LEARNING TO BE NOBLES:
THE ELITE AND EDUCATION IN POST-PETRINE RUSIA

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ABSTRACT

IGOR FEDYUKIN: Learning To Be Nobles: The Elite and Education in post-Petrine Russia
(Under the direction of David M. Griffiths)

This dissertation explores the relationship between the state and the nobility in post-Petrine Russia (1730s-1750s). It focuses on educational policies pursued by the state: specifically, on the establishment and operations of the Noble Cadet Corps and on the reform of noble service in 1736-1737; it also explores the reaction of the nobility to these policies. Traditionally, historians have viewed these measures as concessions granted by the state to the nobility in the aftermath of the succession crisis of 1730. Using a large body of unpublished sources from the archive of the Noble Cadet Corps and the records of the Heraldry Department, this dissertation argues that in the 1730s the government of Empress Anna conducted a campaign of social disciplining with the goal of fashioning a “true nobility” out of the existing elite. Specific changes in the system of noble service, such as allowing the nobles some say in choosing their career path and mode of schooling, were not a result of any political pressure from the nobility, but rather were motivated by the changing theoretical notions of human governability. The leading ministers of the reign believed that the best way to govern was to “encourage” nobles to perform more “diligently” by allowing them to follow their “natural inclinations.” The vast majority of the nobles were not interested in the educational opportunities given them by Anna’s government. At the same time, by 1730 there already existed a small, but
important stratum of the elite which was willing to actively embrace these opportunities. This dissertation argues, therefore, that the elite in the 1730s did not have any residual influence over the governmental policies, nor was there any room for a negotiated or consultative relationship. At the same time, whatever success the government’s campaign of social disciplining enjoyed, was due to the willingness of some nobles to cooperate with it.
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My colleagues at the New Economic School in Moscow, and Sergei Guriev in particular, provided the best possible environment to continue my work on this dissertation. I am also deeply grateful, for a variety of reasons, to Tracy Dennison, A. I. Miller, Alfred J. Rieber, Danilo Leonardi, Dasha Plakhova-Freshville, Sean Pollock, Rosa Magnusdottir, John Wallace, Anne Langley, Irina Denisova, and Rob Collis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

d. – delo (file/folder).

f. – fond (collection).

l. – list (page).

m. s. – “male souls” ([number of] duzh muzhskogo pola), the number of male serfs in one’s possession, the measure of wealth of a landlord in eighteenth-century Russia.

o. – opis’ (subdivision within a fond)

ob. – oborot (verso)

PSZ – Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii (Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire), 1st series. (References given to the number of the relevant law, not to the volume and page number).

RBS – Russkii biograficheskii slovar’ (Russian Biographical Dictionary).

RGADA – Rossiiskii Gosudarstvenyi Arkhiv Drevnikh Aktov (Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents), Moscow.

RGVIA – Rossiiskii Gosudarstvenyi Voenny-Istoricheskii Arkhiv (Russian State Archive of Military History), Moscow.

SIRIO – Sbornik Imeratorskago russkago istoricheskago obshchestva (Publications of the Imperial Russian Historical Society).

SK – Svodnyi katalog russkoi knigi grazhdanskoi pechati vosemnadtsatogo veka, 1725-1800 (General Catalogue of Russian Books Published in Civic Script in the Eighteenth Century, 1725-1800).

INTRODUCTION

On January 18, 1730, on the eve of his own wedding, Peter II, the nineteen-year-old grandson of Peter I, died of smallpox in Moscow’s Lefort Mansion. The teenage emperor did not leave behind either a designated heir, as he was entitled to do under Petrine legislation, or any direct issue, or even a lawful consort. In fact, he was the last male member of the ruling dynasty. On that fateful night the Supreme Privy Council, a body that had governed the empire during the past few years and consisted of half a dozen leading dignitaries of the realm (represented mostly by the Golitsyn and Dolgorukov princes, two of the most illustrious aristocratic clans) choose as the next sovereign of Russia the widowed Duchess Anna of Kurland, the niece of Peter I and the daughter of Ivan V, his brother and co-ruler from 1682 to 1696.1

In the course of the Council’s deliberations Prince D.M. Golitsyn suggested to his colleagues that they use the occasion to “gain some freedom for ourselves” (voli sebe pribavit’).2 “We might start [this enterprise], yet we will fail to see it through,” his colleague, Prince V.L. Dolgorukov, remarked. Still, during their day-long meeting on January 19, the Council members composed a set of eight “Conditions” to be signed by the new empress. These deprived her of powers to declare war, to make peace, impose new taxes, elevate officers to the highest ranks, deprive nobles of their

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1 That selection was far from obvious: other potential “candidates” included Tsarevna Elizabeth, Peter’s daughter; Duke Karl Peter Ulrich of Holstein, Peter’s grandson; Duchess Catherine of Mecklenburg, Anna’s elder sister; Evdokia Lopukhin, Peter’s divorced first wife; and even Princess Catherine Dolgorukov, Peter II’s betrothed bride. D.A. Korsakov, Votsarenie imperatritsy Anny Ioannovny (Kazan’, 1880), 94-101.

2 According to an alternative account, the idea was first suggested by Pavel Iaguzhinskii, the procurator-general of the Senate. On Prince D.M. Golitsyn see, in particular, Isabel de Madariaga, “Portrait of an Eighteenth-Century Russian Statesman: Prince Dmitry Mikhailovitch Golitsyn,” Slavonic and East European Review 62 (1984): 36-60.
landed estates and “honor” without trial, grant landed estates, appoint foreigners to
court positions, and spend state revenues on her own. Anna’s failure to observe the
“Conditions,” or Konditsii, would result in her loss of the “Russian crown.” A
delegation was sent to Anna, who duly accepted the “Conditions” and began her
journey from Kurland to Moscow.

Meanwhile, the rumors of the new arrangements spread throughout the old
capital, where the top of the Russian elite assembled in anticipation of Peter II’s
planned wedding. Discussions of the constitutional innovations initiated by the
Council resulted in a dozen or so proposals being submitted by about four hundred
senior officers and civil servants. These proposals addressed both the constitutional
arrangements, suggested by the Council, and the most pressing needs and desires of
their authors in general. The subsequent events are somewhat murky and open to
interpretation: the apprehensions of the nobility that the “Conditions” represented the
onset of a ruinous oligarchy were only amplified by the Council’s secretive and
arrogant way of doing business. In any case, the Council and the rest of the elite could
not find common ground. Finally, a large group of nobles declared to Anna that the
“Conditions” did not represent the views of the nobility at large and asked her to
assume the absolute authority enjoyed by her illustrious forebears. This gave Anna a
pretext to publicly tear up the document and to restore the autocracy in Russia.3

3 The standard account of the crisis is now I.V. Kurukin, Epokha "dvorskikh bur'": Ocherki
politicheskoi istorii poslepetrovskoi Rossi, 1725-1762 gg. (Riazan', 2003), 165-224, which finally
superseded D.A. Korsakov’s classical (and often incorrect) Votsarenie imperatritsy Anny Ioannovny. A
useful analysis of the crisis and its aftermath is also found in N.N. Petrukhintsev, Tsarstvovanie Anny
Ioannovny: formirovanie vntripoliticheskogo kursa i sud’by armii i flota 1730-1735 g. (St.Petersburg,
2001), 37-65. The standard analysis of the key documents of the crisis is found in a series of articles by
G.A. Protasov: "'Konditsii' 1730 g. i ikh prodolzhenie," Uchenie zapiski Tambovskogo
pedagogicheskogo instituta, 15 (1957): 215-231; idem, “Zapiska V.N. Tatishcheva o ’Proizvol’nom
rassuzhdenii dvorianstva’ v sobytiakh 1730 g.,” in Problemy istochnikovedeniia. Vol. 11 (Moscow,
1963), 246-253; idem, "Verkhovnyi Tainyi sovet i ego proekty 1730 goda (istochnikovedcheskoe
izuchenie)," Istochnikovedcheskie raboty, 1 (1970): 65-103; idem, "Dvorianskie proekty 1730 g.
(istochnikovedcheskoe izuchenie)," Istochnikovedcheskie raboty, 2 (1972): 61-102; idem,
"Sushchestvoval li ‘politicheskii plan’ D.M. Golitsyna," Istochnikovedcheskie raboty, 3 (1973): 90-
The meaning of these events has been debated by historians and polemists ever since. The crisis of 1730 looks especially intriguing, of course, against the backdrop of Petrine heavy-handed autocratic arbitrariness. Indeed, only five years after the death of the oppressive “Father of the Fatherland,” the Russian elite suddenly became an important political actor and played a decisive role in a major “revolution,” actively expressing its views and preferences regarding the system of government.

