polity from the ‘property of the tsar’ into a ‘commonwealth,’ an impersonal *partie* or fatherland in which every member had an equal stake and to which everyone was naturally attached” (Greenfeld 1992, 192). Petrine reforms introduced a new kind of territoriality that was over imposed onto the old order of rural, communal and backward Russia:

A vast program was laid out for years to come—laid out not on paper but on the earth itself. It was inscribed on the sea, where a Russian fleet appeared; on the rivers, now linked by canals; on the state, with its new institutions and ordinances; and on the people, through education, which broadened their mental horizons and enriched their stores of knowledge by exposure to the West and to the new world created within Russia herself (Cracraft on Solovyov 2004, 2).

Feophan Prokopovich (1682-1736), the Kyivan theologian and philosopher, was one of the authors of the new theory of absolute monarchy and appeared in the forefront of westernization of the Russian national and imperial ideology. Prokopovich sought to separate the divine power of the monarch (similar to the ‘spiritual power’ in Medieval political thought) from the rational power used to realize natural rights of the people (or the ‘temporal power’) and believed that the state was an outcome of the conscious unification of all people.

For Prokopovich, the state was created by a will of God, since it was God that placed the monarch above the people and the law. In his theoretical writings, Prokopovich introduced the Western Enlightenment paradigm of ‘social contract,’ an explicit agreement between the monarch and the

people, and between the sovereign and the God (Greenfeld 1992; Morozov 2015; Plokhii 2006). It was the first time in the history of Russian empire that Prokopovich raised a question of state formation. Prior the state, in the state of nature, as he wrote, there was “chaos, tyranny, people were more dangerous than predators; only the emergence of the state united people in the civil union” (Cracraft 1988).

In contrast to the Western political and legal traditions, the norms of the state and the social contract in Russia were tightly connected to the absolutist monarchy and enslaved society, instead of the civil rights for individuals. This hybrid of ideas of the “West European Reformation and Enlightenment and quite traditional attitudes of the Russian power under a slogan ‘the truth of the will of the monarch’” were combined together by Feophan Prokopovich and later determined the direction of the Russian imperial power relations and their future legitimation crisis (Glinchikova 2016, 83). Prokopovich based this treatise on the doctrine of natural law borrowed from Hugo Grotius and translated into French for Peter the Great during his visit to the Netherlands. The main difference from Grotius in Prokopovich writings was that it legitimized the liberation of the state from the control of the church through the theory of natural law with the aim to “build a secular autocratic power of the elite, autocratic but not civil” (Ibid.).

For Hugo Grotius, all people are born equal. An exception to this rule, or violation of the fundamental natural human right – the right to life, only applies in case of resistance to the supreme power. It is noteworthy to say that Grotius, in this case, refers to the life of an individual. While Prokopovich assigns power of a monarch over all manifestations of the human body (Syrikh 2012). In Russia, the principle of the social contract was artificially superimposed on the traditional style of collective life and theocratic consciousness of the people that resulted in complete discreditation of the personal good under the God’s will and under the gaze of the monarch or *obshchina*.

Vasily Tatishchev (1686-1750), a notable statesman and ethnographer, was also an advocate for the theory of natural law. Tatishchev’s scholarship closely followed philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, as he believed that the natural state for a man was his will and freedom. But with this freedom, as argued Tatishchev, the man nevertheless had to restrain himself by different means: by nature (in relation to the power of parents), under the social contract (in the relation between

the owner and the servant), and by coercion (slavery or serfdom) (Syrikh 2012). The first two limitations were related to the origins of the empire and the state, since the monarch was like a parent and political relations of the state were based on some kind of contract or agreement. This natural equilibrium between the peasant masses and their sovereign carried out throughout the entire period of enlightened absolutism shaped by the policies of Catherine II.

In the period of Russian Enlightenment of Catherine II, also known as Catherine the Great, Alexander Radishchev (1749-1802) envisioned more radical changes in imperial Russia, for which he was arrested and exiled. Radishchev advocated for the abolition of serfdom not from above, but from below - through the people's revolution. Again, similar to Rousseau, he considered the emergence of the state as associated with the formation of private property. "The state arose as a result of a tacit agreement in order to ensure to all people a good life, as well as protection of the weak and oppressed" – here, Radishchev argued for a society of free and equal owners that would break the dependency between the state and the enslaved peasantry (Glinchikova 2016).

Yet, the idea(l) of sovereignty of the monarch and state territorial unity became fractured by the end of the reign of Peter the Great – "in the minds of the elite, the values of a new order oriented toward the West were strengthened, while patriarchal and traditional values continued to exist and develop at the level of popular culture, such as communal collectivism, subordination of the individual to religion, legal nihilism with simultaneous inclination towards authoritarianism and strong political leadership" (Glinchikova 2016). Since that time, Russia has become a hybrid between Western societies with their liberal and democratic traditions and Eastern cultures with their customary tropes of development. As Glinchikova concludes, "despite the change of institutions and ideologies, the archetypes of political culture, rooted in the Petrine period, continued to influence political processes today" (Ibid., 85).

Yet the mood and theories of the Russian intellectuals have been shifting and fracturing throughout the history of political and legal thought especially in the times of the Golden Age of Russian Jurisprudence. By the 1840's two new movements were formed - the Slavophiles, who emphasized the need to reassess the experiences of the pre-Petrine Rus' and importance of *obshchina* as a source of peasant self-government, and the Westerners, who argued for Russia's development

along the Western path of individualism and property (debate on the commune is discussed in *Chapter 3*). Many other intellectual movements emerged along the radical and liberal lines, with Herzen and Chernyshevskii leading the peasant socialist wave of scholarship that essentially saw the land commune not as a burden of the past, but as a foundation for Russian socialism. This was furthered in the studies of Bakunin and Kropotkin, who, denying all laws but the laws of nature and connecting the development of the state with the regime of private property, thought of the destruction of the state and emancipation of the society at last.

Golden Age of Russian jurisprudence was characterized by an unusually wide range of theories and views shared and developed by Russian researchers in the field of state and law. Positivism coexisted with the historical school of law and the philosophy of law, rebellious-anarchist ideals - with the conservative sense of justice, theocratic theories - with materialistic, liberalism - with revolutionary populism and Marxism (Syrikh 2012).

Positioning the emergence of Russian imperial territory as an object of state rule definitely creates a limited knowledge of the alternative modes of territorial production. This is the exact issue that many have with combining the emergence of territory with the formation of the European nation-state found in Elden's scholarship (Minca et al. 2015). These dialectic relations between the empire and the state, and between the rule of the sovereign and the subaltern, produced complex territorial scenarios in the Russian imperial periphery. The space of the land commune continued to develop under the state-centered ideology of Peter the Great. *Obshchina* created its own sovereign space through the everyday practices of land repartitioning that would later serve as an object for enclosure.

Greater sensibility to how the modern political technologies of controlling terrain and measuring land have been resisted, appropriated and (re)defined by political actors from below in different historical and geographical contexts provides a reason for taking Elden's impressive project forward (Halvorsen 2018).

1.3.2 Russia as the 'middle kingdom'

The vast expanses of the Russian state and its colonies, washed by the 'three great waters,' demanded the development of a special model of geopolitical control, building of the Western theorists of political, geographic thought, primarily Ratzel's theory of *Lebensraum* or 'living

space' and Mackinder's heartland theory, Veniamin Semenov-Tian-Shanskii (1870-1942) developed a new geopolitical image of Russia and its positioning in the world order. Yet the object of his scholarship was the unity of the sovereign body and not its territorial limits per se.

Tian-Shanskii, following the steps of his father, explorer, and geographer Pyotr Semyonov-Tian-Shanskii, proposed an anthropo-geographical paradigm in the development of the Russian political geography. He called for the analysis of the role of Russian colonization in the world territorial division and argued for the development of cartographic science and quantitative methods for measuring space. Like his Western predecessors and contemporaries (the concepts of Ratzel, Mackinder, Huntington), Tian-Shanskii's theory was methodologically based on an anthropo-geographical approach, on the quantitative measure of the man and its life habitat. Tian-Shanskii's concept of 'world geopolitical domination' emphasized the critical role of the area between the Earth equator and the 45th parallel North, or what he called the 'land in between three seas.' The 'master of the world,' believed Tian-Shanskii, will be the one "who is able to own simultaneously all three seas" (Semenov-Tian-Shanskii 1928).

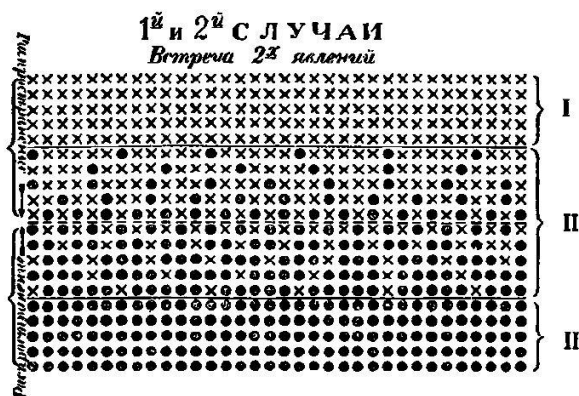
In his geopolitical work titled *Region and Country* (1928), Tian-Shanskii develops major concepts for geographical analysis of the world through his anthropo-geographical lens. 'Space,' for Tian-Shanskii, is an "aggregate of places of actions of a phenomenon, in both physical and psychological sense," since phenomena occur on multiple "connected or disconnected" scales simultaneously, "extending through them continuously and discontinuously" (1928, 9) (See Figure 1). Building on this theorization of *area geographica* as a bounded space filled with geographical phenomena, Tian-Shanskii develops a set of specific definitions: a 'border' (*granitsa*) denotes a shift in any geographical phenomena, a 'frontier' (in a sense of the 'Near Abroad' used in Toal 2017) (*rubezh*) is a sharp border where "one phenomenon immediately breaks off and is chopped off to give way to another," and a 'limit' (*predel*) is a border that is not sharp, where "one phenomenon is gradually replaced giving way to another" (1928, 10) (See Figure 1).

Более грубый способ.

- I. Северная (или восточная) полоса.
- II. Южная (или западная) полоса.

Более тонкий способ.

- I. Северная (или восточная) полоса чистого типа.
- II. Средняя переходная полоса смешанного типа.
- III. Южная (или западная) полоса чистого типа.



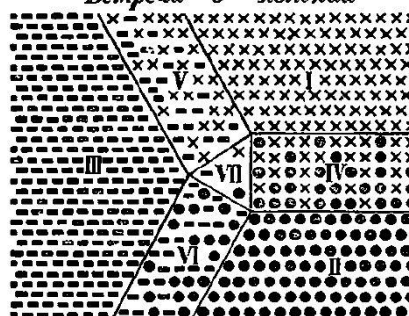
Районы чистых типов.

- I. Северо-восточный (или северо-западный или северный).
- II. Юго-восточный (или юго-западный или южный).
- III. Западный (или восточный).

Районы переходные, смешанных типов.

- IV. От северо-восточного к юго-восточному (или от северо-западного к юго-западному).
- V. От северо-восточного к западному (или от северо-западного к восточному).
- VI. От юго-восточного к западному (или от юго-западного к восточному).
- VII. Центральный (встреча всех трех явлений).

3й 4й 5й и 6й СЛУЧАИ Встреча 3х явлений



Районы чистых типов.

- 1. Северный. 2. Западный.
- 3. Восточный. 4. Южный.

Районы переходные, смешанных типов.

- 5. Северо-восточный. 6. Юго-восточный.
- 7. Юго-западный. 8. Северо-западный.
- 9. Северо-южный. 10. Западно-восточный.
- 11. Центральный (встреча всех четырех явлений).
- 12. Западно-северо-восточный.
- 13. Северо-восточно-южный.
- 14. Восточно-южно-западный.
- 15. Южно-западно-северный.

7й СЛУЧАЙ

Встреча 4х явлений

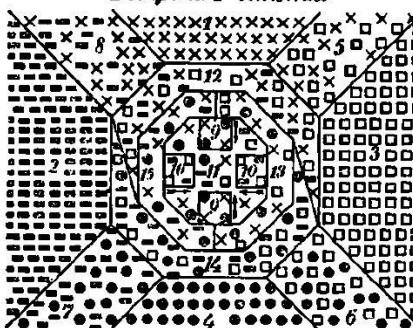


Figure 1 – Tian-Shanskii’s theoretical scheme showing a process of territorial delineation of different regions based on the ‘movement of the geographical phenomenon.’ In the upper figure two cases of converging geographic phenomena are presented, for example, “phenomena of north and south, forest and steppe,

white and yellow race.” The lower and middle figure shows the same idea but with a higher number of phenomena converging one into another. (Source: Semenov-Tian-Shanskii 1928, 13)

Tian-Shanskii’s theory of geopolitical space is that of a constant movement, “internal [movement] within the space, penetration of the space from the outside, and movement from one space into another” (Ibid.). These definitions lead Tian-Shanskii to delineate a set of complex scenarios of different geographical phenomenon meeting each other, thereby forming different world regions with their unique borders, limits, and frontiers (“the North and the South, the forest and the steppe, the white and the yellow race” (Ibid.)) (See Figure 2).

Here grew up the most powerful and original human civilizations and statehoods of the Aryans-Semites, Mongols, Malay and Aztec-Incas, in the three Mediterranean seas and the two peninsulas between them—the Hindustan and the Malaysian-Arabian—while other weak tribes of the human race, for the most part, were frozen in the Neolithic age (1928, 185).

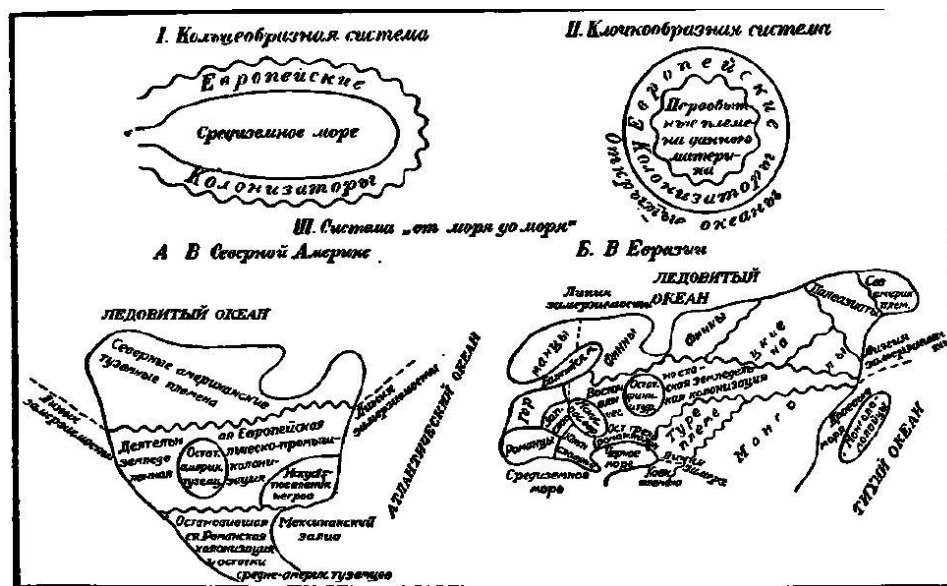


Figure 2 – Tian-Shanskii geographical imagination of the world territorial partitioning, or what he refers to as “three territorial types of powerful possessions,” 1) annular system, 2) tufted system, and 3) a system of “from sea to sea,” which were formed through encounter with different types of frontier. (Source: Semenov-Tian-Shanskii 1928, 13)

These theories legitimized Russia's continental system of colonization, or what Tian-Shanskii called the area 'from sea to sea,' which denoted a vast territory trapped inside the continent with two ends resting on the water bodies washing its frontiers. All attention in developing his geographical thinking was paid to the construction of inland waterways and internal colonization (Syrikh 2012). To keep the unity of the empire intact, he offered to erase arbitrary division between the East and the West along the Ural Mountains. The biggest weakness Tian-Shanskii saw in this system of geopolitical order was its uneven relations of the core *vis-a-vis* the periphery – the issue that Russia has been battling in its efforts to develop and to fix its internal and external frontiers (see *Chapter 4*).

Emigre scientists known as Eurasianists also followed these insights of Russia being a 'middle world,' the development of which was strongly influenced by the characteristics of Eurasia. Consequently, the ideal image of Russia in the view of the Eurasianist group contained all components that contrasted it with the Western society. Pyotr Savitskii, one of the advocates for Eurasianism, saw Russia as a 'middle kingdom,' not as a national state but as an entire civilization formed at once on the basis of the "Aryan-Slavic culture, the Turkic nomadism, the Orthodox traditions of Byzantine empire and the legacy of Roman law for legal practices related to land" (Syrikh 2012).

Arguing for a historically situated mix of the settler and nomadic territorialities these authors brought about and celebrated a new territorial identity of the Russian state different from that of the West. Though these attempts to characterize Russia as a middle kingdom extending from sea to sea were later abandoned as a result of factual oversimplifications, the main characteristic of anti-Western territorial development and its theorizations gave rise to new scholarly waves that continued trying to situate a place of Russia in the context of the global world order and often legitimize occupation of its frontier lands.

These theoretical propositions viewed territory as a spatial container for the Russian state. Yet, Russia's processual ideological positioning against the Western idea(l)s created a space for territorial autonomy on regional and local levels. Different ethnic groups, though recognized under the rule of the empire, were found to be untouched by the unifying ideology of the nation and

preserved their qualities throughout the imperial period (for more detailed discussion see Plokhi *On the Origins of the Slavic Nations*, 2006). Russian land commune, in particular, was a major subject for debate among different academic groups of the Slavophiles, the Eurasianists, and others, that saw it as a unique autonomous feature of Russian development (see periodicals in *Chapter 3*). *Obshchina* was neither Western nor Eastern phenomenon, hence it had to be theorized anew, causing a tremendous interest of Russian political and legal theorists that aimed to find the origins of the commune and its place in Russian national consciousness.

1.4 Situating the object of analysis

Russia's disputed history of land policy generated a considerable amount of scholarly research into the post-1960 Soviet period and soon after 1992. It targeted mainly the topics of new agrarian reforms, industrialization and transition, productivity and rural development, where most works on land have concentrated in the thematic field of agrarian studies, with 'critical agrarian studies' being the primary outlet for enclosure scholarship. Revolutionary events and crises in the twentieth century Russia in which peasants played a critical role, in particular, contributed to the production of iconic and globally recognized works related to the study of agrarian class struggle, rural politics, capitalist development, and peasant resistance (Gerschenkron 1962; Scott 1998; Shanin 1986; Wolf 1969). These works used Russia as an example of a backward and underdeveloped society (Pipes 1974), with unique customary characteristics of development (Engelstein 1993), or with potential for socialist future (Luxemburg 1951).

The most recent agrarian scholarship follows this legacy and continues the debate on the modern land struggle in rural Russia, for the first time introducing the current, post-Soviet land question to the broader Western audience, continuing the tradition of critical agrarian studies, and forming the majority of research in *The Journal of Peasant Studies* starting from its launch in 1973 (Visser and Spoor 2011; Visser, Mamonova and Spoor 2012). Bringing to the table research on the political economies of large-scale land acquisitions in Russia, Spoor, Visser, and Mamonova discuss the agency of the state as a land broker in relation to the ruling local oligarchy, private businesses, and foreign capital, positioning the Russian example as an ordinary and yet a unique case in a network of new neoliberal land struggle all around the world today.

The original research with a specific focus on the Russian land commune or *obshchina*—its backwardness, customary social organization, and political-economic characteristics pre-1917—has been central to the imperial scholarship in political economy or agronomy with numerous periodicals, monographs, and, in particular, research outlets of the Free Imperial Economic Society and Imperial Russian Geographical Society based on their surveys of the commune. This strand of academic work however diverged in its focus and was highly contested by different political groups of populists, Westerners, Eurasianists, Slavophiles, and other. These disputes were popularized in the classical ‘Lenin–Chaianov’ debate on the agrarian development of Russia, where Lenin assigned peasant class differentiation as a driving force of capitalist development through landed property ‘from above,’ while Chaianov connected these trends to the internal demographic cycles of peasant households as related to the issues of peasant family structure in regard to labor-consumer ratio (Bernstein 2009; Shanin 2009).

The post-Soviet work continued the legacy of the studies into the Russian land commune with works that brought back the research on Russian agrarian capitalism as it related to the Stolypin land reforms and Stalin’s collectivization. Post-Soviet critical agrarian scholars analyzed peasant behavioral reactions to the land reforms within the commune and formation of resistance movements in the countryside (Pallot 1999; Macey 1990), agrarian and industrial relations in the village (Atkinson 1983, 1973; Leonard 2010; Nafziger 2016), and political-legal and institutional aspects of the reforms (Wegren 2014). Some have taken the Stolypin reforms as a basis for the comparative study of Soviet and post-Soviet rural politics and new waves of land appropriation (Atkinson 1983; Figs 1990), while other critical agrarian scholars explored the popular political discourses promoted in the countryside as a measure for legitimizing land reforms (Frierson 1993; Kotsonis 1999). Since these issues were examined in greater detail, scholarly interest to the study of imperial land enclosure declined significantly.

While I recognize the breadth and importance of scholarship with a focus on agrarian change, I see the territorialization of the private property regime as a crucial lens through which to view the Russian imperial land enclosure. Rural politics and agrarian change are also a struggle over territory, namely legitimizing, establishing, and maintaining exclusive land ownership through

physically enclosing of land. As Stolypin saw, the ideal outcome of land consolidation reforms of 1906 would be the creation of strong proprietors rather than merely advanced agriculturalists, even though agricultural productivity was a central objective of his reforms. The rule of property would bring about the idea of an ‘individual’ and hence, a new unified territorial order of rational economic development.

Stolypin and Krivoshein pursued a vision of an integrated society, exclusive but cohesive, with property functioning as the instrument that would draw some peasants away from their estate and link them to a different social and political order. As Stolypin put it, the government would cultivate a base of ‘strong people of the land who will be linked with the state power as a unitary organism’ (Kotsonis 1999, 58).

Reading territory from a Russian historical perspective requires avoiding two pitfalls that can often be encountered in the Russian studies. Foremost, treating Russian ‘tsarist,’ ‘socialist,’ or ‘post-socialist’ geographical experience as a temporal and regional container reproduces limited knowledge (Tuvikene 2016). While seeing Russian experience as ‘ordinary’ and as a part of a global movement of enclosure and appropriation allows to connect together various conceptions of territory from around the world, and, thus, decolonize the subject. With this in mind, the goal of this work is to examine the Russian case of land enclosure as an ordinary nuisance of an ontological shift toward global (and local) capital. In doing so, it contributes to a general inquiry into the spatial rationalities and territorial techniques of land enclosure under capitalism, while at the same time preserving a sense of local experiences unique to Russia. This analysis of Russian enclosures on multiple temporal and spatial scales also can offer rich examples for further comparative analysis across regions and national borders.

Hence, this work brings the Russian case into the political geographic territory debate. This entails examining a range of concepts and scales that underpin the empirical research in political geography. Among these are land, space, and power, in other words – political, geographical, legal, technical, and practical properties of territory. These are explored throughout different historical – the Great Dutchy of Moscow, Tsarist pre- and post-Emancipation time, and late imperial period, and geographical scales – the body, land commune, imperial periphery of Moscow, and national

frontiers; these contexts constitute the primary framework for this research, examined through the lens of the enclosure of the Russian land commune.

Historical evolution of capitalism in late imperial Russia through land enclosure has been largely overshadowed by the Marxist analysis of the English case. However, development of Russian capitalism through the delineation of land deserves particular attention since it achieved unexpected outcomes that differs this case from the Western and colonial settings. Waves of land dispossession and social displacement in Russia were not merely the consequences of enclosure, they were its very essence: they operationalized and legitimized the internal periphery (the commune *vis-à-vis* the urban) and the national frontier (national *vis-à-vis* the outside) as a source for speculative investments after the Stolypin land reforms and as a means of managing the legitimization crisis of the Russian imperial state by promoting capitalist development.

Russian feudalism has acquired characteristics different from the ‘classical’ Western case. In as early as the 15th century, large parcels of land had been ‘donated’ to the Russian aristocracy and merchant capitalists in exchange for their military services. The rest of the populous enjoyed working in a land commune, or *mir*, meaning the whole ‘world,’ which was later termed as *obshchina*, meaning the entire ‘society,’ a form of settlement unique to Russian institutional structure under the Tsarist rule.

For the majority of the 19th century, the open-field system of agriculture was a common practice of land management in the pre-emancipatory Russia where agriculture accounted for almost 90% of the land use. Before 1861 serf communities were assigned to use land, owned by their seigneurs in return for their rent or labor services. Land, however, was still allocated and cultivated by their village community unlike in Western Europe and England in particular, where peasant households held hereditary rights to one or several scattered strips of land.

Collective land that was redistributed during the serfdom was institutionalized after the Emancipation and Redemption reforms of the 1860s that ended centuries of serfdom and transferred property from the state, the court, the church or the landed nobility to village communities. After 1861 a newly emerging class structure was superimposed onto the prevalent

territorial order – the old communal land regime under the open-field system of agriculture that, in analogy to the Western Europe of the 17th century that consisted of arable fields divided into narrow strips of land and meadows or waste land held under the common rule.

Emancipation reform institutionalized village community and allotted land endowments to the newly freed peasants. The amount of allotted land was primarily dictated by the amount of ‘eaters’ or by the amount of ‘male souls’ in each household. Ownership of received land allotments by the peasants could be constituted through mortgage payments to the government that had to be paid off in their entirety. The resulting economic burden imposed onto the peasants was a collective liability of each *obshchina*. Moreover, the state-imposed restrictions on selling or renting land allotments before redemption loans were paid off entirely. These restrictions limited peasant’s mobility and wellbeing since the debt value exceeded the actual productive value of land strips. This economic struggle forced the former serfs to engage in exploitative labor in the village or other speculative land relations. In this interpretation, these restrictions lowered the supply of labor into the industry, forced manufacturing to be overly capital-intensive, and slowed industrialization, thereby generating a considerable obstacle for economic growth that lasted until the Stolypin reforms of the 1900s (Nafziger 2016).

The Russian land commune exercised the right to redraw boundaries between land strips on a yearly basis (repartitioning) due to the demographic change and redistribution of tax burdens, which lead to a frequent reterritorialization in areas engaged in open field system of agriculture. This practice contributed to peasant disinvestment in land and the loss of agricultural productivity in the long term. These restrictions almost immediately furthered the growing economic crisis in the countryside. Hereby, the new territorial restructuring was needed as the agricultural crisis and a severe famine hit Russia in 1891.

As Rosa Luxemburg states in her seminal work on *The Accumulation of Capital*, reflecting upon Marx’s encounter with the primary accumulation and the history of capitalism – “ Russian rural communal ownership of land, the famous *obshchina*, seemed to offer a shortcut to the blessed land of socialism, and lead directly to a higher social development of Russia, without the capitalist phase and its attendant misery as experienced in Western Europe” (Luxemburg 1951, 270).

Nevertheless, appropriation of land and the first wave of capitalist land enclosure were introduced through Stolypin's reforms to eliminate communal territorial order resistant to capitalist agricultural development.