When the crisis was over, however, the elite fell silent again. Was it indeed Russia’s missed opportunity to radically alter its historical trajectory, as the 19th-century liberal historians would suggest, to step away from the path of eternal autocracy towards some sort of limited government? Or was it just a squabble between feuding clans? Did the proposals of 1730 really reflect the views of the nobility at large? Did they

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6 For a study that focuses on the rank-and-file nobility, as opposed to the great clans at the court, see Valerie A. Kivelson, Autocracy in the Provinces: The Muscovite Gentry and Political Culture in the Seventeenth Century (Stanford, 1996). For recent attempts to study the eighteenth-century rank-and-file nobility on the basis of large volumes of service records, see I. V. Faizova, "Manifest o vol'nosti i sluzhba dvor'anstva v XVIII stoletii" (Moscow, 1999), G.V. Kalashnikov, "Ofitserskii korpus russkoi armii v 1725-45 gg." Candidate of Science Diss., St.Petersburg, 1999.
represent any sort of corporate political platform of the nobility? Was the elite / the nobility a force to be reckoned with? What was the relationship between the early modern Russian state and the elite in general, that is, was the elite a political actor at all, and was it able to somehow constrain the autocrat and autocracy?7

*    *    *

Indeed, the events of 1730 have long served as a “testing ground for theories about the political culture of the Russian nobility,” this crisis being an event “ambiguous enough to prove the validity of everyone’s favorite theories.”8 One problem with the vast majority of recent interpretations, though, is their exclusive focus on the crisis itself and on the dozen proposals produced in the early February of 1730. It would be reasonable to suggest, however, that any theories regarding the political culture of the post-Petrine Russian nobility and the meaning of the crisis itself would be of somewhat limited validity, if the nature of the post-1730 regime is not also taken into account. It is all the more relevant, since the reign of Empress

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7 In a number of works competing aristocratic clans, bound by matrimonial ties, are portrayed as strong enough to effectively limit the monarch’s power. It might be, indeed, the case that, as Donald Ostrowski puts it, “within the upper echelons, members of the ruling class exchanged some of the power they acquired as a result of their patronage networks with the ruler for the authority of that ruler to maintain those same patronage networks.” Donald Ostrowski, “The Facade of Legitimacy: Exchange of Power and Authority in Early Modern Russia,” Comparative Studies in Society and History 44, no. 3 (July 2002): 562. Ostrowski refers, in particular, to recent works questioning the reality of “absolutism” in Western Europe. In the Russian case, however, historians have yet to demonstrate that these patronage networks went beyond the court circles and central bureaucracy. In particular, there is no evidence so far that these great clans had any independent power base in the provinces, as was the case in France and elsewhere. This approach becomes especially problematic when it is extended to assert also that these patronage networks resulted in “traditional informal restraints between both the monarch and nobility.” Ostrowski, “The Facade of Legitimacy,” 562. See also Edward L. Keenan, “Muscovite Political Folkways,” Russian Review 45 (1986). See, in particular, Nancy Shields Kollmann, By Honor Bound: State and Society in Early Modern Russia (Ithaca, NY, 1999); idem, Kinship and Politics: The Making of the Muscovite Political System, 1345-1547 (Stanford, 1987); For a sharp and, perhaps, too radical critique of this trend see Richard Hellie, “Thoughts on the Absence of Elite Resistance in Muscovy,” in The Resistance Debate in Russian and Soviet History, eds. Michael David-Fox, Marshall Poe, and Peter Holquist. (Bloomington, IN, 2003), 15-36. Hellie goes as far as to remind the readers Chekhov’s saying to the effect that “Russia isn’t England, you know.” He argues that “the elite was created by and exsusted for the state, not the other way around.” For a recent treatment of the early-modern Russian elite as a “ruling class,” see John P. LeDonne, “The Ruling Class: Tsarist Russia as the Perfect Model,” International Social Science Journal 136 (May 1993): 285-300.

Anna (1730-1740) is generally viewed as the first stage of gradual “demobilization” of the elite, exhausted by the Petrine revolution. The overall history of the Russian elite in the eighteenth century is presented, probably correctly, as a story of the “emancipation of the nobility,” which would eventually lead to the transformation of Petrine servitors into a refined nobility of the classical Imperial age and to the emergence of “society” increasingly distinguishable from the state. Indeed, despite considerable repressions against the aristocratic clans implicated in the attempt of 1730, Anna’s government limited the term of obligatory noble service to 25 years; abolished the widely resented (and widely circumvented) “law of single inheritance”; and established in 1731 the Noble Cadet Corps – a school that gave young nobles an opportunity to get an appropriate education and to avoid starting their service as privates in the regiments, rubbing shoulders with their own former serfs. However, the meaning of these reforms and the government’s intent in implementing them has never been studied in any detail.9

This dissertation focuses on one of these measures, the establishment of the Noble Cadet Corps. In doing so it seeks to illuminate the relationship between the

state and the elite in the 1730s and, by extension, the nature of the post-Petrine political regime in general. Indeed, the need for some educational arrangements of that sort was mentioned in the proposals of 1730, as was the demand to “relieve the nobility from service in low and degrading ranks.” Does it mean, then, that even as it repressed the Dolgorukovs and the Golitsyns, the government of Anna felt a need to placate the nobility at large by, essentially, conceding to the demands presented in 1730? Throughout much of the eighteenth century the elite staged coups, exercising its power, borrowing the memorable phrase, to “limit the autocracy by strangulation.” Its ability to retain residual influence over autocratic policy-making, once the coup was over, is less than obvious. Thus, the issue at stake here is the validity of the two competing models of autocracy, one of which presents it as more or less “absolute,” while the other portrays the elite as able to “restrain” the autocracy. 

There exist no studies addressing either the motives of the government in establishing the Cadet Corps, or the reaction of the nobility to this measure. Typically uncertain in this respect is Marc Raeff. According to him, “the crisis ended with Anne’s resumption of absolute and unlimited autocratic powers,” and her reign was “quite tyrannical and arbitrary.” Yet, somehow, at the same time, “in the long run, members of the nobility were given a measure of satisfaction of their aspirations,” those aspirations including “more opportunities for the education of their children” and liberalization of rules of service.”

10 Attempts to present the Russian autocracy as “restrained” by the elites get their inspiration, it seems, from the revisionist analysis of absolutism in Western Europe. For a review of the latest developments on this front, though, see William Beik, “The Absolutism of Louis XIV as Social Collaboration,” *Past and Present*, no. 188 (August 2005): 195-224. To a significant extent, this new paradigm of studying eighteenth-century Russian politics grew also out of an old and established tradition of prosopographic study of the pre-Petrine elite. For an overview, see Robert O. Crummey, “The Latest From Muscovy,” *The Russian Review* 60 (October 2001): 474-486.

11 “Introduction to Plans for Political Reforms in Imperial Russia, 1730-1905,” in Marc Raeff, *Political Ideas and Institutions in Imperial Russia* (Boulder, CO, 1994), 101. In his classic work on the eighteenth-century elite Raeff mentions briefly that the establishment of the Cadet Corps was a
account asserts that by establishing the Cadet Corps Anna “conspicuously
demonstrated that she listened attentively to the voice of ‘all the land’,” i.e. fulfilled
the demand of the nobility.¹²

This interpretation begs for some further explanation, however, for did not
Peter himself, only few years earlier, have to actually force the nobles to study? Why,
then, in 1731 does the right to study suddenly become a concession to the nobility? In
this dissertation I argue instead that Anna’s government, and specifically such leading
ministers as Field-Marshal B. C. von Münnich and Vice-Chancellor A.I. Ostermann,
pursued a coherent policy of social engineering with the goal of moral reformation of
the elite and creation of a “true nobility.” I maintain that in the 1730s Russia saw the
arrival of assumptions and practices associated with the “disciplinary revolution”
unfolding at that time in Western Europe.¹³ The central element of this revolution
was, to borrow a definition from a modern scholar, “a shift from external coercion to
self discipline as mechanisms for regulating social behavior,” which was “critical to

“response to the need for giving privileged service status to the nobility.” Marc Raeff, Origins of the
Russia Intelligentsia: The Eighteenth-Century Nobility (New York, 1966), 68.

interpretations of Anna’s policies towards the nobility, see the introduction to Part II of this
dissertation.

¹³ On social disciplining see, most famously, Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth
disciplinary revolution is also shaped by Gerhard Oestreich, Neostoicism and the Early Modern State
(Cambridge, 1982; 2008); Marc Raeff, The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change
through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600-1800 (New Haven, 1983); idem, "Transfiguration and
Modernization: The Paradoxes of Social Disciplining, Paedagogical Leadership, and the Enlightenment
in the eighteenth Century Russia," in Marc Raeff, Political Ideas and Institutions in Imperial Russia
(Boulder, CO, 1994): 334-347; R. Po-Chia Hsia, Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe
1550-1750 (London, 1989); and Philip S. Gorski, The Disciplinary Revolution: Calvinism and the Rise
of the State in Early Modern Europe (Chicago, 2003). Victor Zhivov’s article on disciplinary revolution
in Russia, which also uses Gorski’s books as a reference point, appeared too late to be considered in
this dissertation. See Victor Zhivov, “Disciplinarnaia revolutsiia i bor’ba s sueveriem v Rossii XVIII
v.: ‘provaly’ i ikh posledstviia,” in Atropologia revolutsi (Moscow, 2009), 327-360. See also a forum
on Foucault in Russia in Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie 49 (2001). My understanding of early-modern
notions of rulership and human nature is influenced decisively by Jay M. Smith, The Culture of Merit:
Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France, 1600-1789 (Ann Arbor,
1996).
the development of modernity in the West.”

This shift meant a vast expansion of the state’s ambition – expansion not so much in the breadth of its functions (although in that too, necessarily so), but in its understanding of the depth of obedience to be expected from its subjects. Such measures as the creation of the Cadet Corps and the reform of the noble service in 1736-1737 should be viewed in light of these changing notions of governing. Rather than a “concession” to the elite, these measures represented an attempt to use modern techniques of social disciplining for the creation of a “true nobility.”

This assertion questions the conventional history of the relationship between the state and the elite in eighteenth-century Russia as that of a gradual “emancipation” of the nobility, which was allegedly wresting, little by little, its rights and privileges from the hands of weak monarchs. There is simply no evidence whatsoever that the need to take into account the demands and desires of the nobility ever entered the policy-makers’s minds. This assertion also serves to refine the extremely broad picture of the arrival of the “well-ordered police state” in Russia presented in Marc Raeff’s eponymous work by positing a sharp divide between Peter and his successors in terms of their “governmentality.” Peter, in particular, is presented here as an essentially seventeenth-century ruler in terms of his understanding of governing.

*   *   *

The second major theme of this dissertation is the mechanism of societal and cultural change. The fate of the Petrine project – both cultural Westernization and


15 Westernization is clearly a very imprecise term. Its meaning, in a way, is self-evident: the term broadly invokes the idea of “making Russia more like the Western Europe” and refers to the borrowing of European institutions, technologies, cultural and social norms and practices by Peter, his successors and, it becomes increasingly clear, his predecessors. I am aware that the use of the term is problematic. To begin with, there was no single homogenous West from which to borrow in the early eighteenth century. Rather, there was a number of “Wests,” that is, competing social, political, and
institutional restructuring – was major concern for historians since the emperor’s death. As Sergei Soloviev put it in the nineteenth century, “Now the reformer was in his grave, so the time came to test how stable the order established by him was.”

Peter himself was not entirely sure if his project would outlive him; neither was its survival obvious for the contemporaries, including foreign ambassadors, who speculated about the possibility of Russia’s return to her old ways. Historians argued whether there had been any revision of Peter’s reforms after his death, and if yes, how one is to assess this revision. While some, including Soloviev himself, believed that Petrine innovations had indeed been corrupted by the emperor’s unworthy and weak successors, others, beginning with liberal historian and politician P.N. Miliukov, maintained that whatever revision actually took place was limited, required by Russia’s circumstances, and, perhaps, even beneficial. Today the consensus picture cultural models. Another question is whether indeed Petrine borrowings meant “Westernizing” Russia, or the imported norms and institutions were twisted and adapted, while the essence of the “Russian model,” whatever it might be, remained the same. A related question is whether the borrowing of social and cultural practices by the elite lead to internalization of some, or any, “Western” values. All of these issues are important, and this dissertation seeks to contribute to our understanding of some of them. At the same time, I reserve a right here to use this term, despite all its imperfections, as a way of referring to institutions and practices introduced by Peter and sufficiently novel and alien for the contemporaries to entail radical and stressful changes in their patterns of life; to avoid further terminological disputes Westernization might as well be called “Petrinization.” For a classic discussion of “Westernization,” see Archbald Kahan, “The Costs of Westernization in Russia: The Gentry and the Economy in Eighteenth-Century Russia,” Slavic Review 25, no.1 (March 1966).


17 To some extent, these debates can often be traced back directly to the propaganda campaigns launched by the mid-eighteenth century rulers against their predecessors, notably by Empress Elizabeth against the ministers Empress Anna and her short-reigning heir, and by Catherine II – against Peter III. Having occupied the throne as a result of a coup, these sovereigns felt a need to legitimiz their actions by delegitimizing those of previous rulers. The traditional way to do it was to claim to be the “true heirs” of the first emperor and to be putting Russia back on the Petrine course. The previous ruler was, thus, implicitly presented as a dangerous revisionist. On competition for the mantle of Peter’s true heir, see N. Riazanovsky, The Image of Peter the Great in Russian History and Thought (Oxford, 1985), 23 passim; E. Shmurlo, Petr Velikii v otsenke sovremennikov i potomstva. Vol. 1. (St.Petersburg, 1912), 31 passim; Richard S. Wortman, Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy From Peter the Great to the Abdication of Nicholas II (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 40 passim.

18 P.N. Miliukov, Gosudarstvennoe khoz’aistvo v Rossii v pervoi chetverti XVIII v. i reforma Petra Velikogo (St.Petersburg, 1892).
seems to be that of extremely pragmatic, and even opportunistic, government.

According to N.N. Petrukhintsev, policymakers of Anna’s reign intended to “bring Peter’s domestic program to completion.” Yet their actions were determined by the severity of fiscal constraints produced by the overextension of Petrine years.\(^{19}\)

If one argues, however, as I do, that the government of Anna pursued a coherent policy of social engineering, then the question regarding the moving forces behind this policy emerges. One problem with the works focusing on competition between rival aristocratic clans / patronage networks is that they leave out the conceptual dimension of eighteenth-century politics. Indeed, if elite politics were solely about the struggle for opportunities to exercise patronage, the only way to explain purposeful, ideologically driven change is to have a strong monarch acting as a \textit{deus ex machina}. In the absence of such a monarch, as was the case in the 1730s,\(^ {20}\) the ability of the government to pursue such a policy is harder to explain.

In this dissertation I propose to bring ideas back as one of the important factors in eighteenth-century politics. In their actions the leading dignitaries were in a very real sense motivated by their understanding of a proper government and way of governing, by their ideas regarding the need for a moral reform of the elite, etc. I do not attempt, however, to impose undue coherence on these notions. Most importantly, I do not attempt to exclude court politics from consideration. On the contrary, I view

\(^{19}\) Petrukhintsev, \textit{Tsarstvovanie}, 66.