Primitive accumulation of capital flourished splendidly in Russia, encouraged by all kinds of state subsidies, guarantees, premiums and executive orders. It earned profits that would already seem legendary for the West. Yet the picture of internal conditions in contemporary Russia was anything but attractive [...]. On the plains, the decline and disintegration of rural economy under the pressure of exploitation [...] caused terrible conditions, periodical famines and peasant risings (Luxemburg 1951, 272).

New legislation was introduced in response to the growing crisis of the late Tsarist countryside. The purpose of land reforms was to impose private rights onto the communal land holdings and thus encourage individual projects for improvement. Under the reform, peasants were given a right to privatize their strips of land and an opportunity to reduce or cancel the redemption debt imposed by the state. Most significantly, the results of the reform didn't follow the popular example in the West:

Instead, almost immediately its operations got underway, the land reform administration found itself having to deal with communes which voted en masse to form unitary farms without any apparent need for more progressive individuals to show the way (Pallot 1999).

For this reason, the state underwent an institutional restructuring and rescaling of its control over the process (see *Chapter 3* for discussion of the institutional change in the commune). For instance, various local land settlement commissions and the Committee for Land Settlement Affairs within the Chief Administration for Land Settlement and Agriculture were created and reformed to manage the process of enclosure. In short, the attempt to impose a new order in such a direct way—by territorial reorganization of the countryside, exercising the disciplinary authority of the state and its techniques of subjectification of the commune to the market rule—encountered a strong resistance from the communities and culminated in the 1917 revolution followed by the forced collectivization and deterritorialization of the late Tsarist regime. These aspects of the territorial delineation of land in Russia's early attempts to transition to capitalist development are reviewed in the chapter that follows.

The transition from coercion and compulsion to social discipline was the main characteristics in Foucault's reading of the history of modern democracies and, in particular, in the context of transitioning from pre-capitalist to capitalist mode of production. As elaborated Laura Engelstein, Foucault "retained the distinction between old regimes, in which power emanated from the state, and the liberal, bourgeois society, in which power is operated through 'normalizing' mechanisms based on 'scientific knowledge' and is implemented through disciplinary practices widely dispersed in the social body" (Engelstein 1993, 342). In the case of the Russian empire, as Engelstein continues, the old regime of absolutist power survived almost intact and was carried into the period in which the new western techniques of societal control and discipline already started to function.

Indeed, all three mechanisms of power and models of governance listed by Foucault, "the so-called juridical monarchy, the *Polizeistaat*, and the modern disciplinary regime," were superimposed onto each other in the Russian case, while they were chronologically separated in Foucault's reading of Western political history (Ibid.).

In Rome, justice has been separated from administration by the second century BC. In countries with feudal traditions, that is in most of western Europe, this separation occurred in the late Middle Ages. In England, by the end of the thirteenth century, the kings' judicial councilors were distinguished from his administrative and fiscal agents. In France, too, the court known as the Parliament of Paris established itself by this time as an institution in its own right. Russia in this respect resembled rather the ancient oriental monarchies where royal officials typically dispensed justice as part of their administrative obligations (Pipes 1974, 288).

Following the years of juridical and administrative absence of public service in the Russian empire, the state turned to terror and discipline to develop a 'bureaucratic police regime with totalitarian overtones' (Pipes 1974). This was achieved starting in 1845 through a number of measures, first, making it a criminal offence for a peasant to concern himself with politics, and second, granting to the authorities to sentence citizens to exile, in addition to shifting all judiciary functions and criminal measures from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Interior (Ibid.).

These exceptional or ‘provisional measures’ were later carried into the development of the Stolypin land reforms (Stolypin 1907), induced by the peasant revolt of 1905 (for more discussion on ‘exceptional measures’ of land reforms see *Chapter 3, Section 3.4*). As Stolypin explained in his Speech on the Provisional Laws, “exceptional laws - a means of necessary defense of the state” (Stolypin 1907, 13 March). Regulation on military courts, proposed by the Council of Ministers of August 19, 1906, was set to speed up legal proceedings in cases of civilians accused of robbery, murder, attacks on military, police and officials and other crimes, in cases where there was no apparent need for additional investigation. In the period of 1906-07, military courts were established in 82 provinces out of 87 that were considered under the martial law and emergency protection.

There are, gentlemen, fatal moments in the life of the state, when state necessity is above the law and when it is necessary to choose between the integrity of the theories and the integrity of the fatherland. [...] I must answer openly that such temporary measures cannot acquire a permanent character; when they become durable, then, firstly, they lose their power, and then they can affect the people themselves, whose morals are to be brought up by law (Stolypin 1907).

As to the land reforms, the similar measures applied. Through new administrative mechanisms and bare extralegal coercion, the land of the communes was delineated among the individual farmers in pursuit of more efficient agrarian development – the dilemma that this dissertation aims to unpack. “This was not merely the old *Polizeistaat* under new ideological auspices,” as concludes Engelstein, but “its refurbishment with new tactics, by which society was enlisted to do its own policing but in which the discursive authority of the professional disciplines, speaking in the name of ‘science,’ functioned only as a dependency of the state” (Engelstein 1993, 353).

Notes:

¹ For the collection of statistical evidence on the Russian financial situation at the end of imperial governance refer to Shanin 1985, 187–189.

² For a more detailed theoretical and empirical engagement with the decolonial reading of territory refer to the special issue titled “Contested Urban Territories: Decolonized Perspectives” in *Geographica Helvetica* (in Press) 2018.

CHAPTER TWO: Land, Enclosure, and Capitalist Appropriation of the Russian Land Commune

2.1 Introduction

Not the indiscriminate distribution of land, not the resolution of riots by subsidies, but their suppression by force, recognition of the inviolability of private property [...] (*applause*), and a real right to exit the land commune – are the objectives, implementation of which the government considered and still considers as crucial to the existence of the Russian state (*applause*).

— Pyotr Stolypin, *We Need a Great Russia* (1907, 307–312)³

“t the beginning of every great epoch there stands a great land appropriation.

— Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth* (2015 [1942], 60)

The global assault on land today indicates the persistence of the logic of enclosure in the development of capitalism and its survival through variegated crises (Arrighi 1994; DeAngelis 2007; Harvey 2011). Land and its accumulation never ceased to be a means of political power and capitalist production of space, or, in contrary, the means of resistance in times of instabilities. Articulated by Carl Schmitt, ‘appropriation, distribution, and production’ of land in the frontiers of hegemonic powers were at the roots of the formation of the new *nomos* of the Earth through moments of instability from the Treaty of Tordesillas to the last colonial Congo conference (Gottmann 1973; Elden 2013; Maier 2016), as well as the recent globalized assault on vast landed wealth in the post-Soviet Russia (Pallot and Nefedova 2007; Visser and Spoor 2011; Visser et al. 2012). As he notably states, “no Man can give, divide, and redistribute without taking, only a God, who created the world from nothing, can [...]” (Schmitt 2003, 345).

Expropriation of peasants from the means of subsistence and ‘commoning’ and commodification of their free labor power through enclosure was introduced by Karl Marx as the basis for the formation and expansion of the capitalist world order. Grown from the crisis of feudalism,

capitalism offered an opportunity for the reorientation of old landed wealth and profits from slave trade into new territories of accumulation in the English countryside. The question of ‘primitive accumulation’ of land and ‘great appropriation’ or primary redivision of territory produced a vast scholarship over the long history of capitalism – it was explored as a ‘*divisio primaeva*’ by Hugo Grotius (2012 [1625]), studied as a ‘prior accumulation’ by Adam Smith (1976 [1776]), and examined as ‘extended’ or ‘expanded accumulation’ by revolutionary Marxists, such as Rosa Luxemburg (2003 [1951]) and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1964 [1899]). Treating land appropriation as both a fundamental moment and a continuous phenomenon in the evolution of the capitalist *nomos*, these original interventions put forward a fruitful pathway for critical research on a more nuanced ‘historicization’ of the production of territory throughout moments of economic or political instabilities in capitalism.

In respect to the current experiences of land appropriation, the goal of my dissertation is to return to the classical, but less recognized in the recent debate on enclosure, example of the formation and dissolution of capitalist relations through appropriation of the Russian ‘land commune’ encouraged by the crises of the late imperial and socialist periods. Approaching economic crisis as an ontological component of capitalist development and land enclosure as a territorial strategy of the state and the capital, I analyze how enclosure and customary territorial practices in the Russian land commune were simultaneously co-produced through the moments of economic and political instabilities during capitalist transitions. This example of the development of capitalism through land enclosure in Russia, long overshadowed by the Marxist historiographical analysis of the parliamentary land capture in pre-industrial England, deserves special attention since it followed unique pathways and achieved unexpected resistance in the periphery.

The Russian land commune, or the famous *mir*, was at once a contested territory that provided peasants with resistance to capitalist pressures as well as a strategic space intended for the accumulation of productive capital and the exploitation of the landless. As Luxemburg believed, *mir* could potentially offer a “shortcut to the blessed land of socialism and lead directly to a higher social development [...], without the capitalist phase and its attendant misery as experienced in Western Europe” (Luxemburg 2003 [1951], 251). Nonetheless, the first wave of land consolidation

reforms, which were brought about by the defeat of Russia in the Crimean and Japanese wars, the great famine, and a financial crash, followed by the revolution of 1905, was introduced to restructure and ‘homogenize’ the collective territorial order that has proven so resistant to advanced economic development. The second wave of land enclosure through collectivization, following the revolution of 1917 and the New Economic Policy period, resulted in a bare land appropriation intended to eliminate the leftover elements of the commune and transfer exclusive control over land to the state.

The coercive techniques of enclosure and fictive legality of landed relations under the late imperial and socialist periods contributed to the rise of Russian landed oligarchy and proprietary state capitalism today. Russia’s possession of one of the biggest mineral and energy reserves and the largest masses of productive (and largely unused) arable land (World Bank 2014), which were opened up for foreign investments after the 1998 financial crisis and the 2001 Land Code, created a murky ground for further speculations. This picture intensified with the global recession of 2008 that was met with a wave of a full-blown land grab in Russia, seen in this study not only as a frontier of global capitalism but as a crony capitalist society in itself (see *Chapter 4* for more discussion on the geographies of dispossession in the frontier).

To explore landed relations during the crisis of the Russian imperial regime, this chapter relies on two surveys on landed poverty in the commune launched by the Imperial Free Economic Society (FES) in 1877 and 1910,⁴ reported cases of urban and rural protest movements, and peasant complaints, in addition to secondary data on Soviet collectivization.⁵ Archival analysis of policy documents and public narratives presents a unique opportunity to examine and contrapose predominant political discourses on peasant life, created and promoted by urban intellectuals and populist parties in the 19th century, against the stories of rural life reported by the peasants themselves.

The emphasis of this dissertation on the disputed territorialization of crisis in the periphery helps to shift attention from the Anglophone interpretation of territory as either a coercive power strategy or a mere bordering of a state’s national limits (Elden 2009; Gottmann 1973; Sack 1986; Soja 1971; Taylor 1994), to territory as a ‘lived space’ where both top-down and bottom-up practices

overlap and often clash (Antonsich 2010; Schwarz and Streule 2016) (for development of this argument see *Chapter 3, Section 3.1-3.3*).

2.2 Primitive accumulation and primary (re)division of land

Prevalence of the logic of enclosure in the current modes of global capitalist development accentuates the importance of land as a key category of geographical analysis. ‘Original,’ ‘primitive,’ ‘primary’ and on-going forms of accumulation and redivision of land have all been associated with various mechanisms and technologies of power throughout the history of capitalism (Peluso and Lund 2011). Carl Schmitt (2003, 42), in his most geopolitical project on the Nomos of the Earth, notably delineates this “threefold root of all law and justice” comprised of fertile soil, fixed boundaries manifested ‘upon the soil’ as a measure of cultivation, and a law imposed ‘above the soil’ through enclosure that makes the “orders and orientations of social [and political] life become visible.” This dialectic of land and power, full of disputed meanings and theoretical interpretations, forms the basis for discussion in this chapter.

Land is foremost a political category, it is a ‘finite resource’ that can be appropriated, distributed, and worked (Elden 2010a; Schmitt 2003). For Polanyi (1957), however, land is a ‘fictitious commodity,’ it cannot be reproduced to meet economic demand since its social, cultural, and economic value far exceeds the price imposed by the markets. Carl Schmitt (2003), on the other hand, sees fertile soil to contain the ‘inner measure of social justice,’ meaning that all work is rewarded fairly by harvest and productively cultivated land is equated to property. This principle of ‘harvest by justice,’ derived from the *terra nullius* doctrine of ‘nobody’s land’ in the Roman law, justified colonial practices over much of the world and propagated that only private property in land is productive of value or ‘fruitful,’ if proved otherwise, it is open for capture by the first taker. This opinion, put forward by many liberal theorists, is still prioritized to justify privatization today.

The chief matter of property being now not the fruits of the earth, and the beasts that subsist on it, but the earth itself; as that which takes in and carries with it all the rest; I think it is plain, that property in that too is acquired as the former. As much land as a man tills, plants,

improves, cultivates, and can use the product of, so much is his property. He by his labour does, as it were, inclose it from the common (Locke 1980 [1690], 21).

Emphasis on the productive property in land was in the core of the Russian imperial land consolidation acts in 1906, 1910, and 1911, which offered the former serfs a right to exit the land commune in exchange for land title and, in the words of Nicholas II of Russia, to help the “fatherland overcome the tormenting turmoil” (RGIA 1291.119.40, 78).⁶

Crisis can serve as a window of opportunity for appropriation and redivision of land. In fact, crisis-ridden production of space has often been one of the core avenues for exploration in urban geography (Harvey 2004; Lefebvre 1991; Smith 2010; Sassen 2014). Karl Marx (1976 [1887]), in the Volume I of *Capital* explains how the preconditions for the ‘original’ capital accumulation arose out of crisis and through enclosure of land, what he describes as the whole series of “thefts, outrages, and popular misery, that accompanied the forcible expropriation of the people, from the last third of the 15th to the end of the 18th century” in pre-industrial England (Marx 1976 [1887], 507). As he argues, feudalism’s main contradictions, grounded in instances where the lord-peasant domination undermined reinvestment in agriculture gave rise to the capitalist mode of development. The ‘spatial fix’ to the crisis of feudalism was internal and external colonization through enclosure – both in the common lands of the English countryside and indigenous lands in the colonies.

This primitive accumulation plays in Political Economy about the same part as original sin in theology. [...] From this original sin dates the poverty of the great majority that, despite all its labour, has up to now nothing to sell but itself, and the wealth of the few that increases constantly although they have long ceased to work. Such insipid childishness is every day preached to us in the defense of property (Marx 1976 [1887], 500).

Separation of the owners from the means of production, the main rationale behind what Marx calls the ‘so called primitive accumulation’ is, however, not a main focus of this chapter. The issue of the development of capitalism through the class struggle in Russia was empirically analyzed by Vladimir Illyich Lenin (1964 [1899]) during his exile in Siberia. For current discussion, it is more important to examine the role that geographers give to land as a ‘great laboratory,’ a strategic resource for originating, managing, and rearticulating accumulation of capital in times of

instabilities – the least discussed moment in Marxist scholarship and, in fact, incomplete in Marx’s own work (Lefebvre 2016).

Carl Schmitt (2003), while grappling with similar issues of the ‘original’ world order, sees ‘just’ land occupation as playing a vital role in the formation of the new *nomos* of the Earth—the “measure by which the land in a particular order is divided and situated” and by which a “part of the earth’s surface” is turned into the ‘force-field’ of that political and social order (Schmitt 2003, 70). Building upon the work of John Locke and Immanuel Kant, Schmitt argues that every law and legal order has land appropriation in its precondition – “every significant alteration and every resituating of the image of the earth is bound up with world political alterations and with a new division of the earth, with a new land appropriation” (Schmitt 2015, 60). Crisis, in the *Nomos of the Earth*, incentivizes and legitimizes appropriation for the sake of preserving the sovereignty and integrity of the state. As Schmitt advocates, ‘emergency’ justifies ‘exception’ – the decision on transcending the rule of law in a particular space, an essentially political and territorial strategy (Agamben 2005; Minca 2007; Schmitt 2003).

Not paradoxically, extralegal territorialization in the name of the public good and in times of crises plays a crucial role in the evolution of capitalism (Perelman 2000). Schmittian understanding of the ‘original appropriation’ is parallel to that of Marx, where something chaotic and diffuse as “a tribe, a retinue, or a people” becomes “settled or historically situated” in a way of a city or a colony (Schmitt 2003, 70). The process of capture or abandonment of certain territorial constructs to allow for new transformed relations or territorialization by means of previous territories is, hence, critical to both the ‘great land appropriation’ and the ‘primitive accumulation.’ As critical is the role of the crisis in the process of appropriation, division, and redistribution of land. By taking over the land and manipulating its boundaries, the crisis is territorialized.

Focus on the *nomos*, or the measure of land appropriation, division, and production, allows Schmitt to reveal how new territories are being created during moments of uncertainty or instability, despite of his state-centered approach to this issue being extensively debated (Agamben 2005; Hardt and Negri 2001; Legg 2011; Mouffe 1999). On the other hand, Marx locks the concept of primitive accumulation into a category of land, seeing it primarily as a limited resource for investments

during the overaccumulation crises. Yet, neither Schmitt nor Marx construe land and territory exclusively with state power. While still referring to the state as a land broker in times of crisis, Marx, and, to a lesser extent, Schmitt, emphasize a definite role of the commune, the commons, cities, or tribes in the production of territory.

Together these thinkers along with followers and critics of their political-legal and political-economic legacies contribute to a more nuanced and historicized account of the land-territory-crisis triad and emphasize the importance of treating land and territory as a means of contested social reproduction and not as ‘an end in itself’ (Sevilla-Buitrago 2012). One hundred years of crisis-driven landed relations in Russia that unfolded under the two opposing political regimes of the late Tsarist and Soviet periods and turned the Russian land commune into a strategic territory offer a rich ground for a similar exploration. In exploring the commune, I highlight a rift between the two conceptions of land and territory in the context of the Russian landed relations and provide a detailed account of the customary and stateless processes of democratic territorialization— a unique feature of the common land right in Russia with little analogy found in the West (Nafziger 2016; Zyrianov 1992).

Next, I introduce the Russian *mir*, its customary land law and autonomous, customary practices of land repartitioning that provided peasants with the means of subsistence or, in contrary, served as a backbone for enclosure. Then, by exploring legal and informal territorial techniques of land appropriation, I highlight subsequent waves of enclosure between the emancipation reform of 1861, the Tsarist land consolidation practices of 1906, and a full-blown land grab via Soviet collectivization, in order to question and elucidate the necessity of dispossession embedded in the evolution of capitalism. This specific stretch of history represents a complex overlay of different territorial orders under imperial and socialist political regimes during the formation of essentially capitalist landed relations – the period that has received less attention in the recent scholarship on capitalist land enclosure.

2.3 Land in Russian historiography

Paradoxically, the role of land differed only slightly during the Russian imperial and early socialist periods. During both regimes, land served at once as a means of social reproduction in *obshchina* and political power of the elites.

Russian monarchy and nobility in the eyes of the society embodied simultaneously a “territorial unity, supreme power over people, and a chief disposal of landed resources” (Medushevskii 2015, 20). Two main types of land tenure were present in the seventeenth century Russia – conditional temporary ownership of provisional estates given to the Russian nobles in exchange for state service (*pomest'e*) and hereditary rights to private property belonging to families of lineage (*votchina*), in addition to vast land holdings by the state and the church. Peter the Great’s decree on common ownership in 1714 equated *pomest'e* and *votchina*, creating a new encompassing class with an exclusive control over land. Fifty years later, military and administrative services were lifted,⁷ church land property was transferred to the state,⁸ and land ownership became a sole right of the nobleman, thus homogenizing and fixating the power-land nexus in the hands of the ‘purely bred.’

The new Edict on the Imperial Family of 1797 introduced a new type of property – the ‘appanage estates’ or *udelnye imenia*, that were recognized as the “private property of the Imperial Family and the House and were separated from the land possessions of the state” (Baev 1994). This addition to the land law of imperial Russia furthered the separation of the Russian national and imperial identity (see discussion in *Chapter 1, Section 1.3*). All the land, which did not belong to anybody, similarly to the so-called *res nullius*, was transferred to the properties of the Empire, and fell under the jurisdiction of the state treasury (Baev 1994). For instance, Russia’s new territorial acquisitions, colonies, or abandoned lands within the empire became the property of the state, and not of the Imperial Family. As Baev described in his review of policies and academic writings of Count Sergey Witte, “the Russian people did not need private ownership of land because they had faith in the Tsar and his discretion to use the land for the necessities of the state, as well as for the benefit and needs of the people themselves” (Baev 1994, 6).

The first successful land survey under the rule of Catherine II of Russia reinforced this hierarchy and filtered out the class of landowners from clerks and officials who had not yet achieved the

gentry status, finalized bordering of their lands, and separated them from state's possessions. Catherine's phrase "Bestow, God, property to your own people!" quickly became a slogan for the increasing hegemony of the landowner class up until the events of 1861. According to the general census of 1905, in Baev's calculations, the state possessed about forty percent of all agricultural lands and sixty percent of all forested areas in the European section of Russia, "the majority of state lands, however, were enormous spaces in Eastern and Northern Russia and were not included in 1905 census" (Ibid.).

2.3.1 Land in the land commune

For serfs in the margins land was foremost 'God's property' that should be distributed equally among those who worked it (Medushevskii 2015). This 'sacralization' of land in a traditional Russian society was historically grounded in the common right to land or the 'land commune.' Urban intellectuals and members of imperial populist parties termed the commune '*obshchina*,' derived from the same root as 'society' or 'common' (*obshchestvo* or *obshchii*), while in contrast, peasants used an older term '*mir*' to describe collective land tenure, meaning the whole 'world' or 'peace.' These contested etymologies often overlapped but the peasants used the latter term most often (Barykov et al. 1880, 1).

The peasants were officially bound to the land from the second half of the sixteen century. Attachment of the majority of the peasants to the land and the land commune shows itself again right after the revolution, when the urban population that left the commune during Stolypin reforms starts fleeing back into the countryside between 1917 and 1920. Richard Pipes estimates that Moscow lost the third of its population, while Petrograd lost a half (Pipes 1974, 141). As Pipes argues citing Leo Tolstoi, the Russian peasants would not intend to subvert the autocratic system and the revolution "will be directed not against the tsar and despotism, but against the ownership of land" (Ibid.).

It is worth noting that, as with any other subaltern subjects, many over-romanticized views prevailed in popular literature. Some academics later claimed that the sacral attachment of the Russian peasants to the soil, an easy argument to make, has in fact no evidence in real life. This

sentiment of Russia's attraction to the soil, as argued Pipes, "is to be found mainly in the imagination of gentry romantics who visited their estates in the summertime" (Pipes 1974, 156). Hence one of the main characteristics of Russian politics under serfdom was to keep peasant tight to the soil thus limiting its mobility.

The earth held the peasant in its grip, sometimes giving, sometimes withholding, forever mysterious and capricious. He [peasant] fled it as eagerly as he fled the landlord and the official, turning to peddling, handicrafts, casual labor in the cities or any other work that would free him from the drudgery of field work (Pipes 1974, 156).

Prior to 1861 state peasants worked the land of the crown estates and, since they didn't offer any service to a landowner, they would pay higher soul taxes. State peasants were attached to the land since they were not allowed to leave the communes in which they were forced to reside. While personal serf communities were assigned to use land, owned by their seigneurs, in return for rent (*obrok*) or various labor services (*barshchina*). Land, however, was still repartitioned and redistributed by the village community, unlike in Western Europe and England in particular, where peasant households held hereditary rights to one or several scattered strips of land (Moore 2002; Sevilla-Buitrago 2015).

The Emancipation Reform of 1861 institutionalized *obshchina* by re-dividing landed wealth of the church, state, and nobility and allocating it to the commune in exchange for redemption payments used by the state to compensate landed gentry for the loss of land. Redemption payments were a collective liability and had to be paid off over the term of 49 years to the Peasant Land Bank before obtaining title to land. The amount of allotted land was largely dictated by the amount of 'eaters' or *edoki* and by the number of 'male souls' or *dushy* in each household. Rural societies received land allocations mainly based on two types of land use – household (*podvornoe*) and repartitional or communal (*obshchinnoe*), characterized by the common practice of frequent redistribution of land parcels. Yet, prior to 1905, communal repartitional land use in Russia accounted for 82% of all land allocated to the peasant communities after 1861 (Medushevskii 2015).

2.3.2 The land commune in capitalism

The Russian land commune and its enclosure cannot be understood outside the concept of capitalism. Imperial Russia, as many argued, was ‘capitalist already’ or as others believed, ‘capitalist not yet’. Industrial production was growing at the rate of 15.9% by 1897, about four million peasants settled in cities by 1913, and the share of foreign capital resulted in eight billion rubles by 1914, constituting 43 percent of all Russian industrial, banking, and trade capital and considerable ownership of Russian land, mines, and manufacturing enterprises.⁹ This dramatic transformation was increasingly recognized as development of capitalism in Russia, or alternatively, as Shanin excerpted from Mirskii, “by 1914, Russia had gone a good part of the way toward becoming a semi-colonial possession of European capital” (Shanin 1985, 188). Agriculture, however, remained the main source of production and employment with no investments made from the state or abroad. Indeed, the opposite was true, “the nobles, urban merchants, and the state were pumping out peasantry’s produce and profits” (Ibid., 198). Yet as believed Lenin, Russian peasantry was an integral part of the capitalist commodity economy already post emancipation reform in 1861 (Lenin 1964).

The commune, in the turn of the twentieth century, became a disputed ground for debate about backwardness of the Russian economy in relation to the West. Ontological discussion on the role of *obshchina* in Russian economic development diverged – proponents of centralization and representatives of the Russian ‘state school’ saw the commune as a “fiscal-administrative device created by the state” in the modern time with little relation to the ancient commune, the Slavophiles insisted on the ancient origins of the land commune and its emancipatory capacity of “accommodating social needs [...] and interests of the people,” while the populist proto-socialist intellectual groups praised the commune’s potential to achieve the “highest socialist form skipping the negation of private property.”¹⁰ Yet, the commune represented the possibility of a revolutionary separation from the logics of capital and the “assembling of an autonomous alternative sociality” (Atkinson 1983).

Others believed the commune was a mechanism of state control and a tool for tying people to the land – one of the main aspects and goals of serfdom. As Pipes argues, the state knew if peasants were allowed to abandon the soil they would revolve or “roam the country in search of easier and

more remunerative work” (Pipes 1973, 164). To accommodate serfdom, the peasants were attached to the commune where it existed, or this attachment has been introduced where it was unknown before (Ibid.). Even after the Emancipation Act, when the peasant lost his ties to the landlord, he stayed attached to the land through redemption payments.

Despite the wide-ranging debates on the role of the commune in the formation of capitalist relations, I see *obshchina* as a strategic and disputed territory – at once customary, self-exploitative, impoverished, and ‘backward’ anachronism of the Tsarist legacy (Gerschenkron 1962), and yet ‘reliable’ and resilient in times of crisis (Atkinson 1983). Surrounded by the growing industrial pressures, proletarianization of rural labor, and capitalist land reforms, the commune offered peasants the means of autogestion, ‘self-defense and defiance,’ and revealed itself as a “generator of egalitarian ideology, and a school for collective actions of the kind capable of turning into well-organized revolt overnight” as believed a prominent sociologist Teodor Shanin (1985, 81). While both feudalism and socialism were built on a homogeneous system of land ownership, meticulous practices of localized customary territorialization persisted in the commune. With no hand from the state, these practices served as a core of the commune’s own autonomous and democratic territorial reproduction from the bottom-up.

2.4 Peasant geometry and everyday territorialization: Male souls, foreheads, and eaters

The land commune itself was a complex territorial entity. Its spatial organization in the Russian Empire was first analyzed in a survey collected by the Imperial Free Economic Society for the Encouragement of Agriculture and Husbandry in 1877.

At the same time as the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, FES launched a set of programs for studying the Russian land commune, or *mir*, offering new opportunities for Russian academics to study rural way of life in the Russian countryside. Both academic societies issued two surveys and sent them out to the district statistical committees (*gubernskii statisticheskii komitet*) and local councils of *mir* (*zemstvo*). Collected results of both surveys arranged by both academic societies were combined and published in a brochure titled the “Collection of Materials for Studying the

Rural Land Commune” that was published by the Free Economic Society and edited by Barykov, Polovtsov, and Sokolovski in 1880 (Barykov et al. 1880).

This effort alone carried out a subjective reading of the commune. The Russian urban intellectuals aimed at creating standardized measures and metrics to evaluate the land commune, against which to examine the commune’s backwardness. Confusion in understanding of peasant land organization tactics was laid out in the survey and the surveyors were asked to record every detail in peasant’s identification of the commune, its characteristics, and importance to the peasant’s daily life.

The issue of communal land ownership is so complex, in each locality there are so many features that until now are completely unknown. If the collector of information has to come across some sort of peculiar custom, it is highly desirable that such a custom be described, if possible, in detail (Barykov et al. 1880, 9).

The notable endeavour of the Free Economic Society, initiated by Catherine II in 1767, was an essay competition that raised a long-standing question, “What is more beneficial to society that the peasants have land as property, or only movable property, and how far should the right of property be extended?” The competition resulted in over a hundred essays and one of the most valuable contributions by a Russian legal theorist Aleksey Polenov, who believed that the promotion of “conditional hereditary possession of land by the peasants without the right to individual land ownership and with limited dependence on the landowner” would result in elimination of peasant’s idle lives, increase in agricultural production, and help to overcome the crisis of Russian imperialism (Medushevskii 2015, 55). The first time Polenov’s work was published, a hundred years later, it served as a cornerstone for the 1861 emancipation reform. Not surprisingly, a similar political discourse emerged as a ground for policy debate in developing a new Land Code of the Russian Federation after the fall of the Soviet Union in 2002 (Ibid., 494). While the FES survey of 1877 carried a general academic interest about the age-old commune, it ultimately aimed to allocate the origins of the growing agrarian crisis and economic stagnation in the system of communal land use and to justify the ‘exceptional measures’ of enclosure put forward in 1906.

In regard to the territorial delineation of the post-1861 *mir*, one could identify the manor lands that were divided into courtyards and arable lands divided into strips, along with hayfields, forests, and pastures – as described by the FES survey participant from Vashutino village in Moscow *uyezd*¹¹ (RGIA 91.2.776). Land redivision among the emancipated peasants was structured around a normative unit that was based on either demographic characteristics, such as the amount of male power or ‘male souls’ (*dushy*), number of ‘eaters’ (*edoki*) and ‘foreheads’ (*lby*), or socioeconomic parameters, such as the size of capital stock (*kopeiki*) or amount of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ land divided into quarters (*sokhi*) (Barykov et al. 1880, 8).

Most communes underwent yearly land repartitioning to meet changes in demographic composition or to adapt to economic instabilities. This right to communal territorialization “defined the very essence of *obshchina*” and was seen by many as “one of the most important functions of the Russian land commune” with little analogue found in the World history (Nafziger 2016; Pallot 1999; Zyrianov 1992). Practices of land repartitioning sometimes would accompany a land grab by the local proprietors, yet, these instances were not nearly as destructive in their outcomes as the state-led enclosure of 1906. Though local actors contributed to the practices of land enclosure in *mir*, these would usually result in court petitions by the peasants and, most likely, in new redistribution of land (TsMAM 369.4.133; RGIA 408.1.153).

2.4.1 Land repartitioning

Three main types of land repartitioning were identified by the Free Economic Society’s survey. The most resource consuming and risky was a complete repartition (*korennoi peredel*) when all arable fields were redrawn into new layouts and redivided among the peasants. Two other types of land redivision were more frequent in *mir* and could be characterized by a mere exchange of land strips between the neighbors or redrawing of the field shape, cutting off or adding land segments (Barykov et al. 1880). These redivisions, conducted as the perceived need arose, followed meticulous practices of land repartitioning that were unique to each region – from the central black earth part of Russia that preferred not to reallocate land as often, to the deterritorialized East where unregulated land capture of the common land by the peasants was a norm (Medushevskii 2015).

This unique peasant geometry can be clearly illustrated through the case of Blaznovskaia *obshchina* in Tver governorate that participated in the Free Economic Society's survey (Barykov et al. 1880, 240). In January of each year, *mir* would gather to assign 'male souls' to available land parcels. Blaznovskaia *obshchina* did not redistribute land by random draw like other communes, instead, it relied on meticulous demographic calculations: "If Alexei Simonov weights 4 souls in 1877, and 4,5 souls in 1878, then in 1877 he gets 4 staves of land, and 4.5 in 1878," as mentioned in the survey by a member of the *mir* (Ibid., 242). The length of the staves varied regionally from the "four swings of the scythe" (*kosy*), "amount of land enough for a day of work" (*den' zemli*), or "area of seeds scattering during sowing" (*lekhi*) (Ibid., 18). The measure of a 'male soul' also varied, "As believed, an 18 years old man would have a right to bear a land burden of 2 souls, while a 60-year-old man to abandon his portion of land completely" (Ibid., 243). Zaozerskaya *obshchina* of Novgorod *uyezd*, in contrast, repartitioned land by random draw, whereby the *mir* was divided into four groups according to the amount of male souls, each being characterized by a symbol that represented the most powerful man in the group (Ibid., 266).

All land in Zaozerskaia *obshchina*, as an example, is divided into two types of field based on their agricultural purpose – settled lands or *stepennye polia*, "those that peasants fertilize and use since old times," and arable lands or *pashni*, forested areas, good for plowing, where forest gets cut down in the autumn, burned in the spring, and where annually peasants sow rye, oats, and buckwheat in this order for 4-5 years, after which they mow the grass for a couple of years before leaving the field as wasteland. *Pashni* are re-divided among the households every year in the autumn. While *stepennye polia* were divided into the winter, spring, and fallow land, established by the forefathers once and for all. Each field was divided into strips, or *zhereb'ia*, that are redistributed across the households. For example, a drawing of the Zaozerskaia *obshchina* in Figure 3, shows its redivision into three large fields. The North-western lands consist of four fields marked as A, B, B, and Г. Each field is divided into strips of land, namely 1,2,3,4 each of which is owned by one family. Hence, peasant Matiuhin owns strip #1 in a field A, which is known to be the "best appreciated land," while his strip #1 in a field B is said to be "the smallest, the lowest, and annually flooded" (Barykov et al. 1880, 261).

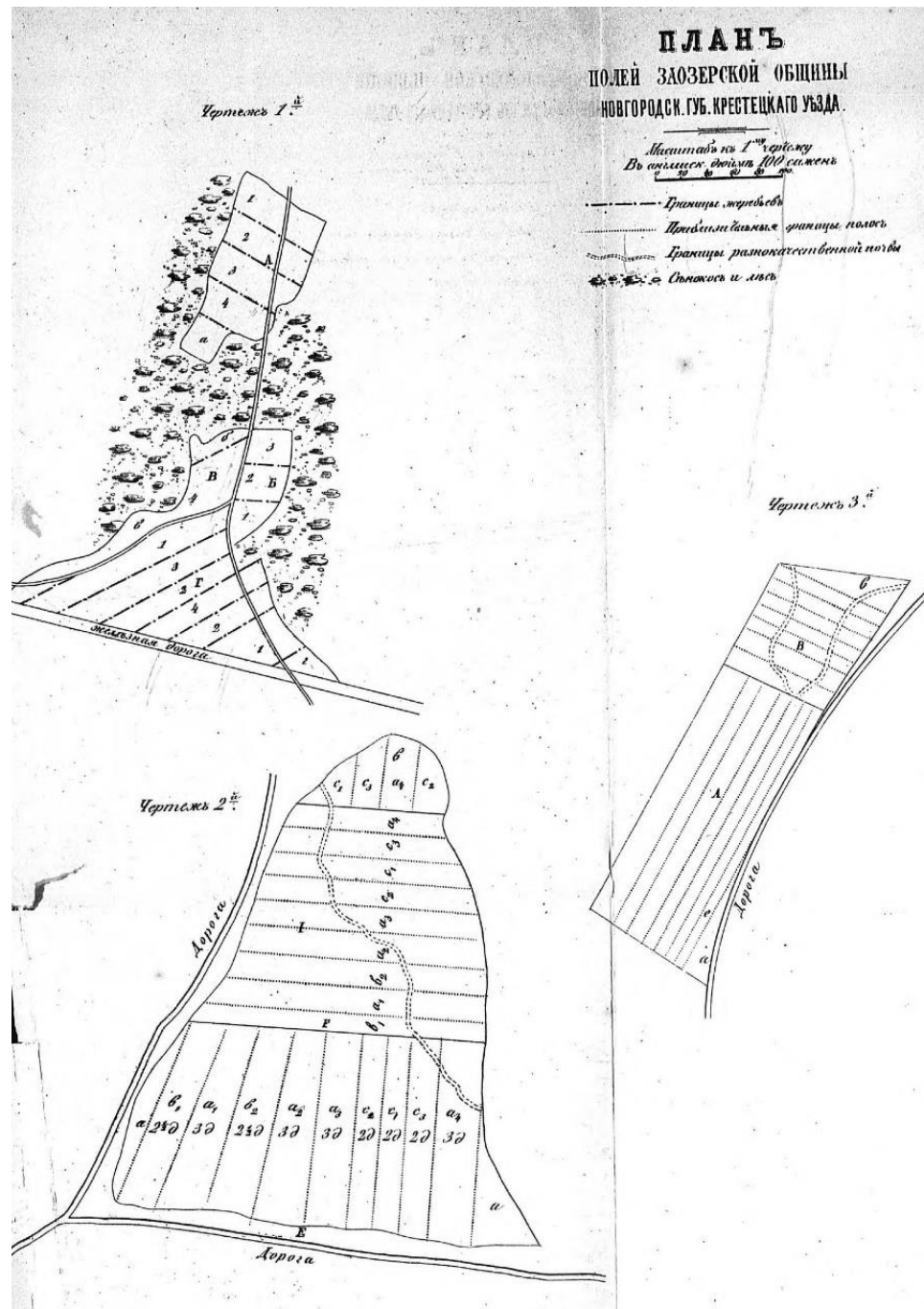


Figure 3 – Map of Zaozerskaya *obshchina* of Novgorod *uyezd*, drawn by a surveyor A.M. Michalenko under request from the Free Imperial Economic Society survey conducted in the autumn of 1879. Results of the survey published in a brochure titled “Collection of Materials for Studying the Rural Land Commune” edited by Barykov, Polovtsov, and Sokolovskiy in 1880. (Source: Barykov et al. 1880)

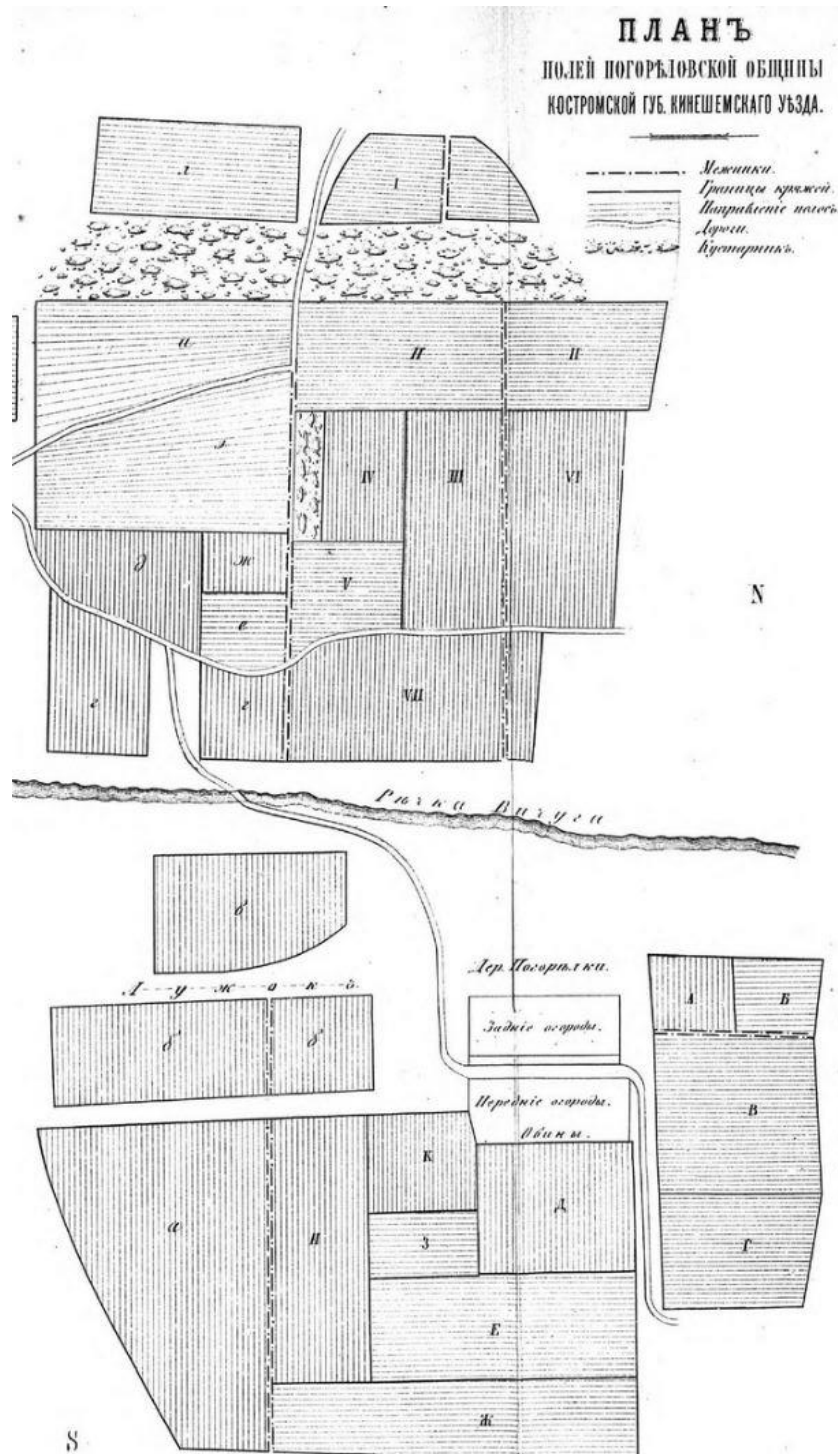


Figure 4 – Map of Pogorelovskaya obshchina of Kostroma governorate, drawn by a surveyor for the Free Imperial Economic Society survey conducted in the autumn of 1879. (Source: Barykov et al. 1880)

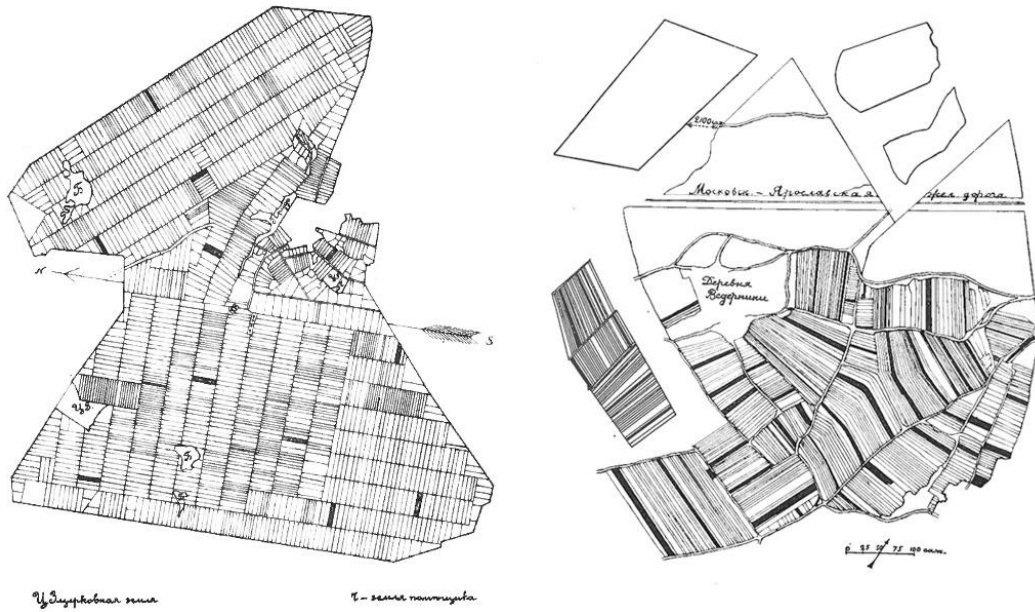


Figure 5 – On the left: example of land scattering in the Chernyakhov village of Zhitomir *uyezd* where land was redistributed among 130 households. On the right: example of land strips (in the southern part of *obshchina*) and the commons (in the north) divided among 15 households in the Vederniki *obshchina* of Yaroslavl *uyezd* in 1883. (Source: Kofod 1913, 15)

Планъ хуторскихъ участковъ въ дер. Древиняхъ, Волынской губернии, Владиміръ-Волынскаго уѣзда, Поридкой волости.
Надѣленныхъ дворовъ — 40, наличныхъ — 81.

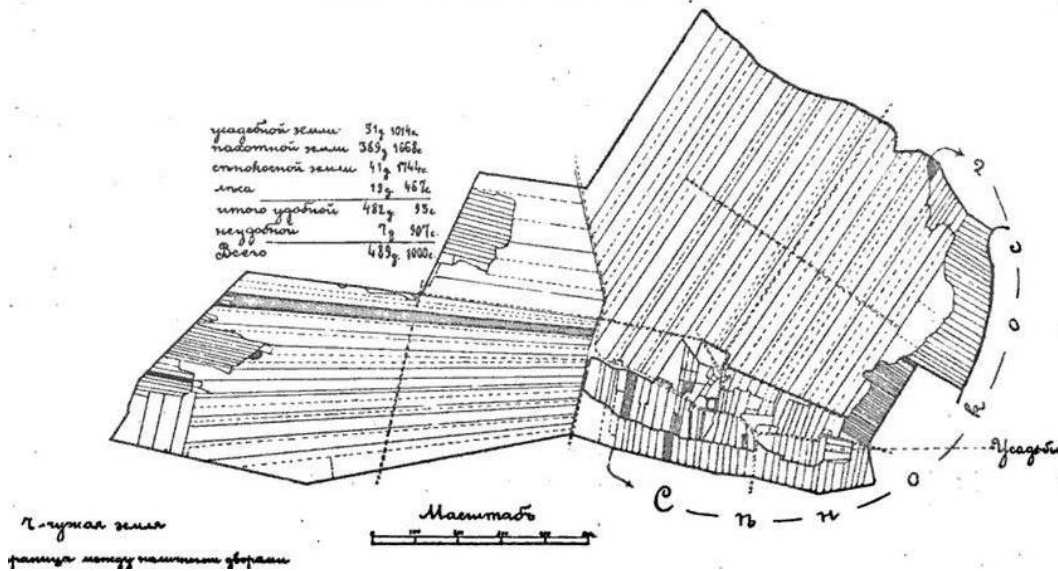


Figure 6 – Plan of the village Drevinyah of Volynsk governorate with mixed territorial development of enclosed farms (81 households) and commune's allotment land (40 households). (Source: Kofod 1906, 69)



Figure 7 – Plan of the village Chernobabka of Chernygov governorate. Upper image shows the plan of the commune, while lower image shows a proposed plan for enclosure, drawn by a head of the surveying company Pyotr Vedris. (Source: Kofod 1906, 94)

2.4.2 Land marking

Redivision or repartition of land is accommodated with a specific set of markers, developed by *mir* and unique for each region. In *Zaozerskaia obshchina*, the strips of ‘settled land’ partitioned among different households, or ‘land strips’ (*zemlenye zhereb’a*) are marked with a long-raised hill in $\frac{1}{2}$ *arshin* (0,35 meters), called *kryazhi* and *stanovye mezhi* (Ibid., 261). Trees on the borders of land strips are also marked with a hatchet. While land strips of each male soul in the household, or ‘soul strips’ (*dyshevye zhereb’a*), adhere to a different marker – instead of a row, these are separated by a long row made in soil (*lotki* or *borozdy*), each row is marked by a wooden peg with a sign made with a hatchet, “one side of the peg is marked with a sign of the owner, the other side is marked with a sign of a neighbor” (Barykov et al. 1880) (See Figure 8).

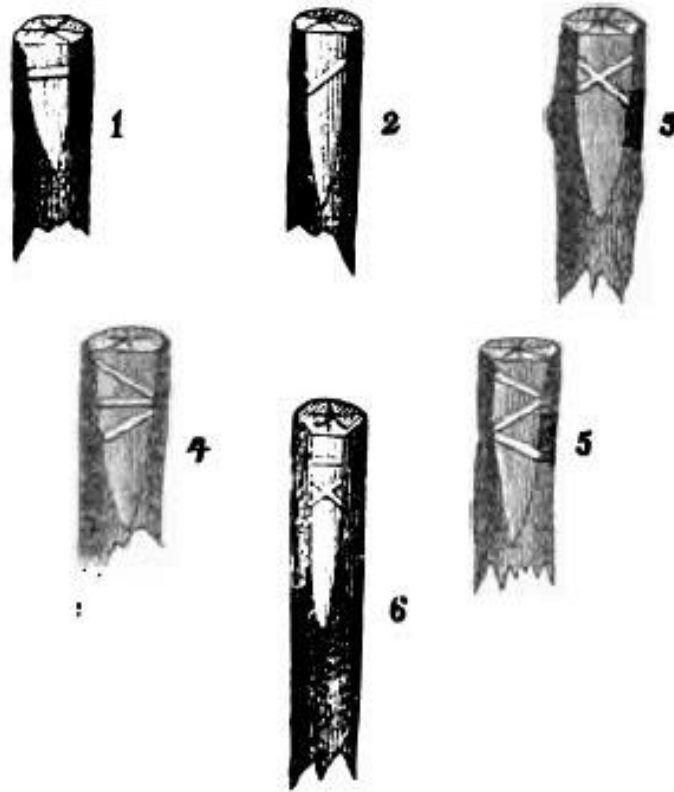


Figure 8 – Example of a land marker in *Zaozerskaya obshchina* of Novgorod governorate that is commonly used in the process of land repartitioning drawn by a land surveyor A.M. Mikhalenke. (Source: Kofod 1906, 94)

This complexity of land organization leaves us with a map, unique to each region, with its customary measures of the land, social organization of the household, and its economic potential.

This peasant geometry can be clearly shown in a survey map created by A.M. Michalenko and attached to his description of *Zaozerskaia obshchina* (Barykov et al. 1880), where one can read complex overlaying of different kinds of borders, from the “borders of *zhreb'a*” that separate strips of land in settled lands (*stpennye polia*) marked as dashed line with dots, to the “borders of strips” in arable lands (*pashni*) marked as dotted line, and the “borders of different quality soil” that are marked with a wavy double dashed line with roads, rivers, and forests cutting through a manmade landscape (refer to Figure 3).

These customary practices of autonomous territorialization in the periphery were imposed onto the common system of three field crop rotation, which was, interestingly, characteristic of the Western European models of non-communal land use. The three-field system had dominated Russian agricultural practices since the sixteenth century and was characterized by the coordinated synchronization of field operations around the winter crop, spring crop, and fallow land. In addition to the yearly repartition practices, *mir* was obliged to provide its members with the ‘commons’ – an area for grazing and other activities, free of fences, unregulated, and open for anyone’s use. Allotment of common lands was also decided on a local level and varied widely across the regions – in Kuban *uyezd* of the far southwest Russian Empire the commons were assigned to places attached to the manor house, whereas in Vologda, an agrarian region in the northwest, land parcels that were the furthest from the manor house were considered for common use (Barykov et al. 1880, 4).

Most importantly, this informal but advanced collective territorialization served as a backbone for enclosure’s legal territorial techniques that were presented to the public as a land consolidation movement and were blended into *mir*’s own customs of land repartitioning, thus masking enclosure’s predatory practices and alienating intentions.

Communes in Moscow governorate, 20 and 100 *verst* away from the city of Moscow, would follow different peasant geometry. In contrast to the peasant societies in Tver governorate, just 176 kilometers away, these communes lacked collective knowledge exchange, followed personal land cultivation guidelines, partially/seasonally engaged in paid work in Moscow factories and fabrics, and rarely redistributed land, as showed the Free Economic Society survey of 1879.

In the village Korshen of Mozhaisk *uyezd*, located 100 *verst* away from Moscow, peasants were separated and resettled in two settlements as a result of repeated resale of the land to different nobles three times after the death of the landlord (RGIA 91.2.776). These settlements, both known as Korshen, had little interaction with one another, “having almost no interaction in common land organization, cultivation, or hay harvesting on common land” (Ibid.). Instead of a unitary marking system, each household in the *mir* would use their own system of land marking - “who would draw a cross, who would make three lines with a hatchet” (RGIA 91.2.776).

Proximity to Moscow offered the commune opportunities for more profitable earnings in comparison to other communities in Central Russia, peasants in Korshen gave up the land and lost incentives for improving agricultural production (RGIA 91.2.776). As the surveyor states in his report to the Free Imperial Economic Society, proximity to Moscow and proletarianization of the peasantry often resulted in family disputes and the loss of family ties. Seasonal migration to Moscow for work resulted in a loss of necessity of land repartitioning, one of the main features of the Russian land commune, “from a means of kinship, [the commune] became a means of social contract,” as argued Russian philosopher and legal theorist Boris Chicherin (Chicherin 1856).