\(^{20}\) The actual degree of Anna’s involvement in policymaking is yet to be investigated seriously. Our traditional picture of her is shaped by the overall perception of the years from 1725 to 1762 as lacking any long-lasting significance, and as a mere interregnum thwarted by the cataclysmic transformation of the Petrine era and the imperial grandeur of Catherine’s reign. To a large extent, this “era of palace revolutions” was defined traditionally by its political instability, i.e. brevity of reigns and unpredictability of succession, while the ruling monarchs were perceived as weak and incompetent, either because they were women, or children, or “unbalanced,” or because their reigns (and lives) had been cut short by coups. The two existing semi-popular biographies of Anna go some distance towards questioning this picture, but do not provide any definitive answer. E.V. Anisimov, \textit{Anna Ioannovna} (Moscow, 2002); Mina Kirstein Curtiss, \textit{A Forgotten Empress: Anna Ivanovna and Her Era, 1730-1740} (New York, 1974). Anna seems to have been by far not as aloof and incompetent as traditionally portrayed; nor was she, however, comparable in her role in government to Catherine II and Peter I.
court politics as an important moving force behind cultural change. In practice the shift to the new notion of governing took the form of discreet policy measures. Each of them was, simultaneously, both an ideological project and a move made by a specific dignitary in the turf war of court politics. Ideas and policies were formulated within the context of power struggle; their implementation (establishment of the Cadet Corps, for example) was also a way of expanding one’s sphere of authority.

This dissertation is not limited, however, to the domain of court politics and Imperial decision-making. Although the attempt to discipline the nobility in the 1730s was, most unequivocally a “revolution from above,” whatever success it enjoyed was due to voluntary participation of certain strata of the elite. I am skeptical, though, of the traditional picture of gradual “awakening” of mentalité de noblesse Russe - mentalité that appears to be presented as somehow immanent to the elite. In my analysis I show that the participation of the wider nobility in the Cadet Corps was driven not necessarily by noble sentiment or by any sort of ideological commitment to the cause of Westernization, but rather by extremely pragmatic and mundane concerns, incentives, and availability of resources. It was this interplay of competing agendas pursued by competing, adapting, and maneuvering individuals that drove the Westernization project forward.

* * *

I would also point out a number of other ways in which this dissertation contributes to our understanding of Russia’s eighteenth century. In the narrow sense, this is a study of the Noble Cadet Corps as an educational institution filling a gap in the historiography of early eighteenth-century Russian education. This school occupied a central place in Russian cultural life of the 1740s-1750s as the home to groundbreaking theatrical and literary activities. Its graduates included such leading
authors of the day as Aleksandr Sumarokov and Mikhail Kheraskov, not to mention dozens of lesser writers, translators, and educators. A study of the cultural environment at this institution would enhance our understanding of their ideas and works, especially as these writings, for lack of other sources, are often used as a window into the thinking of the mid-eighteenth century elite in general.\textsuperscript{21} In the late 1750s the Corps was also notable for its connections to the court of Grand Duke Peter (Peter III) and to the “Panin party,” and so this study illuminates the origins of ideas shared, and policies advocated, by these groups\textsuperscript{22} (and indirectly, half a century later, by the future emperor Paul I). It also contributes to the history of morals and vospitanie in Russia: works on these topics tend to jump from Peter’s Mirror of the Honorable Youth straight to Catherine II and I. I. Betskoi.\textsuperscript{23} Speaking of Catherine, this dissertation provides an important antecedent to her educational reforms and experiments in social engineering. Finally, by illuminating the role of the elite in the post-Petrine period, I am hoping to contribute, if only indirectly, to our understanding of post-revolutionary normalization in general.

\textbf{Sources and Structure}

\textsuperscript{21} Most recently, Cynthia H. Whittaker, \textit{Russian Monarchy: Eighteenth-Century Rulers and Writers in Political Dialogue} (DeKalb, IL, 2003); Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, \textit{The Play of Ideas in Russian Enlightenment Theater} (DeKalb, IL, 2003).


\textsuperscript{23} Catriona Kelly, \textit{Refining Russia: Advice Literature, Polite Culture, and Gender from Catherine to Yeltsin} (Oxford, 2001); Anna K. Kuxhausen, “Raising the Nation: Medicine, Morality, and Vospitanie in Eighteenth Century Russia” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2006).
This dissertation is based primarily on the documents from the archive of the Noble Cadet Corps preserved at the Russian State Archive of Military History (RGVIA) in Moscow. The Corps is the earliest Russian school whose institutional archive survived intact. The data that I was able to mine there could be divided into two categories. On the one hand, there are sources that describe the policies pursued by the state and pedagogical techniques employed by the teachers at the Corps. These include various orders from the government, internal regulations, examination records, records of investigations into various transgressions, etc. On the other hand there are records that describe the family background of incoming cadets. These are supplemented by the records of the Heraldry, a government bureau established by Peter I and charged with keeping track of nobles and their service records – essentially, a personnel department of the Empire. Given the virtual absence – predictable, but still regrettable – of narrative sources left by the nobles of this period (such as letters, diaries, etc), I used these records to reconstruct, as far as possible, the reaction of the nobility to the educational policies pursued by the state.

I also consulted the papers of the Senate, of Anna’s Cabinet of Ministers, and of the key personalities of Anna’s reign, including her favorite, Ernst Biron, and Field-Marshal Burchard Christoph von Münnich. (I by no means claim to have exhausted the latter’s voluminous records. Further study of papers related to his activities as the head of artillery and, especially, of the Military College, would, undoubtedly, provide further insights into his activities related to education.) Naturally, I employ the full arsenal of standard sources available to a student of eighteenth-century Russia, including the Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire (PSZ), the records of the Supreme Privy Council and of the Cabinet of Ministers published before the 1917 revolution by the Russian Historical Society (in Sbornik
I made a conscious decision not to touch in this dissertation upon the literary works produced by the Corps’ graduates, especially the poems. These have been analyzed extensively by the students of eighteenth-century literature, and they should be properly discussed within the framework of the literary process.24

This dissertation is organized thematically. In Part I, I attempt to put the foundation of the Noble Cadet Corps into its proper context. I present an outline of the relevant intellectual trends in contemporary Western Europe and of recent educational innovations, against whose backdrop Peter’s policies should be considered. I argue that this Western European context was defined by the unfolding “disciplinary revolution” based on changing notions of human nature, ability, merit, and morality. In my discussion of Peter’s educational policies I attempt to demonstrate that lacking these notions he was, essentially, a seventeenth-century ruler in his understanding of human nature and, consequently, in his methods of effecting a transformation of Russia. I also discuss the educational writings produced by Peter’s younger contemporaries in the 1720s-1730s. I argue that thanks to the growing familiarity with European theories, the need for a moral reformation of the nobility and creation of “true nobles” in Russia occupied an increasingly prominent place in their thinking.

In Part II, I study the Cadet Corps as an institution. I present the foundation of the Cadet Corps as a result of a complex interplay of the court politics of 1730-1732 taking place against the backdrop of broader cultural change, outlined earlier. In the next three chapters I focus on educational practices employed at the Cadet Corps. I

24 See, most recently, Elena Pogosian, Vostorg russkoi ody i reshenie temy poeta v russkom panegirike 1730-1762 gg. (Tartu, 1997).
argue that these practices reflected a determined attempt to reproduce at the Corps the latest educational methods borrowed directly from the Berlin Cadet Corps and, less directly, from August Hermann Francke’s Pietist schools in Halle. As such, these practices carried within them notions of human nature, which were both radically different from those that informed Peter’s policies and, if accepted, had significant social implications. Having identified these notions, I attempt to trace their influence on other policy measures implemented by Anna’s government, notably the reform of noble service in 1736-1737.