Mir allowed the non-privileged to resist proletarianization and avoid complete dependence on wage labor in cities, while communal territorial practices made it possible to sustain social reproduction in the periphery. The recent quantitative evidence found by Nafziger (2016) shows that land repartitioning often resulted in optimizing the redistribution of economic burden, thus improving productivity and efficiency of communal households. As Nafziger (2016) argues, land repartitions were most frequent in the communes that had higher economic obligations related to tax payments or quality of cultivated land, which helped to address resource scarcity and provide for sustainable social reproduction in the countryside. Nevertheless, both waves of enclosure and appropriation of land in 1906 and 1933 attempted to normalize and homogenize resistant territories under a new pattern of uninterrupted capital accumulation by exploiting customary techniques of democratic territorialization in the commune to promote individual property in land. As Rosa Luxembourg later portrayed:

Primitive accumulation of capital flourished splendidly in Russia, encouraged by all kinds of state subsidies, guarantees, premiums and governmental orders. It earned profits that would already seem legendary for the West. Yet the picture of internal conditions in contemporary Russia was anything but attractive [...]. On the plains, the decline and disintegration of rural economy under the pressure of exploitation [...] caused terrible conditions, periodical famines and peasant risings (Luxemburg 2003 [1951], 272).

2.5 Stolypin land consolidation acts and new measure of the land

Rapid population growth in the commune increased reliance on land for peasant's wellbeing in the late Tsarist Russia. The crop failure in 1891 caused a severe famine accompanied by a typhus and cholera epidemic and followed by escalating land prices that rose from 12.6 rubles per *desiatina*¹² to over 100 rubles by 1910 (Atkinson 1983). The Russian countryside, which was already weakened by lifted tax obligations due to the defeat of Russia in the Crimean war, organized into an agrarian revolution in 1905, opening eyes to the likelihood of the backwardness of Russian economy and a long-coming dissolution of the Russian Empire (Gerschenkron 1962).

Conducting reforms in the time of a revolutionary crisis made it necessary to turn to 'emergency methods' that required imposition of the "authoritarian politics to prevent disintegration of the state" – as emphasized Pyotr Stolypin, the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Empire and creator of the first wave of institutionalized land enclosure (Medushevskii 2015, 277). These exceptional measures resulted in Stolypin land reforms of 1906, which attempted to homogenize and normalize 'unproductive and chaotic' territories of *obshchina* under a new political economic order of private property in land (RGIA 408.1.272). "Aiming that the poor will sell their land and leave for cities and the rich will buy more land and normalize agricultural production," many thought these reforms would solve and offset the crisis of Russian imperialism (Medushevskii 2015, 287). Ivan Chernyshev, the head of the Free Imperial Economic Society's survey committee, explained that the "belief that preservation of the commune was dangerous politically and fatal economically somehow became a universal opinion among the Russian nobleman and bureaucrats" (Chernyshev 1917, 17). As they thought, *obshchina* "artificially united the lower social classes, while the 'wise' state politics should have separated them" (Ibid., 17).

Stolypin's reforms of 1906 gave peasants the option to privatize their land holdings, abolish communal responsibility over taxes, and release the debt accumulated as a result of redemption payments. Dismantling of *obshchina* was approached in a couple of steps, which employed territorial techniques similar to *obshchina*'s own practices of land repartitioning. Guidelines for physical consolidation of land plots into individual farms were outlined and institutionalized in the Land Organization Statute of May 29, 1911. Right after or instead of the yearly repartitioning, peasant households were obliged to consolidate scattered strips of allotment land into private farms. Physical separation of peasant land plots formed a homogenized landscape comprised of the two main forms of land holding – '*khutor*,' an enclosed farm where total consolidation of allotment land was achieved, or, in lesser cases '*otrub*,' a partially consolidated farm, when land organization into *khutora* was difficult (TsMAM 369.4.34). If two-thirds of all members, and later one third, decided to exit *obshchina* – the entire village was forced to undergo wholesale enclosure.

Initially, the state preferred “natural degradation of the commune” since it “already provided a big enough quantity of the proletariat” for economic recovery, as stated in the second land survey conducted by the Free Economic Society in 1910 (Chernyshev 1917, 10); however, after the peasant uprisings of 1905, these intentions took on a more coercive character. Twenty-two out of thirty-two survey respondents in several communes indicated that enclosure was happening without a legal consent of the commune (Ibid., 75). If peasant communities would decide to buy additional land through the Peasant Land Bank, the purchase would be restricted unless they pursued enclosure, while those who decide to leave the commune would receive an allowance of several dozen rubles, as stated in the brochure entitled *Land Disorder* that was anonymously distributed in the countryside in 1910 (RGIA 408.1.153, 70).

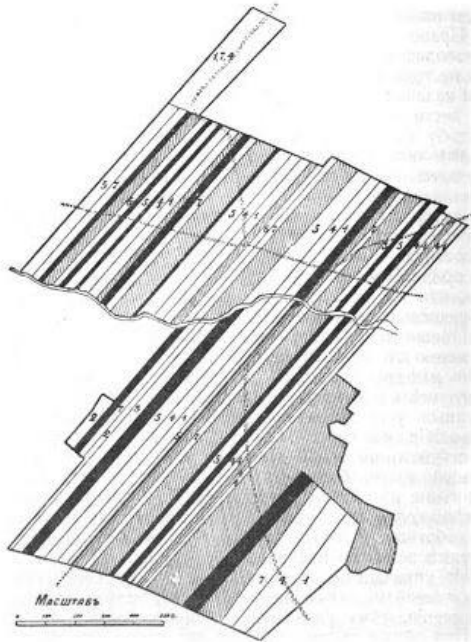
Polish economic historian Witold Kula saw a unified measure of land, resources, and things to evolve from the “techniques of production, to means of packaging and transport, and finally to the needs of consumption” – ‘measuring’ opened a possibility for deceit. As Kula argued in his work titled *Measures and Men*, in the Biblical tradition the notion of measure was associated with cheating, “it symbolized the loss of primeval happiness, and it derived directly from original sin” (Ibid.). The new measure of the land in the Russian imperial land relations was established and

imposed by the state through an array of different mechanisms, from husbandry manuals, archetypal farm movements, to mandatory annual reports and agrarian exhibitions in the periphery (see *Chapter 3, Section 3.4.2* for discussion on territorial regulations and institutionalization of the new measure of the land). While most pre-enclosure measures that framed peasant practices of everyday territorialization were human in scale (Scott 1998).

Territorial delineation of enclosed land followed complex guidelines (See Figure 10). Andrey Kofod, a chief inspector for the land reform in the Russian Empire, proposed at least four distinct spatial variations of the newly privatized farms, which diverged from the round or squared shape *khutora*, where, as he emphasized, “the farmer’s wife would be able to call her husband for lunch from the furthest corner of the house” to more prolonged farms with “the length of the plot being not more than four times bigger than its width” (RGIA 408.1.272, 61). These new guidelines were supposed to normalize what many called ‘land scattering’ or *cherezpolositsa*, where land strips of one household were scattered across the field as a result of land repartitioning. The commons, such as pastures, forests, or lakes, as Kofod believed, were “absolutely not compatible with enclosed farms” and had to be divided among adjacent households (RGIA 408.1.272, 62). Kofod’s guidelines attempted to establish a unified territorial order in the periphery, the one that “broke the close-knit mass of peasants” with its new borders, as someone emphasized in the anonymous report (RGIA 408.1.153, 70). One could argue this was an arrangement that supported contradictory movement between homogeneity, territorial fragmentation, and hierarchization of space to reinforce the logics of power, as notably propagated by Lefebvre (2009, 212), through which territory was removed of any differences and unified under a standardized territorial order to ease the circulation of capital (see Figure 9).

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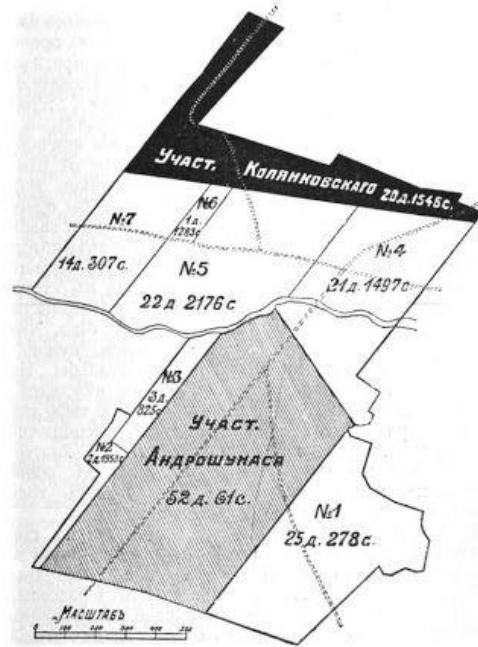
Распределение земли деревни Ловмейки, Ковенской губернии, Поневѣжскаго уѣзда, Нашонской волости, до разверстанія съ посторонними владѣльцами.



Планъ № 2.

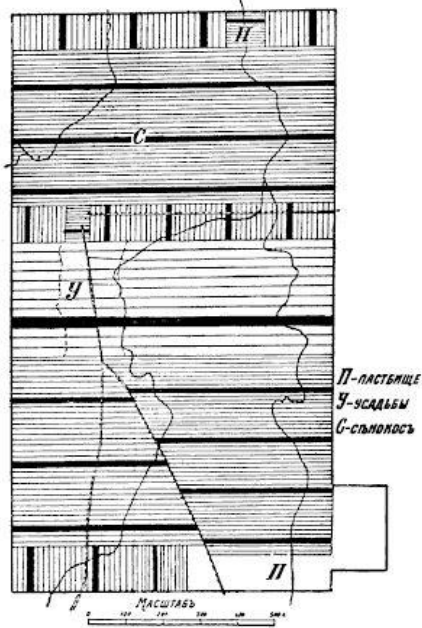
ПОДВОРНОЕ НАДѢЛЕНИЕ.

Распределение земли деревни Ловмейки, Ковенской губернии, Поневѣжскаго уѣзда, Нашонской волости, послѣ разверстанія съ посторонними владѣльцами и разбивки надѣльной земли на хуторскіе участки.



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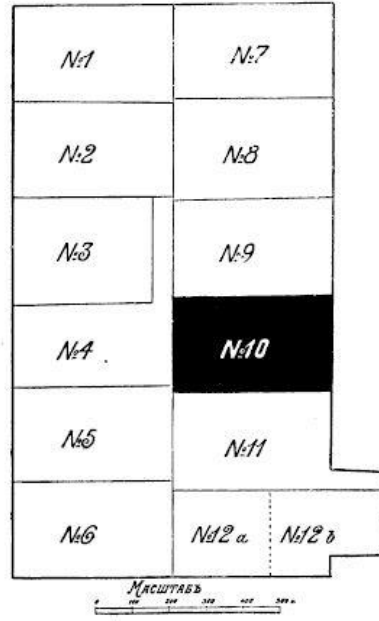
Распределение земли деревни Гимбуце, Ковенской губернии, Шавельского уезда, Жагорской волости, до хуторского расчленения.



Планъ № 11.

ПОДВОРНОЕ НАДѢЛЕНИЕ.

Планъ хуторскихъ участковъ въ деревнѣ Гимбуце, Ковенской губернии, Шавельскаго уѣзда, Жагорской волости. Надѣленныхъ дворовъ—12. Наличныхъ дворовъ—16.



Планъ № 12.

ПОДВОРНОЕ НАДѢЛЕНИЕ.

Распределение земли деревни Зубринки, Волынской губернии, Житомирскаго уѣзда, Горошковской волости, до хуторскаго расчленения:

Удобной земли	752 дес.
Неудобной	350
Всего	1102 дес.



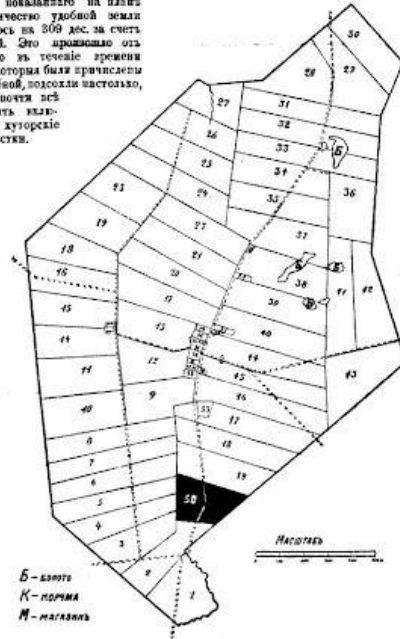
Планъ № 5.

ПОДВОРНОЕ НАДѢЛЕНИЕ.

Планъ хуторскихъ участковъ въ деревнѣ Зубринкѣ, Волынской губернии, Житомирскаго уѣзда, Горошковской волости.

Удобной земли	1061 дес.
Неудобной	41
Всего	1102 дес.

Противъ показаннаго на планѣ № 5 количество удобной земли увеличилось на 309 дес. за счетъ неудобной. Это произошло отъ того, что въ недавнее время болота, которая были причислены къ неудобной, подсохли настолько, что она почти всѣ могла быть включена въ хуторскіе участки.



Планъ № 6.

Figure 9 – Different examples of land redivision in a commune, before (on the left) and after (on the right) land consolidation into enclosed farms. All examples are listed in a set of land settlement guidelines created by Andrey Kofod, a Chief Inspector for the land reform in the Russian Empire. (Source: Kofod 1907, 40-47)

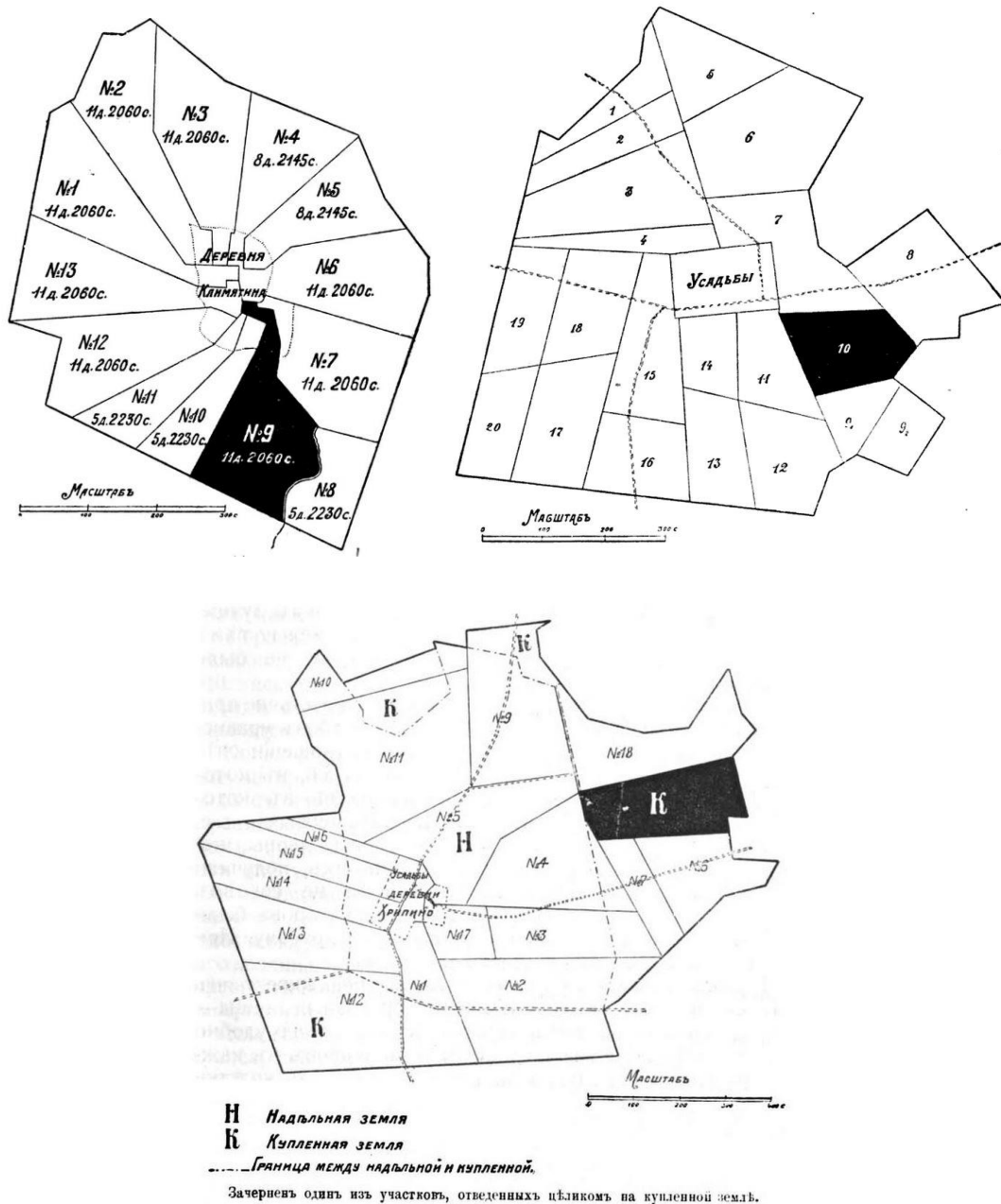


Figure 10 – Examples of enclosed farms of *khutor* and *otrub* type, used by Kofod as the main prototypes of the reform. (Source: Kofod 1907).

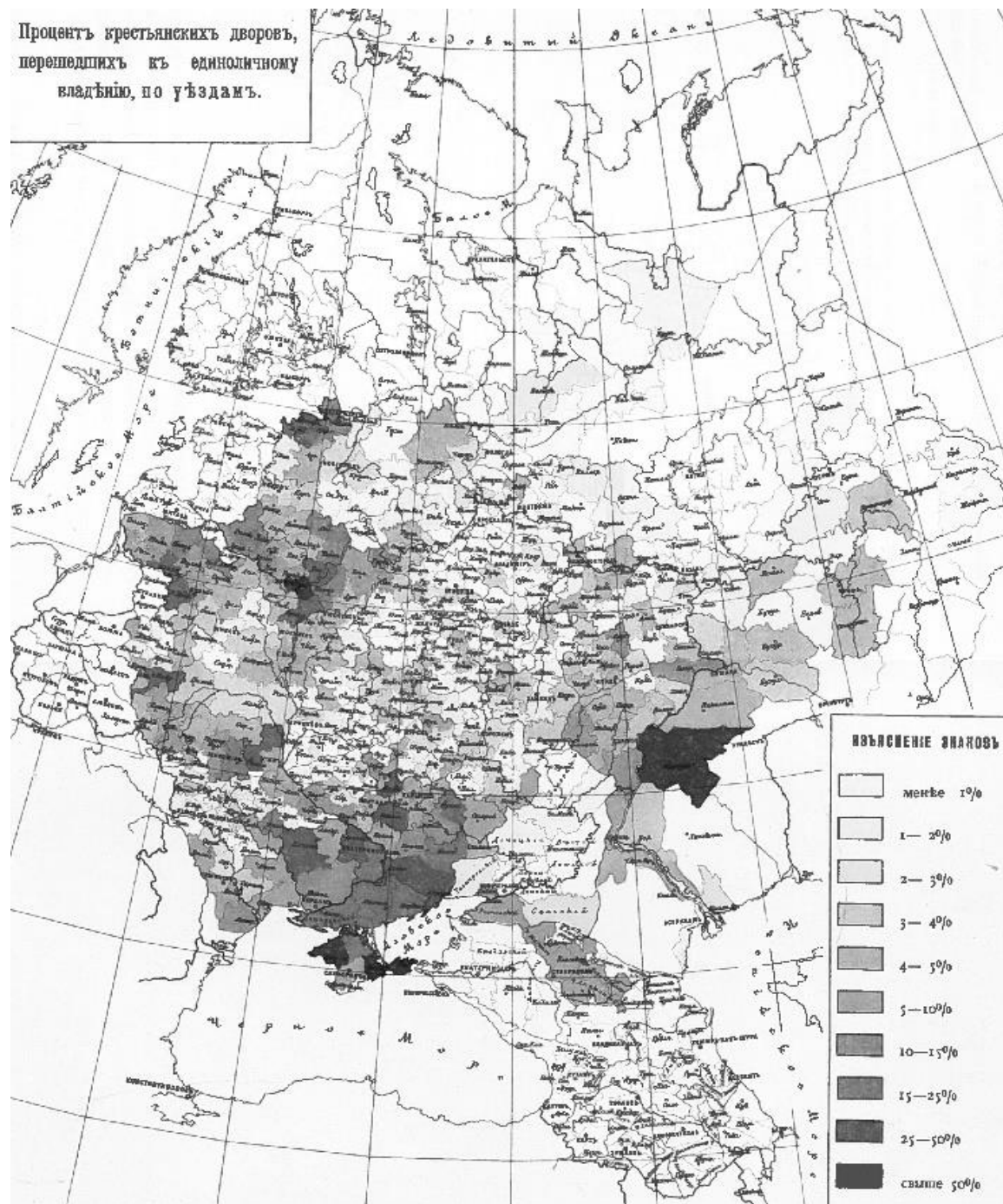


Figure 11 – Map of Western Russia showing the extent of land enclosure in 1913. Color scheme represents a share of privatized farms in each region, from ‘less than 1%’ in light gray color to ‘more than 50%’ in dark gray. (Source: Kofod 1913, 26)

Territorialization of the crisis of Russian imperialism did not meet initial expectations: peasants were still impoverished, displaced from the communal safety nets, unable to provide for their own subsistence, and forced to engage in exploitative labor relations (Nafziger 2016). Some peasants treated land reform as a ‘contagious disease,’ claiming that “in the near future all land will be in the ownership of the rich and well-off” (Chernyshev 1917, 75). Others were afraid that the new proprietors will “sell their land in exchange for alcohol and become a burden for the commune” (Ibid., 75). Yet, by the beginning of 1917 only 20 to 30 percent of all allotment land were successfully enclosed (see Figure 11) (Leonard 2010; Pallot 1999). This small fraction of enclosed households was volatile and experienced waves of massive destruction by the peasants that stayed in *obshchina* killing the livestock and demolishing properties of the peasant-proprietors in the protest of enclosure (GARF 102.116.42). These uprisings skyrocketed in the verge of the October revolution after which, paradoxically, the famous *obshchina* was revived by the early Soviet power (Luxemburg 2003 [1951]).

2.6 Soviet land collectivization reforms and new enclosures

During the Soviet rule, land was at once a national heritage and state property, a subject of governmental use and regulation. After the revolution of 1917, old landed wealth was re-expropriated by the state and put into the production of new ‘collective’ wealth. The main Decree on Land of 1917, proposed by the Socialist Revolutionary Party entailed a fundamental confiscation and re-allotment of land that belonged to the gentry, church, and peasant proprietors. Yet, as Carl Schmitt argued referring to this situation, “expropriation of the old owners opened up new and enormous possibilities for appropriation” (Schmitt 2003, 334) – an issue that was left unanswered in Marxist scholarship and grew into a deep crisis of the socialist state and its subsequent subjectification to crony capitalism:

If the essence of imperialism lies in the precedence of appropriation before distribution and production, then a doctrine such as expropriation of the expropriators is obviously the strongest imperialism, because it is the most modern (Schmitt 2003, 334).

Communal land tenure was extended by the Soviet power challenging the “limited authority that the household and the individual peasant [...] had gradually acquired over sixty years of Russian

law” (Leonard 2010, 142). The commune was temporarily revived but lost its power to the new administrative structure of rural soviet units or *soviety* that extended the old *mir* “from the political microcosm of the commune to the wider scale of the state” (Atkinson 1983, 196). Local matters of land repartitioning remained in the hands of the traditional assembly, limiting central authority of the *soviety*.

However, the 1917 Decree on Land only granted rights to use a bare surface of land if the land was productively worked, similarly to the land law under Catherine II that obliged nobility to own the ‘bowels of the Earth.’ The norms of the worker land use were strictly regulated by the regions and were comprised of the ‘labor norm’ and the ‘use norm’ (Medushevskii 2015; Wegren 2014). Individuals, who lost the ability to work land, had a right to abandon their share and go on the state’s pensions. Realization of this principle meant, ironically, a return to the pre-capitalistic, feudal forms, recreating the model of conditional land ownership in exchange for services (Ibid.), liquidated by Peter the Great almost two centuries prior.

With the onset of collectivization policies of the early 1930’s a new mode of enclosure or ‘exceptional measures’ started forming in response to the deepening grain crisis and food shortages in cities (Atkinson 1983). Until then, the scope of enclosure’s territorial practices was limited, both in terms of the scale of influence, spatial dynamics, and actors involved. Piecemeal enclosure of land in imperial Russia followed a meticulous set of territorial techniques and coercive strategies that differed from a full-blown land grab by the state in the period of collectivization. Collectivization extended state ownership onto peasant’s grain and livestock, followed by enclosure of land and enclosure of the commune at last.

Bare appropriation of rural life under the rule of the state was achieved, as many scholars noticed, using ‘naked coercion,’ methods of ‘social pressure,’ or the so called ‘Ural-Siberian’ tactics (Ibid., 376) – that used exaggerated narratives of social differentiation between the poor and not-so-poor peasants in the commune and made the minority of commune members pass grain and land procurement.¹³ The land commune, as portrayed in popularized discourse, was dominated by ‘peasant proprietors,’ identified as ‘capitalist,’ and had to be eliminated. As Atkinson puts well (1983, 320) the method of social pressure “in a dialectical *tour de force*, joined the tradition of

collective responsibility with the ideology of class struggle” – the commune was eradicated by its own means.

The wholesale commodification of land went through all stages in the Russian history of the land-territory-crisis triad, starting with Peter the Great placing a tax burden onto the landless peasant. Both modes of ‘old’ and ‘new’ enclosures employed previous territories of the land commune as strategic sites for establishment of the new capitalist *nomos* during imperial and socialist regimes. Territorialization of crisis, followed by waves of occupation, marginalization, forced displacement, and resistance now represents the cornerstone of the Russian political economic history.

2.7 The Russian land question today

Enclosure not only normalized resistant territories under a unitary regime of private property to ease the circulation and accumulation of capital in the periphery, it employed the pre-existing territorial order to achieve these goals. The Russian land commune provided enclosure with a pool of free proletariat ready to be expropriated, but also with an age-old tradition of cooperation, support, and territorialization – a unique feature of the Russian communal practices of the social reproduction in the Tsarist and Soviet countryside, which has now vanished. Rather than an obstacle to capitalist development, the “spatial legacy of state socialism” as well as that of feudal imperialism, served as the ‘very infrastructure’ for capital accumulation (Golubchikov et al. 2014).

Territorialization of crisis by the means of previous territories determined the direction of the development of capitalism in Russia. Erroneous goals and fraudulent implementation of land reforms in the early twentieth century and dismantling of the land commune have contributed to the brutality of the modern practices of land grabbing and predation upon bankrupted communal farm enterprises by foreign capital in the post-Soviet period. Russian crony capitalism, whereby old political elites became main nodes in the new economic ‘growth machine’ (Golubchikov and Phelps 2011), fed on the insecure system of land ownership.

A more nuanced understanding of the land-territory-crisis triad and its contextualization in the hundred-year history of the imperial landed relations under feudalism and ‘actually existing

socialism' reveals much complexity left unaccounted for in the Anglophone framing of the 'territory debate.' Territory, in the 100-year history of Russian landed relations, was both a means of the autonomous social reproduction in the periphery and a 'political technology' employed to exploit the times of instability for the sake of capital accumulation and preservation of integrity of the state. The meticulous and decentralized territorialization practices in the Russian land commune not only escape the 'territorial state container' view but complicate a role of the oppressed peasants away from being passive 'docile bodies' waiting to be controlled (Agamben 1998; Antonsich 2009).