In Part III, I discuss the reaction of the nobility to these measures. I demonstrate that the system of noble service in the 1730s, while demanding and rigid in theory, in practice allowed the nobles a de-facto freedom of choosing whether to study or not. Thus, the decision to enter the Corps could be interpreted as such – as a decision reflecting the circumstances and strategies of individual families. I go on to analyze the family backgrounds of incoming cadets to determine which strata of the nobility accepted the new opportunities offered to them and which did not, and to attempt to reconstruct the reasons behind these decisions. Finally, in the Epilogue I outline the relevant developments outside the Corps in the 1740s-1750s, including the creation of the Naval Cadet Corps and the Artillery and Engineering Cadet Corps, to demonstrate how the ideas and practices introduced in the 1730s were employed and adjusted in subsequent decades.
Part I

“They Grow Up Like a Wild Forest”:
The State, the Nobility, and Education, 1700-1730

In May 1714, while celebrating in St.Petersburg the launch of a new warship, Peter I addressed a group of “his old Russians,” reports Friedrich Christian Weber, Hannoverian envoy to Russia. These “old” Russians were being reproved by the tsar for “not following the example of other Russian ministers and generals, and [for not taking] encouragement from their experience,” gained by the latter thanks to Peter’s reforms. So the tsar urged his stubborn subjects to consider the beneficial transformation undergone by their country in recent years:

Brethren, who is that man among you, who thirty years ago could have had only the thought of being employed with me in ship carpenter’s work here in the Baltic; of coming hither in a German dress to settle these countries conquered by our fatigues and bravery; of living to see so many brave and victorious soldiers and seamen sprung from Russian blood; to see our sons coming home able men from foreign countries; to see so many outlandish artificers and handicraft men settling in our dominions, and to see the remotest potentates express so great an esteem for us?25

Indeed, so successful had Russia been, according to Peter, in adopting foreign arts and sciences and putting them to good use that she was now playing a key role in a global (i.e., European) process of what he called the “transmigration of sciences.”26


26 This episode became widely known in Russia, and the “Petrine prophecy” played an important role in the eighteenth-century ideological constructions. See A.L. Zorin, Kormia dvuglavogo orla… Russkaia literatura i gosudarstvennaia ideologija v poslednei treti XVIII – pervoi treti XIX veka (Moscow, 2004), 95-122. Prince Kantemir uses it in his counterpropaganda efforts already in the
Historians, Peter theorized, believe that Greece had been the “ancient seat of all sciences, from whence being expelled by the fatality of the times, they spread in Italy, and afterwards dispersed themselves all over Europe.” The last ones to adopt “the arts, sciences, and improvements” were the Germans and the “Polanders.” As for Russia, due to the “perverseness of our ancestors,” sciences and improvements were “hindered from penetrating” this realm. Now, however, things were to change: “You may happen even in our lifetime to put other civilized nations to the blush, and to carry the glory of the Russian name to the highest pitch,” Peter observed to his subjects. He explained:

I can compare this transmigration of sciences with nothing better than the circulation of the blood in the human body, and my mind almost gives me [that] they will some time or other quit their abode in England, France, and Germany, and come to settle for some centuries among us, and perhaps afterwards return again to their original home into Greece.  

Indeed, for Peter it was by finally joining this “transmigration of sciences” that Russia was to assume a meaningful role in the flow of global history. Thus, this transmigration was the essence of his reign. What matters for the purposes of this dissertation, however, is Peter’s understanding of why and how exactly nations adopt “arts, sciences, and improvements.” Unsurprisingly, Peter believed that the key to the enlightenment of nations was the actions of well-meaning and persistent governments: the Poles and the Germans, allegedly, “formerly groped in the same darkness in which we have lived hitherto, but the indefatigable care of their governors opened their eyes at length.” What were his Russian subjects to do in this case? Here the advice offered by Weber’s Peter seems contradictory. On the one hand, the tsar invited his subjects simply to “practice the Latin saying ora et labora”: to him, “pray and work,”


persistence and passive submission were enough. On the other, although “blind obedience” currently displayed by his subjects was important, Peter hoped that they would “seriously second” his designs: that is, add to their blind obedience “voluntary knowledge,” and “apply” themselves “to the enquiry of good and evil.”

These are, I would argue, two radically different approaches to cultural transformation, to the relationship between the state and its subjects, and to the meaning and purpose of power. The former, as Max Okenfuss has pointed out, is essentially pre-modern, for within the “ora et labora” framework desired transformation was a matter not of “continuous and continuing change and improvement” of human nature, but rather, of mere acceptance. The latter, it seems to me, smacks of modernity; for it implies a far more ambitious agenda on the part of the state. If “voluntary knowledge,” to borrow Weber’s phrase, is required, then the state aims to regulate not only the outward behavior of individuals, but also their will, their desires and values. It wants them not simply to obey, but to want to obey, i.e. to internalize prescribed values. As Joseph Michel Antoine Servan, an eighteenth-century French reformer of morals and society, would put it half a century later “A stupid despot may constrain his slaves with iron chains, but a true politician binds them even more strongly by the chain of their own ideas; it is at the stable point of reason that he secures the end of the chain.”

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28 Ibid.


30 J.M. Servan, Discourse sur l’administration de la justice criminelle (1767) as quoted in Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, 102-103. By the 1770s this idea becomes really a commonplace: in his book James Van Horn Melton supplies a long line of quotes from the Prussian and Habsburg cameralists to the same effect. To give just one example, Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi, the cameralist, wrote that “Enlightened Subjects are obedient because they wish to be, subjects blinded by prejudice because they are forced. A domesticated lion fondles his master, while a lion in fetters constantly seeks to break out of his chains. The lion in bondage will
This episode recited by Weber may well be apocryphal: we have no other evidence that Peter ever made such a speech, or that he said exactly what Weber reports he did. Overall, the actual wording in Weber’s rendering of the emperor’s speech probably says more about his own sensibilities than about Peter’s. Nevertheless, the distinction between these two approaches is crucial for our understanding of Petrine and post-Petrine Russia. In the following pages I will argue that, lacking a concept of moral improvement and not conceptualizing the ethical as an element of relations of power, Peter was essentially missing out on a “disciplinary revolution” that unfolded in Western Europe in the late seventeenth – early eighteenth century and defined the essence of the ongoing transformation of the state.

The central theme of Part I (chapters 1-5) of my dissertation is, thus, the emergence of a modern notion of social disciplining in early eighteenth-century Russia. In the following chapters I attempt to put the foundation of the Noble Cadet Corps in 1731 into its proper intellectual context which, I would argue, was framed by changes of the ways in which the mechanisms of power and the workings of human nature were understood. In chapter 1, I present an outline of the key intellectual shifts and changes in the practices of governing that defined the “disciplinary revolution” in Western and Central Europe in the late seventeenth – early eighteenth century. In chapter 2, I discuss how these shifts and changes were expressed in the emergence in Europe of that period of formal, “disciplinary” education. I place special emphasis on the development of institutionalized education in Prussia, which is important both as eventually free himself of his fetters, and turn on his master in fury.” Melton, Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins, xxii.