Today, Russia is facing new rounds of enclosure, with different severity and outcomes not only limited to enclosure of territory but enclosure of social and cultural identity of the Russian periphery. Russian cities are also undergoing new waves of the territorialization of crisis, ranging from the localized and piecemeal regeneration strategies to a massive housing renovation project with a possibility of displacement of some 1.6 million people in the city of Moscow alone, as a spatial-temporal fix to a prolonged economic stagnation. This example, though different from the West, is not an exception but potentially a part of a global mosaic and dialectical movement of commoning and occupation that provides an illusory solution to the fundamental state of crisis persistent under capitalism.

Notes:

³ Excerpt from the speech of Pyotr Stolypin, Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Empire and initiator of the first Land Reform, to the State Duma of the Russian Empire on November 16, 1907 (Verbatim Records, Petrograd).

⁴ The Imperial Free Economic Society's first survey in 1877 was conducted under the leadership of Barykov, Polovtsov, and Sokolovskyi (Barykov et al. 1880), while the second survey of 1,700 peasant communes in 1910, which exposed the failed attempts of land reforms and made the publication of the survey only possible after FES' dissolution in 1917, was organized by Chernyshev (Chernyshev 1917).

⁵ Data for this research was collected during the fieldwork that I conducted in the Russian state archives – Central State Archive of the City of Moscow (TsMAM), Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA), and State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF).

⁶ This abbreviation marks the location of archival documentation in the Russian state archives where RGIA stands for Russian State Historical Archive, TsMAM stands for the Central State Archive of the City of Moscow, GARF stands for the State Archive of the Russian Federation, and the series of numbers “91.2.776” refer to repository #91, inventory #2, case #776.

⁷ These services were lifted as a result of the 1762 Decree on Freedom of the Gentry and the Chapter of the Nobility in 1785.

⁸ Appropriation of church land by the state was achieved a result of the Secularization Reform of 1764.

⁹ For collection of statistical evidence on the Russian financial situation in the end of imperial governance refer to Shanin 1985, 187–189.

¹⁰ The debate on the role of the commune in economic development of Russia has been examined by many prominent scholars. For a more detailed examination of overlapping political and intellectual discourses please see Atkinson 1983, 21 and Shanin 1985, 78.

¹¹ A *uyezd* was an administrative division in the Russian Empire and the early Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, analogous to a ‘state’ or a ‘province.’

¹² A *desiatina* was a unit of area in the imperial Russia, approximately equal to one hectare.

¹³ Various tactics of collectivization and examples of political coercion in the commune are examined in detail by Atkinson 1983, 318–345, 359–371.

CHAPTER THREE: Collective Sovereignty and State Territorial Mode of Production in the Periphery

3.1 Introduction

There can be, gentlemen, fatal moments in the life of the state, when state's necessity is above the law and when it is crucial to choose between the unity of the theories and the integrity of the fatherland. [...] The temporary measure is a harsh measure, it must resolve the criminal wave, it must break down the ugly phenomena, and retire into eternity.

— Pyotr Stolypin, *Speech about Provisional Laws* (1907a)¹⁴

Sovereignty implies 'space', and what is more, it implies a space against which violence, whether latent or overt, is directed – a space established and constituted by violence.

— Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (1991, 280)

Inspired by the Western liberal idea(l)s, Pyotr Stolypin, Prime Minister of the Russian Empire, portrayed 'exceptional measures' of land reforms as crucial for the integrity of the state and security of the populations. The Stolypin land consolidation acts of 1906, 1910, and 1911 laid the foundation for continuous exploitation of land, customary territoriality, and human bodies in the Russian urban periphery with the goal to overcome the growing legitimation crisis of the Russian imperial state.

As a consequence of Stolypin's new land policy, landless peasants, dispossessed from their villages, became an integral part of state's serge for industrialization, accumulation of capital, and the everyday struggle over property in land. The former land commune became a strategic and disputed territory open for speculations, where the hegemony of the individual, the collective, and the state was contested and challenged in the process of territorializing new socio-spatial relations of power. This collapsing of state territoriality on the local scale undermines the very idea of the

Anglophone reading of territory that treats space as a ‘state power container’ deformed and contested at the national borders (Cox 1991; Del Biaggio 2015; Klauser 2012; Paasi 2003; Sack 1986; Vollard 2009), the issue this chapter aims to unpack and to challenge through a historical, geographical lens.

Drawing on the original records of the Russian imperial orders, petitions, and land decrees that I obtained at the Russian State Archives, and monthly periodicals and public speeches of Russian legal and political theorists, this work explores how the Russian imperial state and territory in the periphery were dialectically co-produced through the coalitions of landed nobility and land surveyors, landless serfs and peasant proprietors that used enclosure as a conduit for property violence, extra-legal governance, accumulation of capital, or, in contrary, as a means of resistance. This chapter argues that the Russian regime of fictitious property eroded the sovereign space of the commune to establish a new institutional structure of control and extra-legal domination over land and human bodies yet allowing space for an organized resistance by the multiplicities of actors, through which territory was produced, contested, and fractured.

In a traditional sense, the purpose of territory is often associated with state-space; territory defines the operationalization of state sovereignty at the national frontiers, where, seemingly, “political-economic life is neatly separated into ‘domestic’ and ‘foreign’” (Brenner and Elden 2009a, 354). This necessity of territorial delineation for defining and legitimizing the sovereign body was emphasized by Carl Schmitt – only through territorialization, a particular social and political order of “a tribe, a retinue, or a people” becomes “settled or historically situated” in the form of a city or a colony (Schmitt 2003, 70). Similarly, only through appropriation of land, resources, or human subjects, as Schmitt argued, the individual, the collective, or the state legitimizes its sovereignty.

The role of national boundaries in the production of territory was critically re-evaluated in the post-Cold War period, with various theoretical propositions that outlined the end of the state and the end of boundaries (Hardt and Negri 2001; O’Brien 1992; Ohmae 1995; Painter 2006), or reterritorialization of social and political order where territory and its borders still matter (Agnew 1999; Antonsich 2009; Brenner 1999; Elden 2005; Tuathail and Luke 1994). Yet, empirical research on territory is still predominantly limited to state-centrism, resulting in projects that treat

territory as a static outcome of power relations or a ‘terror(izing) tool’ and people as *homini sacri*, “contained, controlled, disciplined, or simply disposed by an all-pervasive state power” (Antonsich 2009, 13). This partial conception of territory silences alternative modes of territorial production that go beyond the state, through dispersed practices, lived experiences, and representations of power in non-Western geopolitical contexts and undermines territory’s liberating potential as a space of escape, resistance, where the sovereign can be challenged. Analysis of land enclosure allows one to overcome these limitations since enclosure requires complex and decentralized spatial interpretation to capture its multiscale nature (Sevilla-Buitrago 2012).

To challenge the state-centric view of territory, this dissertation adds to the debate on the decentralization and decolonization of state territorial project by shifting attention to the local scale. Following the call of Schwarz and Streule for “empirically grounded approach to decentralize and further pluralize urban knowledge production” (Schwarz and Streule 2016, 1), this work aims to bring the ‘urban,’ and hence the local, into the debate on territory. As Schwarz and Streule continue, “territories are more than mere abstract governmental spaces—they enclose multiple scales and are produced by multiple subjects,” hence, signifying the urban as a site and a medium of territorial production (Ibid.). This dissertation contends that one way to pursue such project is to scrutinize afresh classical examples in the historiography of a dialectical movement of commoning and appropriation in the formation of capitalism (Hodkinson 2012; Perelman 2000; Sevilla-Buitrago 2012, 2015; Vasudevan 2015), that received little attention in the Western debate on territory, yet provide us with a long-lived legacy of anti-capitalist territorial struggle and present a potential to imagine alternative modes of spatiality today.

Treating the state as a socially constructed set of power relations and territory as a socially contested practice where struggles over sovereignty and hegemony are created and challenged, this chapter examines territorial decentralization and fragmentation of the Russian imperial state in the urban periphery through enclosure. Territorialization of hegemonic functions in the commune was achieved through meticulous institutional arrangements and everyday representations of territory through exemplary farm movements, maps, public announcements, and other social encounters. Enclosure of the Russian land commune, though not explicitly an urban

issue, would later give rise to the spatial rationality of urban planning, in respect to the evolution of spatial knowledge, development of the measure of the land, and territorial techniques of private property first employed and instrumentalized in the countryside.

My arguments rely on the theoretical cues on the state, space, and territory offered by Henri Lefebvre that, though inconsistent, view state, as well as territory, as a contested set of lived, perceived, and conceived relations and hence offer an explanation of the ‘territorial trap,’ or the way the state-space is frequently essentialized in political geography (Agnew 1994). As a contribution to this framework, I bring to the discussion Agambenian reworking of the ‘state of exception’ as a decisional power of the subject to include spaces and human bodies under the law, or under control, through their subsequent enclosure and exclusion. I highlight the relevance of the Agambenian project for making sense of the crisis-fueled dynamics of enclosure and legitimation of property violence through ‘exceptional’ political technologies. This view could help to explain complex territorial assemblages of power through ‘exception’ and, in a way, contribute to theorizing the conditions of ‘abstract homogeneity’ of space, as well as that of territory, under capitalism. In addition, I engage with political philosophical and legal traditions of the Russian Empire that provide interesting insights into the justification of enclosure and either contribute to the debate on decentralizing the notion of territory or reproduce the state-centric bias of political geography but from a Russian perspective. Together, these theoretical frameworks can be used to analyze scaffolding of state functions on a historical and local scale and help us to decipher capitalist geographies of enclosure that drive urban economies today.

In the next section, I unpack my conceptual readings of the state, space, and territory triad. In section 3, I introduce the material construction of the land commune as a sovereign entity formed through competing meanings, expectations, and representations of territory that the state and the peasants prescribed to it. Section 4 explores political technologies that justified enclosure and unpacks three modes of the everyday territorial production in the Russian imperial periphery, namely territorial regulation and institutional fragmentation of the commune and representations of the territory of private property through exemplary farm movements. In the final section, I

reflect upon the historiography of the Russian land enclosure to highlight theoretical insights that it offers on decentralizing and decolonizing the state-centered Anglophone debate on territory.

3.2 State territorial mode of production

Jean Gottmann, in his seminal work on the Significance of Territory, explores the idea of territory through the triad of “security, opportunity, and happiness” within recognized frontiers (Gottmann 1973, 10). Building on a genealogical account of the world territorial partitioning observed through the works of Cicero, Plato, and Aristotle, his project reproduces the Eurocentric and Anglocentric preoccupation with questions of territorial integrity and fundamental rule of the state upon the formation and fixing of national borders. Gottmann emphasizes a shift from space as a means of safety, shelter, and survival to space as a means of power, to later develop an argument that territory should be “defined by the unity of government,” for “the civilized man would not live by security alone” (Gottmann 1973). Territory, for Gottmann, is an “elusive entity, as it is not the ‘body politic’ which is people, but the support on which the body politic rests and without which it lacks balance and position in space,” territory is still a basis for the exercise of sovereignty (Ibid.).

Many, since the prominent publication of John Agnew in 1994, have called to escape this geographical assumption of a ‘territorial trap’ – defined as instances when state’s actions operate within or without national territorial borders, even though social, political relations in capitalism are not always territorially bound, and not intrinsically static or fixed (Agnew 2010; Elden 2010b, 2013; Glassman 1999; Newman and Paasi 1998; Taylor 1994, 1995). This chapter, however, argues that if a set of relations in capitalism is territorial, its territoriality doesn’t necessarily confine to the national space. With the waning of sovereignty and dissolution of state’s direct control over national borders, “the city rather than the land, becomes the great laboratory of social forces” (Lefebvre 2016, 69). More importantly, the quest for state hegemony over spaces, human subjects, and means of social reproduction can be challenged and resisted in the urban. This theoretical proposition doesn’t necessarily abandon the state – it allows for a more nuanced and decentralized treatment of competing territorial strategies of various actors as they relate to the workings of space, power, and capital, but views the ‘urban’ as a mediator of these relations and

not as mere material outcome or a spatial container of power and people (Lefebvre 2003 [1970]; Massey 1991, 2004; Raffestin 2012).

Though Lefebvre doesn't explicitly deliver a clear reading of territory, many linked his work on the capitalist production of space to the territory debate with the argument that it could offer a multifaceted view on the territorial dimensions and decentralization of state power on the urban scale (Brenner and Elden 2009a, 2009b; Elden 2004; Goonewardena et al. 2008). Lefebvrian theorization of territory developed by Brenner and Elden goes beyond the economic determinist account of land appropriation in Marx or a fundamental view of the sovereign territorial superiority of Schmitt (Marx 1976 [1887]; Perelman 2000; Schmitt 2003). While still seeing land as a source of capitalist accumulation and territorial delineation of space as crucial to the formation of the capitalist nomos (Brenner and Elden 2009b; Lefebvre 2016), Lefebvre offers a detailed analysis of state territorial strategies through lived, perceived, and conceived dimensions of power to control and reproduce crisis-tendencies of modern capitalism, grasping both "their historical lineage and their contemporary deployment" (Brenner and Elden 2009a, 367).

The 'state mode of production' mobilizes its institutional powers to reshape the spaces of capital, "subjecting them, simultaneously, to processes of fragmentation, hierarchization, and homogenization" on both territorial and institutional levels (Brenner and Elden 2009a, 359). Homogenization of preceding territorial order, organized following the regular and repetitive rationality, "allows the state to introduce its presence, control, and surveillance in the most isolated corners" on diverse scales like the urban, the rural, the national, and the planetary (Lefebvre 2008, 86). Though the Lefebvrian reading of capitalist territoriality is only comprehensible in reference to statecraft, for him the state, or the sovereign, is always in a perpetual process of production through the struggle over space. Territory for Lefebvre, as further theorize Brenner and Elden, is likewise "not a static form or fixed container but must be viewed as a contextually embedded medium and outcome of ongoing transformations, strategies, and struggles" (Brenner and Elden 2009a, 364).

Territory, as a strategic political technology and a contested social practice, maintains its legitimacy through the workings of exclusion, particularly in times of capitalist crisis; it too,

exercises the right of expelling or terrifying, as argued Elden in his recent work (2013). In a way, this recalls the Agambenian rereading and reworking of the ‘state of exception’ that allows one to trace the architecture of the sovereign and its ability to exclude territories, identities, and human life from the law and by the law itself, to preserve the political order in times of emergency (Agamben 1998, 2005). Exception, in this dissertation, is an ontological dispositif of enclosure, whereby previous territorial structures are enclosed, expelled, and released for appropriation, distribution, and novel modes of production in times of crisis (Rossi 2012). It is through enclosure that exception materializes itself in space, allowing for the formation of a new territorial order, and its successive suspension in times of economic and political instabilities.

The same argument, however, can be applied to the territory of property, where bodies and places are legally recognized and secured through their subsequent exclusion and separation from the outside – the political, legal outcome of the workings of enclosure. This same logic of the hegemonic production of spatial, political, and juridical territorial order can be downscaled to the urban, even though, as Agamben argued, “today, it is not the city but rather the camp that is the fundamental biopolitical paradigm of the West” (Agamben 1998, 181). The urban is an immanent site of a double movement of inclusion and exclusion, continuity and change, commoning and appropriation, where legal and extra-legal governance overlaps in the everyday production of territory. The urban periphery here, in a way, resembles the logic of the camp.

One can conceive of an outcome of the crisis-driven capitalist enclosure as a Lefebvrian ‘abstract space,’ shaped by the normalizing and extra-legal rationality of capital and divorced of all differences to allow for rational governance, continuous circulation of capital, and new institutional scaffolding for hegemonic power. Abstract space, a product of fractured territorial practices, “destroys the historical conditions that gave rise to it, its own internal [and external] differences, in order to impose an abstract homogeneity” (Lefebvre 1991, 370). Historiography of Russian land enclosure offers a unique opportunity to trace and explore this dynamic. The peasant uprisings of 1905, agrarian crises, famines, and the defeat of Russia in the Japanese and Crimean wars granted the Russian imperial state a decisional power to pursue the reforms. Provoking the state of exception justified privatization of land and destruction of an age-old collective territorial

order of the land commune that proved so resistant to advanced economic development. Russian imperial land consolidation acts of 1906, 1910, and 1911 granted the peasants a right to exit the commune and to secure private ownership of their land plots, followed by the elimination of the commune at last – it is only by enclosing and excluding the land commune from the law, the state included it and its members under the political and juridical recognition, under the state of exception.

In the discussion of political discourse below, I show how customary territoriality of the Russian land commune was produced and maintained through an array of competing meanings, interests, and expectations that different subjects prescribed to it. Contesting territories of representation in the Russian land commune became a backbone against which enclosure would operate through its techniques of exception, exclusion, and private property in land, to allow for continuous and uninterrupted circulation of power and capital. This relational reading of territory as socially produced and contested not only enables to transcend and decentralize the ahistorical and static view of state-space but to reveal from the archive a unique Russian experience of territory.

3.3 Contested territories of representation in the Russian land commune

In this section, I consider a set of competing territorialities that shaped the space of the commune, against which enclosure would later operate and which would later help to legitimize land theft, or in contrary, consolidate resistance. This is not limited to the ‘representations of territory’ or ways in which territory of the commune was perceived, imagined, and represented by its users, but also includes its material and lived dimensions, or ‘territories of representation,’ that exhibit the ways in which space of the commune was materialized through the everyday experiences and physical encounters. Hence, this section aims to emphasize how territoriality of the commune was shaped by the multitude of lived, perceived, and conceived dimensions of power, which different actors used to apply homogenizing rationality of enclosure, beyond the fundamental territorial control of the state.

The centuries-old culture of ‘commoning’—collective production of space, knowledge, and personhood in the Russian urban periphery—was embedded in the Slavic settler territoriality and

engrained in a long-lived legacy of the collective struggle of peasantry over land. The meaning of the commune as a collective right to territory was contested, comprised of different territorial imaginations, cultural legacies, and political-economic expectations. In the past, and still in the minds of the masses, land was ‘no ones’ and ‘God’s property’ (Peshehonov 1907) – “people used land and landed resources like air, and no one had in mind, that it could be turned into an exclusive usage or even ownership” (Witte 1923, 407).

Though Russian political and legal thought doesn’t develop an explicit definition of territory in precise terms, re-reading Russian political theory can offer some insightful observations and explain the decision-making behind enclosure. Boris Chicherin, political philosopher and a jurist of the Russian Empire, described the commune as a ‘family at large’ and the ‘owner of the land’ (Chicherin 1856, 374). He explained this departure from the collective land use in Europe referring to the patriarchal nature of the Russian socio-political order, where “family was a prototype of the people,” in contrast to feudal societies in Europe, where communal or ‘cooperative’ relations were established by the legislative and governmental measures from above (Ibid.). For instance, a custom of equal land repartitioning, a core territorial identity of *obshchina*, evolved from the ancient origins of the Old Russian Law, namely from the inseparability of a family’s property versus individual property rights within a cooperative.

Considering these qualities, one could interpret the early imperial land commune as a Lefebvrian ‘absolute space,’ that is “lived rather than conceived,” a “space at once and indistinguishably mental and social, which comprehends the entire existence of the group concerned” (Lefebvre 1991, 236-240). Chicherin, too, compares the Russian peasant land commune to the holy public land or *ager sacer* and *ager publicus* of patrician Rome, land use in Greek Sparta, and Jewish communities that restricted private property in favor of the commons. Yet, in his article at the journal *Russian Herald* (*Russkii Vestnik*) Chicherin concludes that the late imperial *obshchina* is now a ‘fictitious phenomenon,’ corrupted by the invasion of Western ethnic groups and a new communal order of *druzhina*, a retinue in service of a chief – “from a means of kinship, [the commune] became a means of social contract” (Chicherin 1856).

Contrary to Chicherin's historical findings, another legal thinker and Slavophile of the Russian Empire, Vasily Leshkov, saw the commune as an embryo of the institute of public law, "communal ownership offered *obshchina* not only 'dominium' over land, but partial 'imperium' over its members," or territorial integrity (Peshehonov 1907, 199). Comparing communal territoriality to sovereignty, Leshkov thought that within defined borders, *obshchina* exercised the right of the people to land and the right of the commune to the people. As he writes, commune's hegemony over territory, or "distrustful isolation of the Russian land commune [could be seen] through an example when nobody was allowed to enter a city, without calling out a *znatok*, a citizen, who would know a guest and would vouch for him in front of the commune" (Leshkov 1858, 209).

The Russian rural territoriality, throughout centuries, was a defining element of the public legal structure under imperial and, later, socialist regimes, it was both the political technology crucial for the security of the state and autonomous customary land law in and of itself. The commune simultaneously exercised and conceived the state spatially, in part, by extending sovereignty over territory and the people through the productive use of land, a set of prescribed rules of land repartitioning, and a long-lived sacred legacy that portrayed the commune as the 'great truth' or God's property.

Dissolution of the land commune throughout the crises of the late imperial Russia has generated divergent debates on the role of the commune in backward development of the Russian economy (Gerschenkron 1962; Stolypin 1907; Witte 1923), its historical promises of socialist transformation (Luxemburg 2003 [1951]; Shanin 1985), or its self-destructive potential for capitalist primitive accumulation (Lenin 1964 [1899]). These either justified enclosure or vouched for the commune to become a mechanism for socialist development. Study of the commune through this relational reading of territory, versus seeing it as a static spatial container, illustrates a processual formation of communal territoriality which would later serve as the very infrastructure for capitalist development.

3.4 Exceptional measures of enclosure and territorial decentralization of the state

Enclosure of the land commune has emerged as a ruling regime of private property and a daily practice of processual extra-legal territorialization and decentralization of state power. Through the land reforms of 1906, the commune became instrumental to the security and integrity of the state. Sergei Witte, an econometrician, and prime minister of the Russian Empire under Alexander III, propagated the principle of individual ownership in land and claimed that the commune is “only a stage in the life of the peoples; with the development of culture and statehood, ownership must inevitably pass into individualism, into private property; ‘I’ organizes and moves everything.” (Witte 1923, 405). Witte assigned problems of Russian economic development to the political-legal and not political-economic organization of peasant economy. Russian jurist and a politician Vladimir Gessen summarized this point well – “where the legal order is almost non-existent and arbitrary rule prevails, correct economic activity is impossible and at the same time is impossible the lasting well-being of the population” (Gessen 1904, 42). This political-legal and political-strategic aspect of territorialization of the regime of private property became the first goal of enclosure.

Witte’s sacralization of individual property resonated in the land consolidation acts of 1906, 1910, and 1911. Conducting reforms in the time of a revolutionary crisis made it necessary to turn to ‘emergency methods’ that required implementation of the “authoritarian politics to prevent the disintegration of the state” – as emphasized Stolypin (Medushevskii 2015, 277). These exceptional measures attempted to homogenize and normalize ‘unproductive and chaotic’ territories of the commune under a new political-economic order of private property in land (RGIA 408.1.272). In this surge for privatization, the urban periphery became the stake and the medium of crisis management.

To disentangle how competing territorialities and representations of territory that different actors prescribed to the commune entwined to accommodate enclosure, it is necessary to examine concrete practices of new institutional and territorial arrangements in the periphery. Considering the legal autonomy and sacral legacy of *obshchina*, the state had to penetrate the communal structural organization from within through regulational and institutional innovations, representational practices of private property, and disciplinary material technologies of enclosure

– these modes of territorialization I review below. These practices and livelihoods they embraced were institutionalized by numerous orders, decrees, subsidies, and through the everyday encounters of peasant households with land surveyors, agronomists, banking officials, church, and nobility, which unveiled enclosure’s multiscale rationality.

3.4.1 Territorial regulation and institutional fragmentation of the commune: Zemstva, skhod, and land settlement commissions

Prior enclosure, commune’s peasant assembly regularly gathered to repartition land parcels, synchronize agricultural operations, and delineate the ‘commons’ for everyone’s free use. These meetings, or *skhod*, were the core of commune’s autonomous social reproduction from the bottom up. While *zemstvo*, an assembly of rural self-government that represented landed proprietors, gentry, and land communes at the levels of provinces and districts, acted as local agencies in the implementation of the reforms. Stolypin and Krivoshein relied on *zemstvo* as it mostly consisted of the landed gentry whose interests were aligned with the plans of the Ministers, to “rescue the nobility from extinction” (Kotsonis 1999, 80). The debate on the involvement of *zemstva* in land settlement varied across the borders, fueling the rivalry between *zemstva* and land settlement commissions over agricultural aid budgets (Pallot 1999, 245).

While *zemstva* received subsidies to assist farms in enclosure, *skhod* in particular became an integral part of land reforms, a ‘vehicle’ through which the communal assemblies carried a role of delivering news about the reform, approving consolidation and separation of the individual farm, and working out land delineation projects in collaboration with the local land settlement commissions. Yet, if the *skhod* withheld the approval, the state would employ ‘compulsory procedures’ to pursue enclosure (Atkinson 1983; Pallot 1999). While *skhod* was relatively ineffective at preventing enclosure, it was still one of the few oppositional forces. As Pallot argued, these same means of *skhod* participation in the reforms “also enabled it to become the principal locus of resistance to it” (Pallot 1999, 172).

Land settlement commissions were established on a district and provincial levels to deliver land reforms and oversee the process of physical rearrangement of land under the supervision of the Committee for Land Settlement Affairs. District land settlement commissions were comprised of

the members of the nobility, a representative of the judiciary, a tax inspector, and a land captain, prescribed by the Ministry of Agriculture (Atkinson 1983, 64), along with the members of the locality – those “familiar with the area, people with higher education in law or agronomy, or those who held administrative positions beforehand” (TsMAM 369.4.1). Provincial land settlement commissions, on the other hand, included local members of peasant assemblies and nobles of the province, along with powerful representatives of the financial institutions such as the Peasant Land Bank, the Noble Bank, and the regional offices of Crown lands (Atkinson 1983).

The Highest Order of March 4, 1906, underlined two stages of implementing the establishment of land settlement commissions during the land consolidation movement – first, land surveying and, then, land partitioning according to prescribed territorial measures (TsMAM 369.4.1). Both stages, as mentioned members of a local assembly in Moscow *uyezd*, required the involvement of other state agencies for cartographic works and data collection. The expanding network of state representatives occupied the commune in the pursuit of enclosure. In 1913, 463 district land settlement commissions resided in 468 districts that occupied all European Russia, and by 1914 “they had some 1,600 agronomists in the field, along with 2,000 assistants, and 800 land organization specialists” (Atkinson 1983, 65). Yet, different groups carried different expectations from the reforms, all—*skhod*, *zemstvo*, land settlement commissions, and newly arrived agronomists—mobilized peasants in different ways, either encouraging enclosure, obtaining subsidies for continuous communal farming, delivering instrumental changes, or resisting appropriation within the constraints of the reform.

State strategies to secure hegemony over territory from within the commune either eroded commune’s autonomy or, on the other hand, strengthened it. Some land communes, with the help of land settlement commissions, pursued the wholesale land enclosure to escape the rule of the reforms and continue managing land collectively. Many used land enclosure as a measure of resistance (Leonard 2010; Medushevskii 2015). By enclosing an entire commune and separating land strips into individual farms, peasant households regained control over land collectively – they would continue land repartitioning and communal land organization across strict boundaries that were drawn between the farms by land surveyors. Some ignored any interaction with the land

settlement committees. While others exploited involvement of the peasant assembly in reforms to organize boycotts when the households would refuse to participate in the elections of the land settlement commissions or would ignore participation in the excursions to the exemplary farms (GARF 102.116.42).

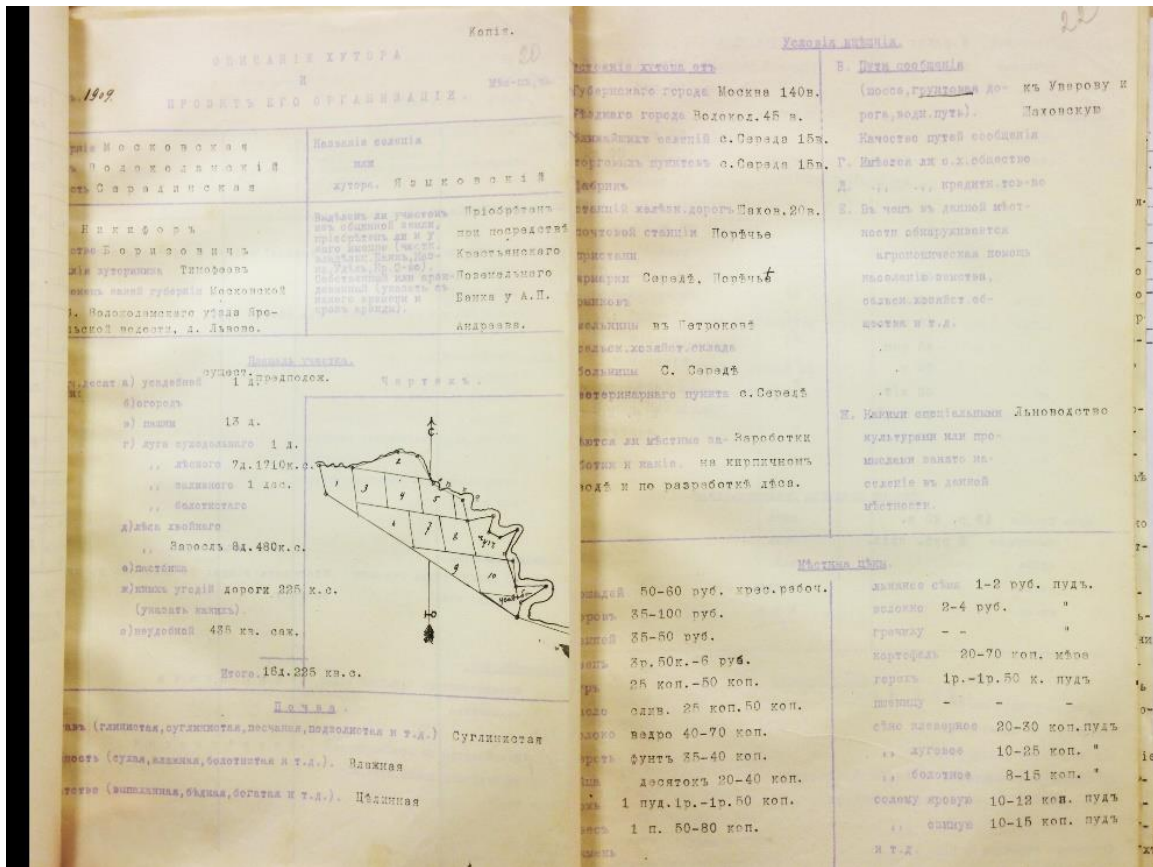
3.4.2 Representational measures of the territory of property: Tours, exhibitions, and archetypal farms

From physical consolidation of land plots to prescribed guidelines for homestead design, the elimination of the peasant land commune became a project of the emergent capitalist economy. Among many representational practices of private property were projects of public demonstrations of the archetypal individual farms, fields, and housing estates. Through these exhibitions, the new territorial organization of an enclosed farm was set up before the viewer to guide privatization and promote a new form of possessive individualism. These were to “serve as a practically an agrarian school that teaches application of ready to make husbandry models, [...] and offers a manual for producing a more or less systematic knowledge of [rational] land management” as described Pavel Sokovnin, director of the Land Settlement Committee (TsMAM 369.4.34, 26).

Exemplary farm movement was also a ‘disciplinary practice’ aimed at promoting homogenization of the collective territorial order under a unitary measure of private property in land. The archetypal farm exhibitions were accompanied by the distribution of specialized literature, public lectures, meetings with agronomists, and public demonstrations of various innovative methods of crop rotation and fertilizers.

Peasants faced land settlement commissions, land surveyors, the Peasant Land Bank, and the police that carried out the projects and organized excursions of the peasants to the sites of exhibitions. Physical organization of the archetypal farms unfolded on the land of agricultural, educational institutions, scientific societies, agrarian farms, or estates bought by the Peasant Land Bank (TsMAM 369.4.34, 26) – hence, chosen places were easily accessible by the peasants. As described in a journal of the Economic Council of the Mozhaisk zemstvo of May 26th 1908, organization of these demonstrations on the land of educational institutions would “give students a chance to always have before the eyes a properly organized husbandry that could have been

conducted under the normal economic conditions, would prove the possibility of the independent existence of this small economic unit, [...] and finally, to show the advantages of the *khutor* farm with respect to the amount of annually produced products” (TsMAM 369.4.34, 53). These representational territories were set as a golden standard against which one could measure, compare, and evaluate the rate of agricultural production of a peasant household and its improvement in the periphery (see Image 3 and 4).



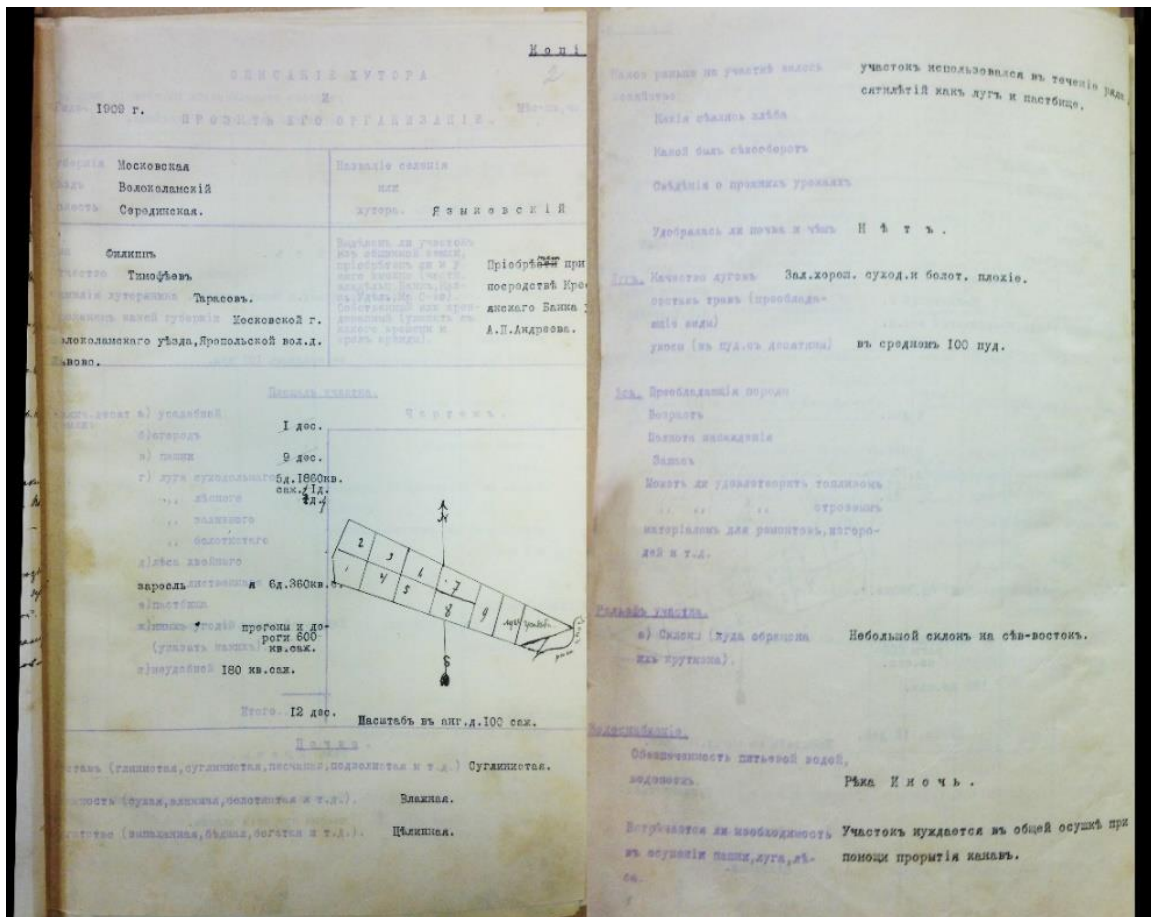


Image 3 – Examples of a protocol filled by an owner of a model farm, which contained questions about the physical delineation of land into crop fields, the area of the plot, quality of soil, distance to the nearest city, prices of agricultural commodities. Above: protocol for the farm of Nikifor Timofeev in Moscow governorate. Below: protocol for the farm of Phillip Tarasov in the same location. (Source: TsMAM 369.4.106, 27)

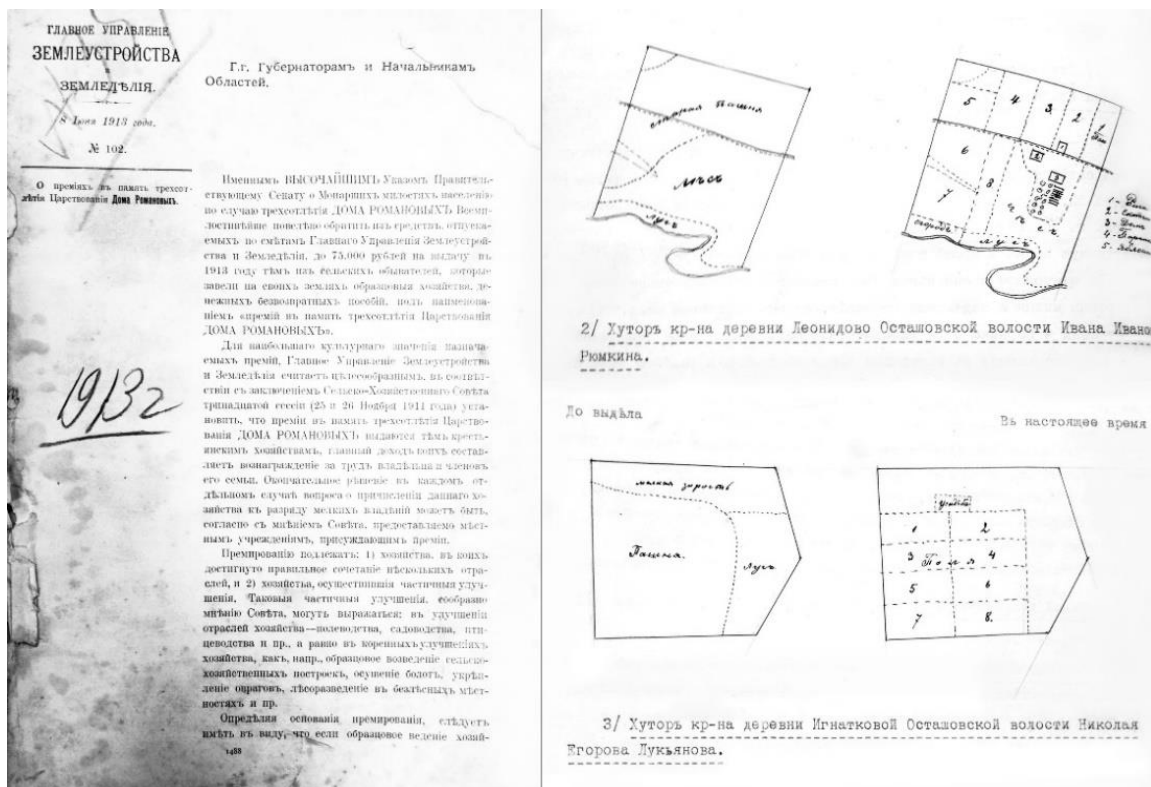


Image 4 – On the left: the Highest Order №102 of June 8, 1913, declaring the payment of 75,000 rubles in memory of the three hundredth anniversary of the Romanov house to those villagers who have established exemplary farms (TsMAM 369.4.245: 1). On the right: Survey drawings of exemplary enclosed farms with a separation into various crop fields under the ownership of Ivan Riumkin (farm #2) and Egor Lukyanov (farm #3). (Source: TsMAM 369.4.245, 24–25)

Most of the archetypal farms were advertised for rental purposes with a right to buy. The rental agreement followed a set of mandatory recommendations proposed by the Land Settlement Committee in 1908. The leaseholder was supposed to “keep the economy in compliance with all requirements established by the ‘organizational plan,’ to record the yields in a particular book issued to him, to allow the agronomists to inspect and supervise the management of the agricultural production, to pay all costs, and to be responsible for the integrity of the property,” as outlined Sokovnin in the proposed project (TsMAM 369.4.34, 26). The organizational plan of an archetypal farm was developed “on the basis of agricultural science and praxis” following established norms and standards for the typology of crop rotation, the number of livestock heads, quantity and quality of fertilizer, plant varieties, and amount of products subject to exemption. These meticulous

guidelines were monitored by local agronomists assigned by the government or the local *skhod*. All results of farming on the model fields were to be announced at regional agricultural exhibitions, public hearings, and meetings, where the most productive farms would receive awards, medals, and monetary compensation (TsMAM 369.4.34, 31).

The right to buy archetypal farms could be obtained after all requirements were met and tested during the two or three full cycles of crop rotation, “not earlier than 8 and not later than 20 years of operation” (Ibid.). In 1914 alone, when the reforms were losing their traction, 555 of demonstration activities were organized – 17 exemplary farms, 11 exemplary fields, and 527 homesteads (Romashova 2004, 25). Public excursions to the site of exhibitions were mandatory and arranged in every commune by the district land settlement commissions. Yet, these were also known to be avenues for protests – entire communities would refuse to participate in the tours by simply refusing to join the excursion or to volunteer for land organization.

This territorial imagery, showcased before the landless peasant, was foremost performative rather than representational. It not only conveyed the changing conception of property’s spatiality but created a basis for control and surveillance in the land commune. In analogy to the Western husbandry manuals, exemplary farm movements provided the commune with new meanings, measures, and, most of all, with a new image of the individual.

3.5 Russia’s rural territorial autonomy in times of crisis

Throughout the history of Russian land enclosure, territory was both, a ‘political technology’ employed by the state in times of instabilities and a process of autonomous social reproduction in the periphery. Overlapping and competing meanings that different actors prescribed to *obshchina* represented its unique quality of being both a sacred structure of land organization based on family values, an autonomous territorial order in the periphery, and a source of state oppression integral to the feudalist political order. Revisiting the dissolution of the Russian land commune from a multi-scale and relational perspective allows for a deeper understanding of competing territorial strategies and counter forces that arose to resist them. The Russian land commune was as much a state project as it was a contested practice and a sovereign body that offered a means of shelter and

safety to some 12 million peasant households through the perpetuating crises of Russian imperialism.

Territories form and are formed by the social relations of power. Rereading territory from a decentralized perspective beyond the construct of the nation-state opens an opportunity to imagine alternative territorialities and to foster new socio-political structures in place. Though the Russian imperial state accommodated dissolution of the commune, it also gave rise to resistance that formed across the borders of fragmented individual farms. The enclosed communes continued customary practices of land management even within the constraints of private property. Russian imperial land reforms didn't achieve expected outcomes, and the land commune was revived by the new socialist power to signify an entirely different set of meanings, imaginations, and expectations, thus, giving rise to a new communal territoriality.¹⁵ If one was to consider *obshchina* as a spatial container, they would see a mere cooperation of peasants in a defined territorial area controlled by the state and would fail to grasp the essence of the commune as a core of Slavic domesticity, identity, and personhood, that remains crucial in the formation of urban peripheries under state capitalism today.

The example I reviewed in this chapter is not reminiscent of the feudalist past or capitalist transitions in a specific region but is a part of a long-lived legacy of the territorial struggle, which cuts across prescribed national, disciplinary, and historical boundaries. Instead of essentializing the unique Russian experience of the production of territory, this work uses Russian example to offer a novel perspective on theorizing the state, land, and territory triad. Many scholars of Slavic and Eurasian studies fall into a danger of extracting a particular 'Russian imperial,' 'socialist,' or 'post-socialist' experience as a regional or temporal container (Tuvikene 2016), thus reproducing limited knowledge, instead of recognizing global similarities in the struggles over 'commoning' and occupation of space, work, and personhood, shared across many societies today. Seeing enclosure of the commune as an ordinary experience allows one to compare this case to the broader collective practices and customary forms of property like the Mexican *ejidos*, East African kinship-based territorial formations, or other examples that cut across the limits of regional or historical scholarship (Cymet 1992; Jones and Ward 1998; Shipton and Goheen 1992). Bringing studies of

the Russian land commune into the Anglophone debate on territory, in particular, offers a wealth of territorial scenarios that connect regionally specific knowledge of territory to the utopian state projects and the emergence of the frontiers of land control (Peluso and Lund 2011; Scott 1998), legitimation of the territory of property and development of the measure of the land (Blomley 2016; Kula 2014 [1986]), or peasant customary territoriality that have now vanished (Luxemburg 2003 [1951]; Marx 1976 [1887]).

Bringing the urban and the rural into the debate on territory also opens new possibilities. Though a ‘space of exception,’ the urban offers a niche for emancipatory politics; state hegemony can be resisted in the urban. The commune wasn’t necessarily an urban entity, yet it was an essential component of the urban experience throughout the history of Russia, whereby the idea of property was developed, legitimized through enclosure, and exploited by the elites, which marks the emergence of the rationality of urban planning in cities today. The commune not only offered a pool of free workers but also an age-old heritage of collective identity, cooperation, and multitude that was exploited by the multiplicities of actors in the pursued of the capitalist urban project. Unraveling these disputed representations of territory in the periphery can help to transcend the Anglophone ‘territorial trap’ and offer a more nuanced debate on territory from a decolonized and decentralized perspective. Enclosure of the Russian land commune is not an exception but potentially a part of a global mosaic of appropriation of space, personhood, and human bodies that provides an illusory solution to the perpetuating state of crisis under capitalism today.

Notes:

¹⁴ In this speech Pyotr Stolypin delivered his intentions to employ emergency measures of a court-martial law during the revolutionary acts, the number of which increased in 1906. The speech was titled “Speech about provisional laws” issued in the period between the First and Second Duma, uttered in the State Duma on March 13, 1907. Stolypin’s speech also explains the legal aspects of the Article #87 of the Russian Constitution of 1906 that allows to repeal a law in times of necessity. This law itself “establishes the procedure for the termination of such a temporary measure” when the necessity is over – meaning that “temporary laws can be terminated in the same order as permanent laws”.

¹⁵ In a period from 1907 to 1915 about 2 million households left the commune, which constituted only 10 percent of all peasant families, yet in 1927 as much as 91% of peasant land was again under the communal tenure.

CHAPTER FOUR: Geographies of Dispossession and Property Frontiers in the Margins of Russian Capitalism

4.1 Introduction

First, he berieveth the countrie of armour and other means of defence, which he permitteth to none but to his boiarskeis [feudal lords] onely. Secondly, he robbeth them continually of their monie and commodities, and leaveth them barewith nothing but their bodies and lives, within certeine yeares compasse. Thirdly, he renteth and devideth his territories into many small pieces by several governments: so that none hath much under him to make any strength, though he had other oportunities. Fourthly, he governeth his countries by men of small reputation and no power of themselves, and straungers in those places where their government lieth. Fiftly, he chaungeth his governours once a yeare ordinarily, that there grow no great liking nor intiernesse betwixt the people and them, nor acquaintance with the enemy if they lie towards the borders.

— Giles Fletcher, *Of the Russe Commonwealth* (1591, 64)

This passage on the colonial practices of Muscovite Russia in the Far East is extracted from the collection of travel notes gathered by Giles Fletcher the Elder, an English poet and ambassador to the Russian Empire from 1588. This collection represents a rich depository of stories describing Russian power disputes at its internal and external frontiers: from the “vulgar sorte of people” in the Russian land commune that are, as Fletcher described, “reckoned in no degree at all, nor have any suffrage, nor place in their *zabory* [fences] or high court of parliament,” to the lawful oppression of the colonized territories in Siberia of “a naked and almost a savage kinde, without any use of armour or of civil government of themselves” (1591) (See Figure 12).

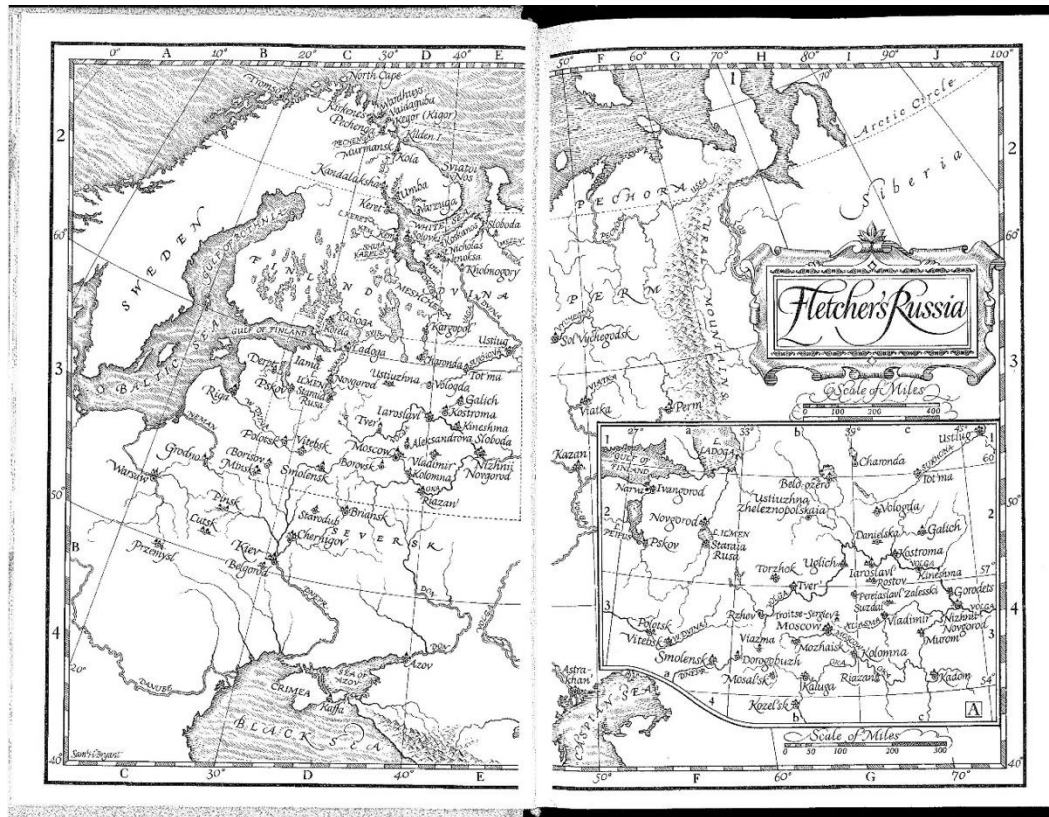


Figure 12 – Map of ‘Fletcher’s Russia.’ (Fletcher 1591, 1)

The fictitious legality of private property during the Russian Tsarist regime have devastated both the urban and national periphery in a short period of 1906-1917 resulting in mass displacement of some three million dispossessed peasants to Siberia, proletarianization of 470,000 peasant households in the urban periphery, and alienation of customary rural domesticity in the land commune that led to its eventual termination. The Russian land commune, collective land institute that housed more than 77% of the peasants and held 83% of all land, became an operational periphery where the authority of the new elites, land surveyors, peasant proprietors, and landless households was established and contested during the land consolidation reforms of 1906, 1910, and 1911.

The territories and identities of the frontier were manufactured as a result of these relations and became a conduit for speculations and further expropriation. Rural personhood and collective domesticity in the commune were alienated through prescribed husbandry manuals and other

scientific practices of subjectification to the capitalist way of life. While Siberia, recognized as an ‘empty land,’ absorbed displaced peasantry, and underwent new regimes of capitalist territorialization through land surveying and resettlement reforms launched by Pyotr Stolypin. These local and national frontiers were manufactured by both, power, capital, and their limits. Many fled to the frontier to avoid and resist state oppression. While others were encamped and tied to land through the fictive regime of private property that they could not sell, exchange, or use as collateral.

Theorists have conceived of the ‘frontier’ as a boundary between state-spaces, yet frontiers have proven to be actively produced and productive, they are the outcomes and yet the medium through which power is materialized in space. The materiality of the frontier, the specific frontier-like conditions—its extent, location, cultural uniqueness, ‘otherness’— is only made possible by specific power arrangements, that are not necessarily territorial. As Anna Tsing portrays, “the frontier is made in the shifting terrain between legality and illegality, public and private ownership, brutal rape and passionate charisma, ethnic collaboration and hostility, violence and law, restoration and extermination” (Tsing 2003).

Frontier, as follows, is an outcome of the workings of exception, it is a ‘space of exception,’ placed outside of the juridical order but nonetheless not external to that order. The law in the frontier is ‘localized’ and ‘unlocalizable,’ it “produces and diffuses the zone of indistinction,” where exception operates upon subjects and spaces and within which the law and its repeal are not separable (Belcher et al. 2008, 500). Here, I view exception in Schmitt’s and Agamben’s dialectical understanding of a ‘decision’ that the sovereign makes upon the exclusion of spaces, bodies, and identities from the law by the law itself – thus releasing them for appropriation, distribution, and novel modes of production to preserve the political order and integrity of the state.

Frontier is, thus, crucial for capitalist development in the borderlines between the law and lawlessness, the state and statelessness, or the private property and the commons. Capitalist frontiers are, what Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre would term ‘abstract spaces,’ where order and reason are inserted to ease the circulation of capital, where “a native space—dense with meanings, stories, and tenurial relations—could be conceptually remapped as ‘vacant’ land”

(Blomley 2003, 129). Drawing on these theorizations, this chapter explores a role of the frontier as an ontological *dispositif* of capitalist development. In particular, it interrogates the ways Russian internal and external frontiers were manufactured through enclosure of space, knowledge, and human bodies and, through different discursive and material technologies that legitimized enclosure. This chapter's intervention into enclosure's material and immaterial means of operation would help us understand the present modes of capitalism's extra-legal expansion through delineation and transgression of the frontiers.