31 Four pages later, speaking this time in his own voice, Weber asserts that “as far as fear of government and blind obedience rather than wisdom of government can carry things, the Russians surpass all other nations.” Weber, 20. Similar statements on “blind obedience” of Russians are repeated elsewhere in the book. See, however, Weber’s contemporary, Englishman John Perry, who believed that the Russians are destined for “slavery” by their “Slavic soul.” Marshal Poe, A People Born to Slavery: Russia in Early Modern European Ethnography, 1467-1748 (Ithaca, NY, 2000), 192-193.
an extreme case of religion-driven disciplinary revolution, and as the key source of intellectual and institutional borrowing in early eighteenth-century Russia, including the idea of the cadet corps itself. In chapter 3, I analyze through this lens Petrine educational and social policies. I argue that the key feature of these policies was the tsar’s inability to perceive education as an instrument of social, much less of moral, transformation. In Chapter 4, I present an overview of educational writings of Peter’s younger Russian contemporaries, focusing on the way in which they appropriated, discussed, and used contemporary discourses and practices related to human nature, education, and morals. Finally, in chapter 5, I discuss in this context the creation of the Noble Cadet Corps itself. I show that far from being a concession granted by the state to the nobility as a result of the 1730 crisis, it in fact reflected the consensus among the key members of the ruling elite regarding the need to discipline and reform the nobility (and society) much more thoroughly than was done by Peter.
Chapter 1
The Soul of the Machine: Human Nature, Society, 
and the State in Early Modern Europe

According to a standard version, implicit in a great majority of accounts, in refashioning the administrative machinery of his realm Peter was acting within the framework of progressive rationalization (“mechanization”) of political thinking - rationalization based on Cartesian philosophy and Lockean and Puffendorfian notions of the state. In particular, his “practical mind” was attracted by a secular concept of the state born in Europe out of the ravages of religious wars.32 Thus, according to Evgenii Anisimov, the leading authority on Peter, the emperor’s practices reflected the influence of the “epoch of rationalism of the European seventeenth century,” as embodied by “Bacon, Spinoza, Locke, Gassendi, Hobbes, Leibnitz.” The essence of this rationalism was the belief that the state, rather than being “immutable and God-given,” was, in fact, a man-made institution, something akin to a machine:

In an appraisal of social phenomena and institutions, mechanisms held sway – more precisely, mechanical determinism. The outstanding success of mathematics and natural sciences created the illusion that one might treat life in all its manifestations as a mechanical process. With equal ardor such an approach was applied to physiology, psychology, society, and the state, for, according to Descartes’s teaching on universal mathematics (\textit{mathesis universalis}), all sciences were seen as another form of mathematics, which appeared to be especially important then as the only certain knowledge shorn of mysticism.33

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32 To give an example of a false dichotomy between “modern” and “religious,” an author of a section of the \textit{Cambridge History of Russia} writes that “although” Shafirov “explained Russia’s conduct in the [Northern] war as consistent with contemporary European thinking on international law and sovereignty, citing text from Grotius and Pufendorf. Yet (sic!) Shafirov also quoted Biblical texts in support of Peter’s conduct.” Similarly, “although Tatishchev has most often been read as a secularist thinker, he demanded that the tsar pay attention to close advisors lest dismissing their wisdom provoke divine punishment.” Gary M. Hamburg, “Russian Political Thought: 1700-1917.” In \textit{The Cambridge History of Russia}. Vol. II, Imperial Russia, 1689-1917 (Cambridge, 2006), 117-118.
Hence Peter’s rational, “regulated” state.

Indeed, in his classic study James E. King emphasizes the influence of contemporary “scientific” and mathematical thinking on European (French, that is) political theory and practice of the mid-seventeenth century. It was believed, according to King, that “the answer to all problems lay somewhere revealed in the bosom of reason and number,” while the sovereign authority was “both the product of reason and its instrument.” This belief in reason made the problem of governability irrelevant. According to Richelieu, “man having been created reasonable, ought to do nothing except by reason, since otherwise he would act against reason, and consequently, against himself who is the author of it.” A ruler who is being reasonable, and acts on basis of the reason of state, would be loved and obeyed by his subjects – because it is a reasonable thing for them to do.34 This reason-based theory of governing and governability went hand-in-hand with the rationalization of the state apparatus and, of course, with the staggering growth of the French military. The army grew – mostly under Louis XIV, but also under Richelieu – from peacetime strength of 10,000-20,000 in the early decades of the seventeenth century to about 150,000 peacetime (and over 300,000 wartime) by the end of the century.35 This expansion was, allegedly, made possible by the new rational administration of the state – but at the same time, it also required introduction of the new, more impersonal, ways of governing.

33 E.V. Anisimov, The Refoms of Peter the Great: Progress Through Coercion in Russia (Armonk, 1993): 24-25. Anisimov’s interpretation of Peter, though, is driven to a significant extent by his not-so-subtle desire to draw a parallel between the reforming tsar and the Bolsheviks.


Yet, two caveats should be made here. First, the rationalization of contemporary European models of thinking and governing was never as absolute and unequivocal as implied in the traditional narrative of the progress of science. Peter, of course, knew and personally praised a number of contemporary philosophers, mostly German, and above all, Puffendorf, whose work he had translated into Russian and included in the program of studies for his son Aleksei.\(^{36}\) It is true that the Puffendorfian political theory is best understood within the context of Cartesian rationalization of analytical discourse and of the “post-Westfalian deconfessionalised sovereign territorial state.” This attempt to purge “moral theology from natural law” in order to justify removing the “levers of civil coercion from the hands of the clergy” justified, conveniently for Peter, the autonomy of the secular state.\(^{37}\) But to reduce Puffendorf’s political theory – and late seventeenth-early eighteenth century European thought in general – to the mechanization of the state would be a gross oversimplification. Fashioning by Puffendorf of a “persona for the citizen that would allow individuals to accede to their civil obligations independently of their Christian moral personality” did not mean the abolition of this “Christian moral personality” altogether, or a “wholesale secularization or instrumentalisation of all social spheres.”\(^{38}\) On the contrary, as Ian Hunter points out, “the civil philosophers sought to remove ‘true Christianity’ from political supervision by treating it in terms of the informulable and unenforceable

\(^{36}\) See Lindsey Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great* (New Haven and London, 1998), 95, 145, 324.

\(^{37}\) Ian Hunter, *Rival Enlightenments: Civil and Metaphysical Philosophy in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 2001), 148-154 and passim. In fact, Peter’s interest in such an approach might be explained not only by an opportunistic desire to legitimize his own autocratic tendencies. In his own youth the tsar had witnessed a wave of remarkable and bloody outbursts of sectarian strife in Russia. Hence, his aversion to the mixing of politics with “superstitions” was probably quite sincere. This point is made in A.M. Panchenko, ”Nachalo Petrovskoi reformy: ideinaia podopleka,” in *XVIII vek. Sbornik 16. Problemy izuchenia russkoi literatury XVIII veka* (Leningrad, 1989), 5-16.

faith of an ‘invisible church’.” Moreover, such contemporary European thinkers as Leibnitz and Wolff — who knew Peter personally, maintained correspondence with the tsar, and advised him on academic matters — vehemently rejected “civil philosophy’s uncoupling of the spheres of civil and spiritual governance” and the alleged “indifference of sovereign power to moral truth.” The need to employ the state as an instrument for pursuing morally (religiously) motivated policies was never discarded, of course, by the early-modern authors, while the importance for the governability of the state of maintaining the internalized civic-cum-religious sense of duty toward it among the population was recognized as paramount.

In fact, much of what we today associate with the modern state, that is, nearly all the techniques of social disciplining — especially, in the crucially important field of indoctrination through education — were invented and perfected by religious confessions. Driven partially by the new understanding of religiosity, partially by the need to adapt to realities of post-Augsburg Europe, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Tridentine Catholics engaged in ferocious competition for souls, designing in the process ever more sophisticated tools for manipulating minds through education, art, public displays, religious rituals, mechanisms of confession and communal exclusion, etc. Jesuit innovations in pedagogy and indoctrination were the most famous product of this competition, but not the only one. One should keep in mind the obvious fact that the Dutch Republic, Sweden, and Brandenburg-Prussia that served as the key models for Peter, were all deeply Protestant societies. In particular, the strength of the Dutch model, so admired by Peter, and later, of the Prussian military machinery (itself based on the earlier military innovations of the house of Orange), is to a significant

39 Ibid, 89-91.

40 For a comparative overview of social disciplining by the three confessions, see: R. Po-Chia Hsia, Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550-1750 (London, 1989).
degree explained by an earlier Calvinist disciplinarian revolution there. Even the employment and perfection by Louis XIV of utterly modern mechanisms of policing and disciplining urban “disorder” was driven by his “backward-looking” obsession with sin – an obsession that was “rooted deeply in the heavy-handed piety of the French religious revival.” Nor did the religious practices and modes of thinking cease to be relevant for the government with the advent of the new era. As David Bell argues in his study of the birth of French nationalism, when the leaders of the new, republican France had to mold the peasant masses into the new national body, they found themselves quite explicitly “reaching back to an older, clerical model of evangelization,” directly borrowing rituals, forms of schooling, and other techniques of indoctrination from the Catholic church.