Enclosure here is not meant in any sense as a tool and an outcome of territorialization but viewed as one of the mechanisms of exception, that, through which exception materializes itself in space. It is through enclosure that determination of certain juridical or territorial order becomes possible. Yet the nature of enclosure formation is not always spatially bound, enclosure often terminates the means of 'commoning' (Hardt and Negri 2009; Vasudevan 2015), erases what people create collectively— knowledge, experiences, cultures, and languages. This chapter, however, doesn't attempt to theorize enclosure's extra-territorial technologies of operation anew, this has been done in details in the previous chapters (for territorial techniques of enclosure see *Chapter 2, Section 2.5*, and *Chapter 3, Section 3.4*). This chapter instead focuses on examining the active production of the popular discourse on 'frontier' and its role in the legitimation of capitalist land enclosure.

This chapter draws on a specific subset of archival data that I collected at the Russian state archives, focusing primarily on the Russian Holy Synod orders on Siberian resettlement reforms, confidential circulars between resettlement officials and Pyotr Stolypin, documented organization of various agronomic programs in the commune, and a number of husbandry manuals created by the Ministry of Agriculture, along with the field notes from Stolypin's trip to Siberia. Employing critical discourse analysis, this chapter exposes contested making and sustaining of the frontiers through territorial delineation of private property and discursive disciplinary practices, from the margins of the nation-state, the Russian Far East in particular, to the encampment of collective life in the commune, both seen in this dissertation as a frontiers of proprietary capitalism. In so doing I do not necessarily focus on the territorial organization of the frontier, I instead unpack the tension

between the frontier and the capitalist logic and examine how new frontiers are actively produced by and productive of exception through various discursive and bodily practices.

This research traces a number of dialectical contradictions through the lens of the frontier: on the one hand, there is a tendency of exploitation in the frontier, rooted in its weak institutional structure, abandonment by the state, and distance from the centers of wealth and power - or the means of exception. On the other hand, frontier in the case of Russia represents a territory of escape and resistance to the capitalist rule, a place where the sovereign can be challenged - or the means of *autogestion*. On the basis of this inquiry into the histories of land enclosure, frontier is illustrated as a place of struggle based on the mutual coexistence of wealth and poverty, law and violence (Blomley 2003; Ferguson and Reffestin 1986), state and the multitude (Hardt and Negri 2001, 2009), property and the commons (Tsing 2011).

The research material of this chapter is organized through a series of scales of dispossession, each of which represents a specific scale of enclosure – this allows to grasp circulation of enclosure movement through its temporal and spatial means of operation and to illustrate enclosure's variety of techniques of exception in the evolution of Russian capitalism. Enclosure of the Russian land commune in 1906 demarcated the whole series of dispossession on multiple temporal and spatial scales where the urban periphery around imperial Moscow and other central cities accommodated mass proletarianization of landless households, while Siberia became a contested frontier intended for the exploitation of peasants and criminal subjects who were forcefully resettled in search of new profits or, in contrary, seeking a refuge from enclosure rule. At another scale, Russia, seen in this study as a frontier of global capitalism, found itself entangled in a complex set of relations allowing for a globalized seizure of the former Soviet farm enterprises bankrupted after the 1998 financial crisis.

4.2 Capitalist formation(s) of the frontier

The limit, a traced line, sets up an order that is not only spatial but temporal since it not only separates a “this side” from a “that side” but also a “before” and an “after.” [...] In the practice and/or knowledge of things, every living and active subject is confronted with the notion of a limit (Ferguson and Raffestin 1986, 2).

The importance of the ‘living frontier,’ a “peripheral membrane that is deformed at the pleasure of the expansion of the state” was emphasized by many, in particular, in the work of the father of human geography Friedrich Ratzel, whose organic biogeographical view of the *lebensraum* played a crucial role in the articulation of the Schmittian ‘greater space’ and German *geopolitik* of expansion in particular (Raffestin 1986). Similar logic was developed in the Russian political and legal thought, in particular theories of geographical determinism, which positioned Russian empire and its colonies in the global world order as a landed power with its living frontiers locked between the ‘three seas’ (see discussion on Pyotr Semyonov-Tian-Shanskii’s theory of the ‘middle kingdom,’ *Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2*). The frontier, hence, is conceived as a borderscape separating law and order from the “anomic or sectarian savagery beyond law’s boundaries” (Sarat and Kearns 1992, 5). Without a ‘violent world of nonlaw,’ there can be no law (Blomley 2003). Manufacturing of a discourse on the frontier is, hence, integral to the process of enclosure – without the image of the ‘other’ or the ‘outside,’ there can be no enclosure.

Geography has long been associated with mapping the borderscapes between the law and ‘savagery’ through the examples of resource frontiers or ‘commodity frontiers’ as operational landscapes of capitalism (Moore 2011; Raffestin 1986), narco-frontiers that channel drug profits through extra-legal acquisitions of land (Ballve 2013), or war-torn frontiers at the borderlines of nation-states (Minca and Vaughan-Williams 2012). Same logic, however, can be applied to the ‘territory of property.’ The existence of what we consider private property relies explicitly on the domain of non-property. The constitutive outside of the property is the common - where there is the common, there is lawlessness, chaos, and robbery, where there is property, there is law and order. Frontier is a place where this dialectic is enacted at its best.

Following this direction, my chapter maps territorialities of property frontiers through the history of land enclosure in late imperial Russia. In so doing, it explores how ideological, discursive, and material identities of the frontier were manufactured by the state to justify enclosure of the Russian land commune, to appropriate land in the Russian Far East, and to accommodate a bare land grab by foreign actors in Russia, seen in this study as a “semi-colonial possession of European capital” (Shanin 1985).

4.2.1 Frontier is localized

According to the Schmittian theorization of the ‘spatial consciousness of the Earth,’ that very much draws on the work of Ratzel and other scholars of the state, property, and territory, frontiers demarcate the inside and the outside of law – where violence can be applied to preserve and reinstall a prevalent political order. For Carl Schmitt, normality and order are produced by an ‘act of concrete differentiation.’ The frontier then is a crucial element of this differentiation; it is an exception translated into concrete space, a “zone of anomie excluded from the ‘normal’ juridical-political space of the state, but nevertheless an integral part of that national territory” (Minca and Vaughan-Williams 2012).

For Schmitt, the decision on the exception is not only legitimized in the frontier but is also productive of the frontier. Frontier is “defined, delimited, and, finally, demarcated or fixed,” as portrays Swiss geographer Claude Raffestin in his work on the *Elements for a Theory of the Frontier*, “the limit brings about the difference or, if you prefer, the difference brings about the limit” (1986, 3). The last stage of territorial ‘fixing’ of boundaries in the frontier occurs on the terrain itself, through delineation by fences, enclosures, walls, houses, and other constructs, which makes all forms of ‘power and domination’ become visible and historically situated.

It is this localized and continuously shifting frontier line, ‘the meeting point between savagery and civilization’ (Turner 1893, 200), as argued historian Frederick Jackson Turner, was fundamental for the development of American democracy. Turner’s frontier implies a spatial divide, but yet it is an ‘elastic concept’ that underlies a “return to primitive conditions on a continuously advancing the frontier line” (Ibid.).

At the frontier, the bonds of custom are broken, and unrestraint is triumphant. There is not *tabula rasa*. The stubborn American environment is there with its imperious summons to accept its conditions; the inherited ways of doing things are also there; and yet, in spite of environment, and in spite of custom, each frontier did indeed furnish a new field of opportunity, a gate of escape from the bondage of the past; and freshness, and confidence, and scorn of older society, impatience of its restraints and its ideas, and indifference to its lessons, have accompanied the frontier (Turner 1893, 200).

Later, Neil Smith has taken the notion of the frontier further, shifting the scale of frontier operation to the regional and the urban. Smith (2002) explained how various processes of frontier making operate in urban systems under capitalism. Frontier logic mobilizes city spaces as outlets for speculative real-estate capital accumulation, as the inner city becomes “discursively constituted as an urban wilderness of savagery and chaos, awaiting the urban homesteaders who can forge a renaissance of hope and civility; Contra Turner, then, the frontier is not closed” (Blomley 2003, 125).

4.2.2 Frontier is unlocalizable

The Schmittian fundamental spatiality of a political order grounded upon the strict difference is challenged and, in a way, deterritorialized by Giorgio Agamben. Exception, an "emergent [...] and dynamic set of techniques of power" creates conditions of possibility for territorialization, yet, it is itself unlocalizable (Belcher et al. 2008). Though Agamben builds his notion of sovereignty on the Schmittian conception of ‘exception,’ or the difference between the interiority and exteriority of law, and ‘decision,’ or the ability of the sovereign to decide upon the exceptional situation, yet his notion of sovereignty focuses on life itself. The Agambenian logic of sovereignty is a "logic of capturing life, a logic of isolating a bare life as an exception" (Genel 2006, 43).

Henceforth, frontier is a container of bare life, that where life is included by its exclusion – a primarily topological relation of exception (Belcher et al. 2008; Debrix 2013; Malpas 2011; Minca 2016). The notion of bare life is therefore distinguished from normal life: "it is life inasmuch as it is exposed to power and its force, inasmuch therefore as it is exposed to death" (Genel 2006, 51). This chapter hence sees frontier as a set of topological relations between the "potentiality of spatial conditions of power and the capacity of bodies to be captured by regimes of sovereign exception" (Debrix 2013). Frontier, therefore, resembles the logic of the camp. With this intention in mind, this study aims to undermine the apparent fixity of power relations in space and decentralize a state-centric Anglophone view of territory through the case of Russia.

The regime of private property in land is also symptomatic of exception – through borders and limits of property, the law and violence are spatially delineated. The portrayal of the frontier as an

‘empty space,’ where designated suspension of law in a certain time and space is possible, legitimizes property violence. As Nicholas Blomley describes, the frontier, “which appears as a neutral boundary, serves as a condition of possibility for property’s violence, distinguishing and constituting at one and the same time” (2003, 135). Similarly, the regime of private property relies upon a distinction with that of nonproperty. “Inside the frontier lie secure tenure, free simple ownership, and state-guaranteed rights to property. Outside lie uncertain and undeveloped entitlements, communal claims, and the absence of state guarantees to property. Inside lies stability and order, outside disorder, violence, and bare life” (Ibid.). Here, frontier is a crucial element of proprietary capitalism. It is through outlining and transgressing territorial, ideological, and imagined frontiers, capitalism preserves its political ‘orders and orientations’ in space – issue that this chapter aims to contribute.

4.3 Dispossession of the collective domesticity in *mir*

The late imperial Russia of 1906-1914 witnessed a wave of subjectification of the peasant collective domesticity to the capitalist way of life. Spurred on by the industrialization and economic liberalization with international influence, the state promoted the image of an ‘individual’ through husbandry manuals, educational brochures, and popular discourses. In this great surge of privatization and individualization, the commune became a property frontier, where the old wealth and landless peasantry combined to resolve the crisis of late imperial Russia.

The narratives on *obshchina* as being in the margins of the society were promoted to justify land appropriation. The idea and the meaning of the peasant has shifted the scales, from being in the center of the society, termed by the early Tsarist state as the ‘carrier of the great truth’ and the ‘man of the land’—to the periphery, or what they termed the ‘grey mass’ – “grey in the sense of being neither pure and untainted white nor wholly evil and thus dark or black” (Frierson 1993, 117). The new image of *obshchina* was produced and modified to legitimize enclosure and destruction of the collective regimes of peasant domesticity to create an individual subjected to the capitalist way of life. In contrast to the outsider strongmen and proprietor *kulak*, the member of *obshchina*, in public discourse, was stripped off any previous ideals, “the image of the drab, dreary grey *muzhyk* (man, husband) offered the conclusion that there was no such thing as a specifically

peasant soul [...]. Instead, the peasant was a *tabula rasa* like all others, shaped and defined by his environment” (Ibid., 137). Separating a peasant man from the land and the conditions of the collective labor, which formed the very essence of the peasant image, would result in the elimination of peasantness itself.

Land reforms used landed property to break down the ‘grey mass’ of the peasantry. It is through the abandonment of the peasantry’s collective life, the subordinate worker of the land was born. Paradoxically, “privileging the individual, the measure reversed decades of policy that had bolstered collective ownership and had shown little concern for the individual at all” (Kotsonis 2011, 26). One can trace a similar logic unfolding at the national frontier, or the Russian Far East in particular. Stolypin reforms were extended to Siberia, while popular discourse on the ‘free’ and ‘uncultured’ frontiers was promoted to legitimize the reforms and to promote a new territorial pattern of private property to transform nomadic Siberian territories into more productive uses.

Fixing of new frontiers of accumulation was achieved using particular discursive, regulatory, and material techniques. Articulating a new territoriality of private property, bourgeois domesticity legitimized privatization along two axes: from without, the collective domestic life was disregarded and alienated as a ‘backward project,’ (see *Section 4.3.1*); and from within, those who stayed in *obshchina* were kept to the work of science and social agronomy to deliver a proper image of the individual worker of the land (see *Section 4.3.2*). The commune’s new dual quality as a prison and a home mirrored this process of subjectification to the capitalist way of life.

4.3.1 Externalization of the collective

Frontier formation unfolded within the commune itself. Different groups of peasants in the same communes were singled out for dispossession or exploitation. Territorial imagery and constructions of the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ were put to work to legitimize property violence. As Tsing draws out in her work on resource frontiers in Kalimantan, Indonesia, frontier is a global project, yet it requires “localization to come to life; drawing man from everywhere, frontier culture can mobilize them both for and against each other” (Tsing 2003).

As stated in the anonymous report Land (Dis)Order, redistributed in the countryside, one peasant Tomilov argued, “the law of November 9th, 1906, is a bone thrown to the masses by the state, “Go folk, share it!” (RGIA 408.1.153, 12). In other words, reform was needed to separate *mir* from within, to “speed up this fighting over the bone” and to turn peasants against each other (Ibid.). The personal proprietor of the land was, as Stolypin argued, “a barrier to the revolutionary movement” and a source for “reorganization of our kingdom in monarchical measures” (RGIA 408.1.153, 13). “When we write laws for the whole country,” explained Stolypin, “we mean reasonable and strong man, not weak and drunk” (RGIA 408.1.153, 13).

Ruining the country, exhausting it by the senseless war with Japan and continuous war with the people themselves inside Russia, making the peasantry starve from year to year, the state dares to say, that it spits on the weak. From such a government there is nothing to expect but lead bullets during uprisings, Cossack whips, prison, and exile to every truthful person that wants to help the others (RGIA 408.1.153, 14).

Starting with the work of a liberal historian Alexander Gerschenkron, the Russian peasant economy was depicted as a ‘backward project,’ in contrast to the ‘progressive’ economy of the West. While the English yeoman could sell his farm and use the funds for investing outside of agriculture, the member of the Russian land commune was attached to the land through redemption payments, which, as Gerschenkron argued, was the most irrational feature of the Russian peasant economy (Gerschenkron 1962). Gerschenkron’s mainly economic, limited treatment of backwardness reinforced the “fixed geographic opposites in Europe – England as the extreme West, Russia as the extreme East,” the advanced and the primitive. It also fractured *obshchina*’s identity and externalized the collective from the individual. The peasants were made backward, and backwardness, like the frontier, was a project that legitimized property violence within the land commune.

Not only peasant economy was considered backward and failed to industrialize, but the peasants themselves were portrayed as a ‘grey mass’ where a ‘grey man’ were fighting for their subsistence. Hence, peasants were externalized from the society. As writes Yanni Kotsonis, ‘society,’ or *obshchestvo*, a term used to describe the land commune, or *obshchina*, in 1914 characterized membership in a “small educated or propertied elite that was ‘cultured’ or ‘civilized,’ and was

used in contradiction to the ‘people,’ the ‘*narod*,’ or ‘depersonalized masses’” (Kotsonis 1999, 7). *Obshchina* was depicted by many populists and progressives as an anachronism of the past (Gerschenkron 1962). As Kotsonis writes, by claiming their own illiteracy, poverty, and squalor, when interacting with the reform and its authorities, the peasants were “participating in their own delegitimation, and confirming dehumanizing stereotypes of peasant benightedness and irrationality” (Kotsonis 1999, 11). Being outside of all political matters the peasant was put outside of the society, outside of advanced cities, outside European civilization, hence outside the Western democratic principles.

Vladimir Dal’, Russian lexicographer and a founding member of the Russian Geographical Society, argued that the Russian *narod*, used to describe the common folk or the common people, referred not only the national group, or those lived in the same territory, but also portrayed the ‘other’, or the lower classes. Catherine Frierson describes in her remarkable linguistic and ethnographic work *Peasant Icons*, the dichotomy of the society, or *obshchestvo*, and the folk, or *narod*, was essentially an extension of the urban-rural conflict in the nineteenth century Russia (Frierson 1993). Relying on the ‘strong and sober’ Stolypin hoped to “neutralize in some measure the antagonism of the majority” (Gerschenkron 1962, 145). Discussing the writings of the Slavophile Ivan Aksakov, Frierson draws out the image of *narod* as truly Russian national, thus territorial, group and yet an unconscious mass:

But in the narrow and stricter sense, it is the simple narod who are called the narod, that popular multitude who live a spontaneous life and who, like a seed, hold in concentrated form all of the organic force, all of the development of the organism. But this type, this specificity is manifest in the narod on the level and with the character of a spontaneous force—of course not in the physical, but in a spiritual sense, spiritual force that has not yet, however, become conscious (Aksakov in Frierson 1992, 35).

This unconscious mass was also characterized by their ability to “endure every possible deprivation and misfortune without falling into despair and without giving up the struggle with the circumstances that oppress them to their last breath” (Ibid.). Through the images of peasant life in examples of Tolstoy’s Platon Karataev in *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, or Dostoevsky’s *Diary of a Writer*, Frierson highlights the flexible nature of the definition of *narod* in relation to the

political needs. In the surge for new reforms, there appeared a need to redefine the peasant, to legalize its place in the society, the nation, and the new legal system. The *narod* was placed within the society through meticulous guidelines and development of the new measure of the land using the knowledge of science and agronomy.

4.3.2 Science, agronomy, and normalization of the capitalist way of life

As Anna Tsing argued, “frontiers are not just discovered at the edge; they are projects in making geographical and temporal experiences” (Tsing 2003, 5100). From physical consolidation of land plots to prescribed guidelines for homestead design, the elimination of the peasant *obshchina* became a project of the emergent capitalist economy. Capitalist domesticity developed processually. Among many practices of capitalist subjectification were new manuals of social agronomy.

The rise in agronomic studies since 1905 made the commune a new object of science. The economic and cultural mission of agronomy was to learn the people, to get familiar with the common folk, yet spreading legitimate knowledge of agricultural production backed by science. Alexander Chaianov, the scholar of social agronomy, or the science of connecting societal change to the economic advancement of land organization, developed a set of guidelines for disciplining the ‘mass’ of the peasantry.

Following these scientific suggestions, Alexander Krivoshein, the Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Empire, wrote a petition asking all agronomists to stay in the villages as long as needed to achieve trust from the peasants and implement more comprehensive changes (RGIA 408.1.153). As some peasants of Lugansk governorate described in their complaints forms, soon for every fifty households, there will be assigned one agronomist, “neither to plow, nor to sow, nor to mill, nor even bake or cook anything the peasants cannot dare without his permission” (RGIA 408.1.153). The agronomists had to be supported by the peasants themselves, who were paying a third of the profit for agronomist work, or as one peasant described, “the third egg from every chicken” (Ibid.).

Guidance in agricultural affairs of peasant households was given to the state as the only authority guiding the peasants and guarding their interests. Due to this concern, peasants were not allowed

to receive additional loans and use land as collateral and essentially had to rely on state grants, unsecured credits, and administrative help from without. Peasant allotment land was inalienable, and excluded from credit markets through other restrictions, while land that was bought from the Peasant Land Bank was already in debt to the bank (Kotsonis 1999). Peasants were not treated as proprietors, and all questions of peasant responsibility over property were ending with objections over low peasant culture, lack of maturity, and backwardness – peasants involved in financial affairs, as noted Iakov Litvinov of the Interior Ministry, were "even worse," they were traders and liars "pursuing speculative and avaricious ends" (Ibid., 64).

Moreover, those who stayed in *obshchina* were economically expropriated. They could not access the credit and had bigger economic limitations imposed on them, as stated in the brochure entitled *Land (Dis)Order* that was anonymously distributed in the countryside in 1910 (RGIA 408.1.153, 70). If peasant communities decided to buy additional land through the Peasant Land Bank, the purchase would be restricted unless they pursued enclosure, while those who decide to leave *obshchina* would receive an allowance of several dozen rubles. In fact, coercive measures of enclosure were recorded in many cases that included not only economic means of coercion but also extra-economic means of social and cultural pressure.

4.4 Dispossession of nomadic territoriality at the ‘borderlands of the fatherland’

As a tree without bark should dry out, so the state without strong borders ceases to be a great power [*derzhava*]. The surge of new settlers to the outskirts of Siberia should grow a thick bark for the tree that is Russia (Stolypin 1910).

Focus on the larger scales of enclosure brings us to the margins of the nation-state, where enclosure reworks bordering territorial orders—us and the other, inside and the outside, ‘cultural’ and the ‘savage’—to create new operational landscapes in times of instabilities. The Russian Far East, Siberia in particular, was another object for Stolypin’s project of social engineering of a new subordinate type of the individual. The regime of private property in land, as developed in Central Russia, was not extended to Siberia through the land reform, yet, attempts of fostering property were made through the new resettlement reforms that were promoting new patterns of land

organization. Primary goals of such project were dispossession of nomadic territorialities in the Russian Far Eastern frontier, or as framed Stolypin in his speech:

This way, gradually, and although slowly and continuously, we are carrying out a historical work of defending the borderlands of our fatherland in its frontiers, the settlement of new spaces and the conversion of previously unoccupied free state lands into cultural areas (TsMAM 369.4.106, 115).

Siberian pre-enclosure land division was mainly based on the principle of seizure (*zakhvat*) or autonomous and stateless practices of land management, the so-called ‘squatter’s tenure’ or *zakhvatnoe zemlepol’zovanie* – meaning that anyone could acquire as much land as one wanted no matter whether it was productively used or not (Channon 1990, 67). Voluntary occupation or enclosure was the only way peasants could acquire land from the state, the Kabinet, or the Cossack army unless the plots were legally allocated by the authorities. Peasant land commune, though it did not possess any right to land, was an advocate for the peasants, controlled the distribution of land, and spoke as a juridical entity (Ibid.). Land occupation and land holding were legitimated by the labor it took to clear out the ground from shrubs and to build fences. This, what Stolypin called the "democratic spirit of indigenous Siberians," characterized best the nomadic territoriality in the frontier (TsMAM 369.4.106, 115).

Stolypin resettlement reforms were aimed at defusing the revolutionary atmosphere near the centers of power in Central Russia by offering private land holdings for new settlers in Siberia, hence preparing a grid for a new territorial pattern of individual farms. Resettlement tactics started off as a productive endeavor: “if, during the twenty years from 1885 to 1905, settled not less than a million and a half of peasants, then in the period of 9 years, from 1906 to 1914, more than three million of households moved across the Urals” (Skliarov 1962, 312). With the resettlement of the populations followed a new territorial arrangement of the Siberian frontier, as mentioned the governor of Tobolsk in one of the reports, “peasant migration, or the bigger brother of land settlement, accomplishing its main mission of filling in the empty lands suitable for cultivation [with settlers], gradually gives way to a proper land management as a basis for a new economic life” (Ibid.).

The goal of land reforms primarily depended on the creation of a new framework against which to build a new territorial system of productive, individual land management. Similar to central Russia, Siberian land reforms were consistent of two stages: enclosure of state lands followed by their consolidation into *khutor* and *otrub* typology of farms (for the discussion about *khutor* and *otrub* typology in Central Russia see *Chapter 2, Section 2.5*). Free land necessary for the expansion of the 'colonization fund' was obtained in the form of 'cutoffs,' or the land parcels of old settlers (*starozhily*), that the state claimed as underused or unproductively cultivated.

The arrangement of property in land has significant implications for social ordering. Property disciplines social and political life, it puts social contract between the individuals as a matter of interaction, thus erasing customary social forms of being. Yet, the "territorial imagery and constructions of the inside and the outside can be put to work to justify violence" (Blomley 2008, 123). As many argued, land reforms in Siberia led to insignificant results – in 1910 there was a dramatic drop in the number of people who resettled to Siberia, from 619,300 people in 1909 to 316,100 people in 1910, with a significant increase of the number of returnees from 13.3% to 36.3%. And, Lenin later concluded, forced land organization deepened the agrarian crisis in Russia and extended its scope to the nation's furthest lands.

4.4.1 Escape and exile in Siberia

Siberia has always been in the margins of the Russian imperial state where the logic of enclosure was used at once, to contain insubordinate peasants and to avoid land reforms in Central Russia. Several movements were present here: many peasants would settle Siberia by being exiled for their abnormal behavior dangerous for the security of the country and the commune, while others, in fact, escaped the logic of land enclosure by resettling in Siberia and forming new communes on state land – the opportunity unintentionally offered by the land reform itself.

Along with the voluntary wave of resettlement, insubordinate peasants and instigators of agrarian movements were sanctioned to be reallocated to Siberia. The Highest Order of the Council of Ministers of 23 January 1906, as described in the circulars signed by Pyotr Stolypin himself, prepared guidance for proposed resettlement of 'malicious members of the commune,' people that

the commune itself should have found and prepared for removal (RGIA 1291.120.67). Expenses for the removal of disobedient members of rural communities were “entrusted to the eligible rural communities, who were obliged to pay the amount due at the same time as the sentencing decision on removal [was granted]” – as stated Stolypin in the circulars of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Ibid.). This program followed the same geographical directionality as the Siberian resettlement reforms – peasants from the central regions were removed to the Far East (TsMAM 369.4.27).

Travel to the Urals was challenging, prisoners and settlers, seeking for exile or escape, were traveling in groups and settling in Siberia in communes. All media channels, carrying out the task of the state, were widely promoting resettlement, hoping to attract the most enterprising and hard-working peasants who could not improve their economic situation in the Central Russian land commune (Rogachevskaia 2002). Against the state's intentions, settler households united in the land communes appropriated free land as a hereditary possession and resisted any effort to privatize. The commune remained as the primary type of land tenure in Siberia, not as a family unit like in Central Russia but in the form of "cooperation of direct producers and economic users of the land" (Shilovskii 2012, 15). Exiled criminals also united in the communes that they referred to as Siberian ‘exile collective’ or *artel* and ‘escaped convicts commune’ or *brodiazheskaia obshchina*, which to a large extent “governed the lives and controlled the activities of the exiles more closely and effectively than the regulations, agencies, and officers” (Wood 1990, 402). As George Kennan portrayed, “the *artel* is the body politic of the exile world; it plays the same role in the life of the exile that the *mir* or the commune plays in the life of the free peasant” (Ibid.).

Extralegal characteristics of enclosure showed itself during the course of the resettlement initiatives that the state unfolded as a part of the land reforms in 1906. A new Resettlement Department, transferred from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Ministry of Land Settlement and Land Organization, accommodated the reform and offered resettlement benefits to those households that decided to leave the communes in exchange for private land plots in the Russian Far East. Though migrants received state subsidies and the help of land surveyors in organizing land plots, some responsibility of infrastructural arrangement fell on the shoulders of the members of *obshchina* that remained in place.