Peter, of course, was highly interested in religious matters, initiating a radical reform of church governance based explicitly enough on the Lutheran model; in general, the church and the clerics were treated by him very much as an arm of the state. But the spiritual well-being of their subjects has been a major concern of Christians rulers for centuries. As late as 1598, for example, Duke Maximilian of Bavaria in his *Law for Morality and Religion* could demand that his subjects receive obligatory Easter Communion, attend church regularly, and pray at least one *Pater Noster* and one *Ave Maria* for the deliverance of Christendom from the Turkish threat when the bell rang daily reminding them to do so. As for cursing, failure to refrain

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41 On the role of Calvinism in the rise of the Netherlands see Gorski, *Disciplinary Revolution*, 39-77.


44 Hughes, *Russia*, 332-356.
from it could lead to a punishment as severe as amputation of a limb.\textsuperscript{45} What was changing now were the ways of thinking about this spiritual health – and here I would turn over to the second of the two caveats.

In fact, sometime around the year 1700 a change of paradigm was taking place important aspects of which are captured in the works of Michael Foucault. Intellectually, this change was driven, to a large extent, by a reaction to the earlier, however imperfect, mechanization, impersonalisation, and rationalization of the state – most notably, as in the case of Fenelon and Vauban, reaction against the model of the state built by Louis XIV. Theologically, it manifested itself in the emergence of such powerful movements as Pietism and Jansenism. In education, this change was most clearly expressed by John Locke. In the realm of natural science, it took the form of a shift away from the radically mechanistic reading of the Cartesian description of the human body:\textsuperscript{46} in fact, a sharper delineation between body and soul, suggested by Descartes, provoked a more intense debate on the immaterial – on what exactly soul and/or mind were? How were they connected to the body? And how did they manifest themselves through it?\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{45} Robert Birley, \textit{The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450-1700} (Washington, DC, 1999), 77.


\textsuperscript{47} Daniel Garber, Margaret Wilson, “Mind-Body Problems,” in Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers (eds.), \textit{The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy}, Vol. I. (Cambridge, 1998), 833-867. This debate was inseparable from contemporary religious concerns. To give but one example, the key precept of John Locke’s famous and hugely influential treatise on education – the idea that children were like “soft wax,” a tabula rasa – was grounded in his thinking on the problem of original sin, for without his rejection of the Aristotelian notion of inborn sinfulness it would have been hard, if not impossible, to discuss the malleability of human nature. J.A. Passmore, "The Malleability of Man in Eighteenth-Century Thought," in Earl R. Waserman (ed.), \textit{Aspects of the Eighteenth Century} (Baltimore, 1965), 21-46. Overall, recent scholarship tends to emphasize the close links between physical and metaphysical concerns in the thinking of late seventeenth – early eighteenth-century scholars, as opposed to the traditional version of history of science, which focused on the triumphant
There were important differences in the way in which these questions were answered by different thinkers. Overall, however, this change could be summed up as the discovery of a more complex human being – of an “inner man” – as an object of governing. The rulers were no longer satisfied with the outer conformity of their subject to the laws and regulation: the subjects were now expected to want to obey – and that obedience from “reasonable” subjects was no longer taken for granted.

Although the emerging eighteenth-century paradigm of absolutism was built directly on the absolutism of Louis XIV and Peter I, it was this focus on manipulating the “souls” that made it different from these seventeenth-century models.

In the following paragraphs I will single out the key concepts, discourses – or, on the elementary level, simply buzz-words – that were fundamental to the shifts in contemporary thinking on society and in transformation of the means and purposes of governance, defining, in effect, eighteenth-century modernity. One of them was the intense thinking about morality and virtue as the cornerstones of society that was common to such widely different thinkers as John Locke and Fénelon, Puffendorf and the German Pietists. These could have been conceptualized as a primarily religious piety or as a primarily social, aristocratic virtue. Yet the common theme was the progress of secularization dismissing as irrelevant the volumes upon volumes of theologically framed writings produced by the leading scientists of the day. For an overview, see Richard Popkin, “The Religious Background of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy,” in Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers (eds.), The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy, Vol. I. (Cambridge, 1998), 393-424; Peter Harrison, "Physico-Theology and the Mixed Sciences: The Role of Theology in Early Modern Natural Phylosophy," in Peter R. Anstey and John A. Schuster (eds.), The Science of Nature in the Seventeenth Century: Patterns of Change in Early Modern Natural Philosophy (Dordrecht, 2005), 165-184.

According to Locke, it is not knowledge as such, but “direct virtue which is the hard and valuable part to be aimed at in education.” It was his concern for preservation of virtue that led Locke to advise parents to prefer home schooling over the formal education with its dangers of corruptive influences. See Passmore, 21 passim. On the role of morality in thinking of Pufendorf, so popular in Russia, see Craig L. Carr, Michael J. Seidler, “Pufendorf, Sociability and the Modern State,” History of Political Thought 17, no. 3 (1996): 354-378; and Michael Nutkiewicz, "Samuel Pufendorf: Obligation as the Basis of the State," Journal of the History of Philosophy 21, no. 1 (1983): 15-29. On Pietism, see chapter 2 below.
juxtaposition of insufficient and unsatisfactory outward (bodily) conformity and the inner, internalized morality and virtuousness. Both the Protestant Pietists in Germany and the Catholic Jansenists in France searched for true piety, while Fénelon’s Adventures of Telemachus advocated the restoration of true virtue and warned against the follies of falsity and illusions of luxury, flattery, artificiality of court life, and the empty glory of needless conquest.\textsuperscript{49} Thus, the ruler, the pedagogue, and the cleric had to find ways to go beyond the ritual and outward conformity. They had to find ways to motivate their respective audiences, who now had to want to obey.

Note the changing attitude towards “ambition” (“zeal,” “ревност’’, in Russian official parlance). Whereas a century earlier it had been used, according to Jay Smith, “to evoke the self-interested motives thought to prevent commoners from obtaining honorable reputation and royal recognition,” now it acquired a positive meaning as the “energy that one devoted to one’s profession.” One had to recognize his obligations and to act upon them – to display “application” (“diligence,” “прозорливость”, in Russian official parlance): the true hönnete homme had to take satisfaction in “the application he brings to his duty.”\textsuperscript{50} In Prussia, it was the expectation of Friedrich Wilhelm I that an intelligent, assiduous, and alert person who after God values nothing higher than his king’s pleasure and serves him out of love and for the sake of honor rather than money and who in his conduct seeks and constantly bears in mind his king’s service and interest, who, moreover, abhors all intrigue and emotional deterrents.\textsuperscript{51}


\textsuperscript{50} Smith, The Culture of Merit, 173-175, 214-215.

\textsuperscript{51} Quoted in Hans Rosenberg, Bureaucracy, Aristocracy, and Autocracy: The Prussian Experience, 1660-1815 (Cambridge, MA, 1958), 93.
Compare that with the ideas of the Pietist August Hermann Francke, who demanded that the pupils in his schools study “not as if you were performing compulsory labor, but faithfully, diligently, and with relish.”52

One way to achieve this was by encouraging emulation through the creation of a public and transparent system of reward and punishment to “encourage” the subjects to perform better, which also implied monitoring, recording, and assessment.53 Another strategy was to shield the youngsters from morally harmful influences by secluding them in an artificially created, pedagogically beneficial environment and attempt to manipulate the souls by manipulating the bodies (hence the birth of Foucauldian disciplinary institutions around the year 1700 with their focus on ordering, regimenting, observing bodies, including also drilling the troops increasingly important in the military thought of that period54).