The program of money collection was promoted through local churches during the Trinity Sunday in the period of five years in all cities and villages of the Empire (see Image 5) (TsMAM 369.4.106). Portrayed as a voluntary endeavor, these public statements were ordered and accounted for by the state. The Holy Synod order #1803 of 8-9 March 1910 proclaimed that “all churches of the Empire, in the course of five years, should collect donations to build churches and schools for immigrants in the Far East, [...] and this call should be accompanied by special sermons” (TsMAM 369.4.106, 20). As the Order explained, “we hope that the Russian people will respond to the holy cause of expanding and strengthening faith and knowledge in the distant and hollow margins of their native land” (Ibid.).

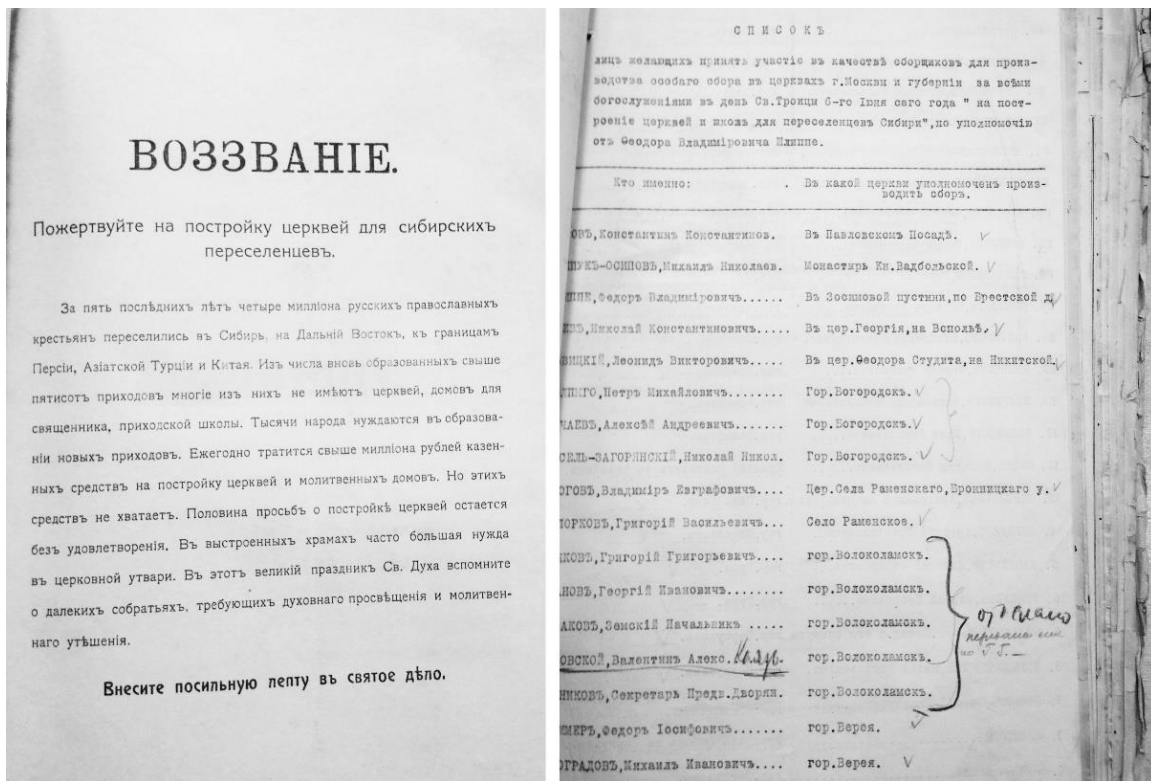


Image 5 – On the left: “Proclamation” – announcement displayed on the door of the churches to collect donations (Source: TsMAM 369.4.106, 146). On the right: a list of 41 churches in the Moscow *uyezd* that participated in the program of the Holy Synod order #1803, 1910. (Source: TsMAM 369.4.106, 27)

However, a high outflow of migrants would often cause major problems with their transportations, from finding enough wagons to fit all the families, to peasants not making it to the final destination

due to severe cold and needing to settle in random unoccupied land along the way. As stated the chief inspector of Land Settlement and Organization and the Minister of Railways, “the railway stations were in chaos, peasant families appeared at stations whenever they pleased and in unspecified numbers,” this situation often resulted in the inability of the Ministry of Railways to allocate enough warm wagons (*vagony teplushki*) and prepare families for departure (RGIA 1276.3.484, 2-5). As a result of this organizational confusion, the entire families had to wait for their departure under the open sky for days. As described a head of the district land settlement commission of Volokolamsk in Moscow *uyezd*, in the autumn of 1907, 120 peasant families that decided to resettle to Siberia, arranged a *khodok*¹⁶ for finding and crediting free land shares in Eniseisk governorate, and sold off all their possessions and land in Central Russia, when they did not receive the land allocations they were promised and had to seek for new parcels in other locations in Eniseisk governorate (TsMAM 369.4.27, 25-28). Harsh climate, long winters, and two years of drought in 1910 and 1911 drew some peasants bankrupt and made reliance on the commune an important incentive. In the period from 1906 to 1914 more than 3 million of peasants resettled in Siberia, while 11 percent of those had to return home, the most of which returned between 1910 and 1911 (Shilovskii 2012).

Resettlement reform was a necessary part of land organization. New settlers and prisoners were supposed to bring with them a new change in land politics of Siberia, a new wave of territorialization of the regime of private property. As the state thought, free settlers would embrace their individualistic merit to promote productive agriculture on enclosed farms. With the purpose of making sense of the legitimation, origins, and the workings of private property in the Russian Far East, I distinguish and highlight three geographic concepts of the frontier, the survey, and the grid as means of territorialization in the margins of the nation-state, to further explore the topic of enclosure.

4.4.2 The frontier, the survey, and the grid¹⁷

Theorizing the operationalization of private property, Nicholas Blomley argues that violence plays an integral role in the foundation of property regime, it enforces property rights through various disciplinary practices in material, discursive, and corporeal ways. Blomley identifies three lenses

through which to explore this relationship – the frontier, the survey, and the grid, three spatial concepts that “play an important practical and ideological role in property’s legitimation, foundation, and operation” (2003, 121). Legitimation of the exclusive ownership of land is often possible through the promotion of common narratives on the frontier that lies beyond the boundaries of property, a free land that has no owner. While the foundation of property regime often relies on measuring land or developing land surveys, followed by creating a new set of territorial guidelines or a new spatial grid for the sustained operation of the regime. These territorialities of the frontier, the survey, and the grid were the core mechanisms of Stolypin’s new land policy, its legitimation and foundation in both the local and the national periphery.

For over three centuries the Russian Far East was a strategic frontier that accommodated dispossession of the outlaw persons and criminals or other individuals who were marked to be harmful to the integrity of the fatherland. By 1660 the exiles from the European part of imperial Russia, in particular of foreign prisoners of war, accounted for 11 percent of Siberia’s total population (Wood 1990). Carrying out a number of genocidal campaigns launched to subordinate Siberian lands to cultured development through war, Elizabeth of Russia ordered to expel local ethnicities in 1742 eventually leading to a full disappearance of 12 indigenous groups by 1882. The space in the frontier was further territorialized by an inflow of new settlers and exiles from Central Russia, carried out through Stolypin's reforms with a goal to encourage new patterns of land organization. The power of lawful, administrative banishment was not only achieved by the state, the commune and the church played an important role in managing dispossession of banned humanity, thus, accommodating the formation of new territories of escape and exile through exception.

Stolypin used the same narratives to legitimize a new property regime in the Far East and to encourage cultured peasants of central Russia to leave the commune and settle private allotment land in Siberia. "Resettlement here", he argued, "is the main driving force; under the influence of this force, all other relations are shifting and being restructured: the free seizure economy of the old-timer, the age-old primitive economy of the nomad, and the local labor markets must adapt to the new conditions created by the arrival of new settlers" (Stolypin and Krivoshein 1910). Stolypin

and Krivoshein, the Minister of General Administration of Land Use and Agriculture, arranged an extensive traveling campaign to promote resettlement reforms, while churches and local land management committees were organized to deliver the message.

The notable 10-day field trip of Stolypin and Krivoshein to Siberia in August 1910 aimed at adjusting governmental affairs in relation to the resettlement program in the Russian Far East and celebrating its successes. In 10 days the ministers visited land communes, newly enclosed farms, prisons, and cities in 6 *uyezdy* and 4 governorates (Stolypin and Krivoshein 1910). The travel of the ministers was widely advertised by pro-governmental publications, public announcements, newspapers, and received mixed reactions, some admired it, while others reacted to the event as purely propagandistic, comparing it with the famous trip of Catherine II to the newly acquired lands of New Russia and Crimea in 1787.

The ministers published their observations, impressions, and suggestions in a lengthy note, where they highlighted the general success of the resettlement reform in Siberia. To improve the outcomes of the resettlement campaign, the note laid out a set of propositions the goal of which was to grant the rural population of the region personal land titles and property rights to their allotments to speed up the development of ‘cultured private farms’ (Ibid.). At the same time, it was proposed to preserve the Siberian land commune due to its extraordinary adaptability to rough conditions and the ability to resolve land disputes more effectively. To successfully implement the proposed course, Stolypin and Krivoshein offered a detailed set of technical measures of land organization, provision of subsidies and loans, delivery of agronomists to the sites, and new land surveying techniques. Ministerial proposals did not result in productive outcomes and were opposed by the settlers, although the government began the implementation of preparatory activities during the course of the reforms.

Siberia underwent a first set of land surveys in 1896 and 1898 that aimed to physically separate the land of the noble family, or ‘Kabinet land,’ from the land of old settlers, and to reclaim back all deserted land parcels. Stolypin later described these ‘broad brush surveys’ as “the most primitive division, in a biblical sense, like the division of land from water” (Stolypin 1910). This first set of land surveys established main borders between the large swaps of land of the entire

regions and villages, leaving internal division for the future and for Stolypin. This process of the broad land division did not result in planned outcomes, and 20 out of 38 million *desiatin* of land, not counting Altai and Kirgiz steppe, were not redistributed and left untouched by the surveys. New land reform was needed, the one that would put a more effective beginning to new land legislation and provide a more efficient small-scale land division for new settlers.

A new set of land surveys was developed to accommodate Stolypin resettlement reforms. This land legislation served more than instrumental ends. It arbitrated between an acknowledged regime of private property and those forms of property of the old settlers that were deemed unproductive and inefficient. More abstractly, the effect of the survey was to portray space as an 'object of calculation.' The correct setting of intraregional surveying in Siberia (*vnutri-nadelnoe mezhevanie*) has started with Stolypin, as he described in the fieldnotes – "all complex forms of land organization are being broken down: regional communes are divided into separate villages, settler-communes – into cutoffs, homesteads, and enclosed farms" (Stolypin 1910). This surge for certainty and rational land management caused an emergence of many private companies ready to exploit this opportunity, from engineers, agronomists, land surveyors, technicians, and students. With the help of land surveying, the land was prepared for a new territorial grid of privatized farms, in the Western ideals.

Drawing a territorial grid to establish allotment land for new settlers also followed meticulous guidelines. The new typology of land tenure had to follow a principle of *otruba* – enclosed farms clustered together in a village. Organization of an enclosed farm in a type of a *khutor*, or an individual farm physically separated from the village, that was encouraged in Central Russia was not feasible due to the forested terrain, rough climate conditions, and plenty of wild animals roaming in the area. Allocated *otruba* land then was redistributed among the settlers and evaluated by a special inspector, or *khodok*, who would travel ahead of the family and examine the quality of a given farm.

It is through legal practices and yet their absence that the Siberian frontier territories were manufactured. The new regime of private property, individual land management, and cultivation practices were normalized under the same legal framework as in Central Russia. Through popular

discourses on the frontier, development of land surveys, and production of guidelines for a new territorial grid, individual land tenure was extended to the nomadic lands of Siberia to foster a new image of a strong individual.

4.5 Situating the operational frontiers in Russian state capitalism today

The global encounter of enclosure brings us to examine Russia as a frontier of global capitalism, where the complex workings of exception accommodate a globalized land grab. Large-scale land capture by global actors predated the history of Russian capitalism. Imperial Russia heavily relied on foreign capital which accounted for 43% of all capital held in the country by 1914. The origin of the land banks was primarily European, and the majority of factories were owned by foreign entities. Considering these changes others thought of Russia as a frontier of Western economies or as a ‘peripheral empire.’

Russia’s biggest land reserves are now open for new investments. However, new features of land grabbing emerged in the post-Soviet space. Before that, piecemeal enclosure of land in imperial Russia followed a meticulous set of territorial techniques and coercive strategies that differed from a full-blown land grab by the international actors post-2002 Land Decree. The new land legislation is conflicting, “foreigners are not officially allowed to acquire agricultural land in Russia, however, they do so by means of their Russian subsidiaries, which are considered as Russian domestic companies by Russian law” (Visser et al. 2012).

The deliberate bankruptcy of the former Soviet land enterprises and fictive legality of obtained land shares allowed for investment capital of domestic oil and gas companies, local oligarchs, and foreign money, starting to flow into Russian land reserves. Scale of land grabbing increased massively, in particular in times of financial crisis of 1998, when agri-food business was a safe outlet for investments – “by mid-2008, according to the Institute for Agricultural Market Studies, 196 large agroholdings controlled 11.5 million ha, of these agroholdings, 32 had landholdings of over 100,000 ha” (Visser and Spoor 2011).

Answering journalists’ questions at an annual press conference, Vladimir Putin compared Russia with a bear that won’t share his land, his taiga, with anybody (RT 2014, October 24).

Paradoxically, the rates of land grabbing by foreign actors is snowballing, with the Ukrainian land deal of 100,000 hectares with the government of Libya, and appropriation of farmland in Central Eurasia by Western investors from the UK, Sweden, and Denmark, and petrodollars from the Gulf States (Visser and Spoor 2011). Rural Russia is still a frontier of global capital today with land being as important political asset as oil or gas.

Notes:

¹⁶ *Khodoky* in Siberian resettlement reforms were the so-called 'walkers,' groups of people assigned by the land management commissions or zemstvo institutions to explore areas in Siberia on behalf of new settlers.

¹⁷ This title was borrowed from the article by Nicholas Bromley titled "Law, Property, and the Geography of Violence: The Frontier, the Survey, and the Grid" (2003) to examine the formation of private property regime in the Siberian frontier.

CONCLUSION

This research has reexamined some predominant assumptions about the land, territory, and crisis triad in Russia by positioning the rural politics of the late imperial period within the global context of land enclosure. At the same time, it sought to introduce complexity into the dominant, colonial understanding of territory in conventional Western interpretation by bringing fresh insights from the studies on the Russian *obshchina*. In particular, it examined territorial practices of land enclosure that were used to eliminate the Russian land commune in response to the agrarian and economic crises of the late imperial period. Using original archival records on the Russian imperial land deals, surveys of the land commune, confidential circulars, speeches of reform officials, and peasant complaints, this research explored how the coalitions of landed nobility, land surveyors, landless serfs, and peasant proprietors used enclosure as a conduit for extra-legal governance, accumulation of capital, or, to the contrary, as a means of resistance. Critical discourse analysis of public narratives employed by the varieties of actors illustrated how the Russian imperial state and territories in the periphery were dialectically co-produced not only through institutional manipulations, state resettlement plans, and husbandry manuals, but also through political and public discourses.

This work argued that land reforms exploited practices of customary territorialization in the commune through land surveying (see *Chapter 2*), instigated territorial decentralization of state functions through erosion of the peasant land law (see *Chapter 3*), and furthered growing agrarian and economic crises in the countryside by promoting discourses on the ‘uncultured frontiers’ and peasant ‘backwardness’ (see *Chapter 4*). The urban periphery became a strategic and contested territory used for the accumulation of new landed wealth and displacement of two million peasant households, which accommodated capitalist development under the Russian Tsarist and, later, Soviet political regimes. Through this example, this analysis identified blind spots in the Western traditions of scholarship that often treat territory as a ‘bordered power container’ of the nation-

state in the tradition of Western political thought. Instead, it argued for a more nuanced understanding of social agency in the production of territory from the decolonized and decentered perspectives.

This concluding section addresses the contribution of research findings in the field of political geography. It also spotlights new theoretical insights that this research brings into the critical agrarian scholarship. It concludes with an overview of research limitations and indicates several directions for the future study of land enclosure.

Contributions to the critical agrarian studies and political geography debates

This dissertation initiated a discussion on how the focus on land enclosure and Russian imperial property relations can contribute to the core theoretical traditions of critical agrarian studies and political geography. This research objective did not intend to provide rigid conclusions but sought to open alternative directions for rethinking rural politics in the margins of Russian state-capitalism and other disputes over land and territory across the world today.

First, by bringing into discussion the political characteristics of property and its legitimation through enclosure, this work introduced a territorial dimension into the critical agrarian scholarship on the topic. Tsarist agrarian policies and practices of land acquisition are an exhausted avenue for research today. However, the idea of territory and, in particular, the territory of property, needs a more detailed historical examination. Most of the work on land grabbing in late imperial Russia has focused on the internal agrarian relations, where enclosure played a role of normalizing efficient economic productivity in the village. Yet, coercive practices of the territorialization of property often stand behind such agrarian conflicts. *How does exclusive ownership of a piece of land occur and by what means? How is the legitimation of this ownership achieved and justified? Who holds authority over drawing the borders of property? And whose interests are privileged or dispossessed in this process?* Bridging the study of the Russian territorial struggles into the global debates in political geography introduced new nuances into both areas.

Despite the geographical positioning of primary data in the peripheries of Moscow and the Far Eastern frontiers of the Russian nation-state, this research was not limited to any particular

location. The findings intentionally provide connections to other cases of land enclosure found on a global scale, depicting enclosure as an ordinary practice of the everyday capitalist development. The commune, seen in this research as a key territorial feature of imperial and socialist Russia, and not as a one-time one-place phenomenon, represents an alternative territorial regime. In some cases, it accommodated, but in others, it resisted dominant power relations. As a subaltern subject, the *obshchina* provided peasants with alternative territoriality of the sovereign, and informal enduring ownership of the land, resources, and the means of subsistence. Such localized and bottom-up mode of territorialization contests the predominant assumption of territory as a bordered container of state power. Hence, this study highlights the emancipatory potential of territory, since some use enclosure to acquire political power, while others enclose land to obtain territorial autonomy.

Second, focusing on the historical reading of territory from the Russian perspective, this study introduced a more nuanced alternative to the traditional colonial territory discourse often found in Western interpretations. This objective was achieved by discussing three properties of territory, namely land (as political-economic), sovereignty (as political-juridical), and spaces of dispossession (as a political-strategic aspect of territory).

Land in the Russian perspective was not merely a limited resource that could be measured, appropriated, and owned but it also carried a more sacral meaning that directed peasant life in the commune in particular ways (see *Chapter 2, Sections 2.3, 2.4*). Borrowing from the theoretical readings of ‘primitive accumulation’ and ‘primary division’ of land in the work of Karl Marx (1976) and Carl Schmitt (2003 [1950]) respectively, this work argued for cultural nuances in treating land as a source of capitalist accumulation. To account for this complexity, this dissertation examined commune’s daily practices of land repartitioning, through which land was more than a commodity. It also carried a paternalistic meaning in the commune – the peasant was born from land, which was a possession of the God. New land legislation under Pyotr Stolypin introduced a new measure and a new meaning of the land, against which enclosure practices operated. The peasant space was measured, evaluated, and continuously assessed against the new productivity standards to nurture a subordinate worker of the land.

Territorial sovereignty of the state, earlier developed in the era of Petrine reforms, carried out control over all stages of human life and bodily experiences, instead of representing individual freedoms through the regime of private property as could be found in the traditions of Western democracies (see *Chapter 1, Section 1.2*). The commune, as portrayed the Slavophiles, also held *dominium* over its land reserves and *imperium* over its populations (see *Chapter 3, Sections 3.3, 3.4*). This limited autonomy of the commune within the space of the state offered new opportunities for organized resistance to be expressed through the property regime. Instead of being subordinate bodies waiting to be controlled by the power of the state, the commune developed a whole set of customary territorial practices of land repartitioning, not only unique to every region but to every commune, the feature that could not be found in other societies (Gerschenkron 1962; Zyrianov 1992). Engaging with the work of Lefebvre (1991) and Agamben (2005) on ‘exceptional’ measures of state territorial practices, this analysis argued that the space of the commune and the nation-state of the empire both possessed territorial superiority over land, which resulted in the need to develop meticulous techniques of territorialization to eliminate the commune from within (see *Chapter 3, Section 3.4*). These techniques used the knowledge of science to privatize communal resources and were exercised through the archetypal farm exhibitions, husbandry manuals, methods of social agronomy, and everyday land surveying practices (see *Chapter 3, Section 3.4*, and *Chapter 4, section 4.3.1 and 4.3.2*)

The strategic spaces of dispossession in the case of Russian land enclosure were not limited to the national frontiers but were manufactured near the centers of power as well. The peasants were actively portrayed as ‘backward’ and a ‘grey mass,’ and the regime of property was applied to create strong proprietors under the rule of the state. Through comparison with the ‘moving frontiers’ and ‘fixed frontiers’ in the history of European colonization (Gottmann 1973; Turner 1893), this work unravels the idea of Russian internal colonization. Internal frontiers were created through public discourses and were fetishized as ‘foreign’ or ‘exotic’ (Etkind 2012). This so-called *orientalization* of Russia's poor resulted in a surge of the studies of the commune, coming from social agronomy (Chaianov 1918; Gershchenkron 1962; Kofod 1907), political economy (two surveys of the Free Imperial Economic Society and Imperial Russian Geographical Society in 1877 and 1910), or even popular literature (Frierson 1993; Kotsonis 1999), that found in the commune

a root of the crisis of Russian imperialism, hence, again, legitimizing enclosure through popular discourse.

Limitations of archival research and future directions

Conducting historical archival research raises a question of the objectivity of such information. Most political discourses analyzed in this dissertation were shaped by people whose voice was more legitimate – various state officials, urban intellectuals, land committees, and even *zemstvo* commissions in the village that consisted of the strongest peasant proprietors that represented the commune in front of the state. This research limitation is a common omission in the historical analysis where data is extracted from the archive. The agency of the archive itself has a contested nature. Lisa Lowe, in her work on the emergence of Western liberal regimes, demonstrates how the forgetting and acceptance of violent colonial encounters are ‘naturalized’ by the archive and in the narratives that it promotes (Lowe 2015). Lowe argues against treating the archive as a “stable, transparent collection of facts,” instead she calls to regard the archive as an “architecture of differently functioning offices and departments as rooms of the imperial state; they house the historically specific technologies of colonial governance for knowing and administering colonized populations, which both attest to its contradictions, and yield its critique” (Lowe 2015, 4). What seems to be a limitation of archival research, can also be seen as its strength. Revealing contradictory accounts of the poor by the imperial governance is a crucial objective of this work, since these discourses accommodated enclosure throughout the history of the Russian empire, so as they do today in the bureaucratic papers of the capitalist state.

Another limitation of this study is its inability to confirm the findings with hard numbers and statistical measures. *How much land was redistributed to the state peasants or proprietary serfs post-emancipation? How much of that land was exchanged, sold, or obtained after the land consolidation reforms? How many of the communes continued farming collectively after enclosure?* Collection and consolidation of a dataset with these estimates requires great work of gathering the information across different archival outlets. Similar quantitative studies that employ compiled longitudinal datasets of statistical estimated started to emerge only recently. For example, Stephen Nafziger (2016) has recently collected a unique dataset from Moscow province

on the frequency of communal land repartitions and its correlation with agrarian productivity, grain yields, tax obligation levels, land prices, and availability of rental markets, covering the period of 1858-1877. As he explains, the dataset was compiled from census records, *zemstvo* statistical sheets, and other official government statistics that have not been used before, which represents a new starting point in comprehensive quantitative analysis on the topic that is yet to come.

Moreover, by concentrating on the Central European part of Russia, this study omits from analysis processes of land enclosure in the Northern and Asian peripheral regions of the country that followed different pathways of capitalist development. As Nafziger identifies, enclosure resulted in different outcomes in Moscow and other urban regions, where people already relied on speculative labor relations in the city and kept their communal land allotments to accommodate future retirement and old age (Nafziger 2016). While enclosure rule did not extend into the Northern governorates and, in contrast, hit the hardest the Black Earth region in the South of the empire (Atkinson 1973; Bartlett 1990; Pallot 1999). Focus on a comparative analysis of these place-specific processes could be a productive direction for future research in post-colonial settings.

Some of these limitations can be resolved in the future research on the topic of enclosure. In particular, it would be of interest to conduct a comparative analysis of the imperial land enclosure and the practices of a bare land grab by foreign capital in the post-2002 Land Decree under Putin. As this dissertation reveals, the post-Soviet land rush is profoundly shaped by the historical legacies of the imperial land, territory, and crisis triad. Like the Tsarist period, people in modern Russia are still reliant on the land that they hold in the form of summer plots or *dachi*. As some scholars estimate, the number of urban populations that rely on dacha for food production range between 40 and 80% (Treivish 2014). As dacha gardening is widely seen to be a subject of Soviet nostalgia, it still serves as a source of food sovereignty and resistance to neoliberal agricultural production in times of economic instabilities. Moreover, similarly to the Tsarist and Soviet governance regimes, the patrimonial rule of the sovereign defines the entire system of power under Putin. Putin's figure as a new tsar has many similarities with post-Petrine Russian sovereignty and an absolute rule of the state over human life. The image of the Russian president as a 'tsar deliverer'

(Mamonova 2016), unsurprisingly reflects his popularity. Exploring these issues of new territorial and extra-territorial enclosure is a fruitful avenue for future work.

Michel Foucault, theorizing the history of political order in the European world, examined a historical transition from compulsion and ‘brute force’ of the absolute monarchic power to discipline framed by the formation of the new technologies of power that make people police themselves through everyday practices (Foucault 1977; 1978). During the shift from pre-capitalist to capitalist organization of political order emerged new disciplinary practices and normalizing mechanisms of subjectification and control through the principles of science. In the Russian empire, as later argued Laura Engelstein, the “Old Regime survived almost unmodified into the era in which the modern mechanisms of social control and social self-discipline derived from Western practices had already emerged” (Engelstein 1993, 343). The rule of law and discipline overlapped in the Russian political history.

New enclosures in the post-Soviet space transcend the chronological measures of power in a Foucauldian sense. From 1905 land enclosure in Siberia to the Soviet Virgin Lands campaigns and the 2002 Land Decree, the Russian example represented and still represents the superimposition of these models of power, rather than its succession. The so-called “juridical monarchy, the *Polizeistaat*, and the modern disciplinary regime” are all present in the modern Russian reality today. In the recent years, from the anti-Magnitsky law and a ban on child adoption (Federal law of Russian Federation no. 272-FZ of 12.28.2012), gay propaganda law (Federal law approved by State Duma on 06.11.2013), to the new bill of decriminalizing family violence (of 12.07.2017), enclosure has shifted onto the social and human life itself. Enclosure is becoming an ordinary territorial, ideological, and corporeal event in the everyday politics of a state-capitalist society such as Russia today. Thus, an extensive comparative and historical research on the nuances of new enclosures is still in the making.

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