One more intriguing and inescapable extension of this discourse was the question of human talents and inclinations. Indeed, how were observable differences in human behavior to be explained – do they mean that not all subjects are reasonable? The state was now supposed to manipulate minds. Very well, but are there any limits to manipulability and malleability of human nature? Mid-eighteenth century radicals, most notably the abbé de Condillac and Helvetius, insisted that a human mind is “nothing but the sum of all it has acquired,” and that the observed differences in human abilities were produced not by nature, but exclusively by education. Yet, the majority, especially in the early eighteenth century, found it hard to reject the notion of inborn differences. Locke himself, apparently, did not deny the

52 Quoted in Melton, Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins, 38-44.
54 For an overview, see: John Childs, Armies and Warfare in Europe: 1648-1789 (Manchester, 1982).
existence of differences of inborn abilities and inclinations. In any case, such differences were, at the very least, recognized, analyzed, and taken into account. This debate had understandably huge implications for the ways in which social hierarchies were understood and legitimized.\textsuperscript{55}

This outline of the key topic in early eighteenth-century thinking is necessarily crude and superficial, glossing over hugely important differences and complexities. Still, I find it more useful to focus in my subsequent analysis of Russian thinking and governmental practices on these key notions rather than split hairs arguing whether the ministers of Anna’s reign were moved by their alleged Pietism, or by their admiration for Fénelon. To give one example, in France Fénelon might have been regarded as a critic of absolutism. Yet the first German translation of \textit{Adventures of Telemachus} was published in 1700 (seventeen years before the official French publication) and dedicated to Friedrich Wilhelm, the eleven-year-old Prince of Prussia and future champion of Pietism. The Berlin court appears to have regarded the book with benevolence. Fénelon’s book on the education of girls was published in 1698 in German in Halle with a preface by the leading Pietist August Hermann Francke, while in 1733 there appeared a new translation of Fénelon directly influenced by Pietism.\textsuperscript{56}

Another example is Locke. Most likely, his ideas on education reached Vasilii Tatishchev, a Russian administrator and intellectual, through the medium of Christian Wolff’s \textit{Reasonable Thoughts on God, the World, and Man’s Soul} (1720). In this book Wolff presented the concept of schools as an artificial environment, in which the child


would be removed from the corruptive influence of superstitions, gossip, and similar threats. At the same time, Wolff’s emphasis on utilitarian elements of education is remarkably similar to the thinking of Francke, his colleague and rival at Halle.\textsuperscript{57}

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To sum up, it was this more complex understanding of human nature based, ultimately, on the increasing awareness of a mind-body duality that provided both the moral/ethical imperatives for reforming society through social disciplining, and reason to believe that such reform was possible. As a result, theoreticians and practitioners of disciplinary revolution were driven by a desire to go in their social reformism beyond simply changing the outward behavior of people towards manipulation of “inner human.” Discourses on natural science and religion, medicine and society were, therefore, interlinked to an extremely high degree. This connection is exemplified, for example, by Johann Georg Walch’s \textit{Philosophisches Lexicon} (1726), in which the author, according to one recent study, upholds the position that “upright posture makes it easier to ‘look heavenward’; i.e., to live one's life in accordance with the divine will, while at the same time applying reason to shape the self and the surrounding world.”\textsuperscript{58}

It is instructive, perhaps, in this regard to consider the terms in which the transformation of Russia is discussed by Friedrich Christian Weber, already mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. Writing about young Russian nobles going abroad to study, Weber contrasts their ability to learn elements of “bodily exercises,”


\textsuperscript{58} Brian Todd McInnis, “Reading the Moral Code: Theories of Mind and Body in Eighteenth-Century Germany” (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 2006), 68.
on the one hand, to their refusal to “cultivate the mind” (which was not their “design”
anyway). He admits, though, that there are some exceptions. Certain Russians, thanks
to “that sagacity and cunning which is natural to almost the whole nation,” are able to
“attain, by means of a good education and instruction abroad, to the same degree of
perfection as children of other civilized nations.” Most of them, however, upon their
return home shed that outward “politeness, [which] they acquired in foreign parts.” In
short, due to their “obstinacy” (which Peter attempted to “break”) there is no room in
Russia for “true virtue and sincere piety.”⁵⁹ Indeed, Peter’s attempt to “reclaim
[Russians] from irregular life” required from his subjects nothing short of a
“conversion.”⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Weber, The Present State, 18-20. In many ways, of course, his account runs parallel to a
typical early-modern discourse on “savages”: Weber indicates, for example, that Russians traveling
abroad are corrupted by civilization, i.e. they pick out only “what is vicious in Germany and other
countries,” neglecting that which is good.

⁶⁰ Weber, The Present State, 16; also “Author’s Preface.”
Chapter II

“In Reality, Seminaries”: Social Discipline and Early Modern Elite Schooling

The transformation around the year 1700 of the European notions of government, outlined in the previous chapter, found a direct reflection in the evolution of European elite schools, particularly by the institutions for the training of future officers and gentlemen. This transformation was a culmination of a broader trend, described by Philip Aries in his classic book, and by 1700 it had been in the making for well over a century. Indeed, many pedagogical techniques and assumptions discussed here directly descended from those used by both Jesuit and Protestant educators. Yet, it was only in the late seventeenth – early eighteenth century that these techniques were coupled with a new notion of human nature and consciously used by the state to create and govern a new elite.

This chapter outlines the interplay of the key notions, discussed above, in the transformation of European elite schooling in the early eighteenth century, which serves as a backdrop for Peter’s educational policies. In particular, I focus on the Prussian case. One reason for that is the fact that Brandenburg-Prussia was, probably, the early-modern absolutist state in its most extreme, most “perfect” form. Certainly it was recognized as such in Russia where the reigns of Peter III and Paul I, and less directly, of Nicholas I were (or were perceived to be) built on direct references to the “orderliness” and “efficiency” of the “Prussian model.” Prussian laws and regulations served as an important source of administrative inspiration


62 For the sake of simplicity, here and elsewhere I will refer to Brandenburg-Prussia as simply Prussia, even though at times it might be anachronistic.
already for Peter I himself. Another reason is that the Noble Cadet Corps in St. Petersburg was explicitly modeled after similar institutions set up in Berlin in 1717-1720: a reference to the Berlin institution is made already in the founding documents of the Russian school. In this chapter, therefore, I present an overview of both the Berlin Cadet Corps itself and the role of Pietism and the Halle Pietist schools in shaping the Corps. Finally, the role played in Prussian educational reform by the Pietists helps to highlight the fact that the introduction of modern disciplinary practices went hand in hand with contemporary ethical and intellectual concerns.

* * *

The standard story of Petrine educational reforms is straightforward: Peter wanted to build a modern army and navy. So he had to set up schools to teach the necessary technical disciplines, first and foremost, mathematics. Indeed, his innovations, including the increasing use of guns, “scientific” methods of fortification and navigation, complex geometry of troop movements, required specialized, technical instruction systematically delivered in a classroom setting by a professional teacher. Transition towards formal, institutionalized forms of education that we associate with modern schooling is described as a natural, indeed, necessary consequence of the early-modern technical and military revolutions. Unfortunately, it is assumed, being preoccupied with the Northern War, and lacking funds and qualified teachers, Peter did not have time to place modern education in Russia on a firm foundation.

This vision, however, ignores the basic realities of late seventeenth century military training and education of the nobility. The schools for the nobility that Russian dignitaries observed abroad were “academies.” These began appearing sometime around the beginning of the seventeenth century and were meant to prepare
young aristocrats for courtly life. They stressed fencing and riding, as important both for public display of individual skills on various occasions and for forming an appropriate “posture” in general. There was no fixed term or course of study, and overall, arrangements seem to have been extremely informal. Private or enjoying royal patronage, these academies were of limited size and charged very steep fees. These were institutions for the very top aristocratic families and their retinues, and education there, appropriately for future leaders, was often to be followed by a “trip to foreign countries to learn languages, <…> and how different peoples are governed.”

As for military training, the pre-modern model of preparing young nobles for military service was based on apprenticeship – ideally, apprenticeship as a page at the household of a prince, but increasingly, as an apprentice soldier (cadet) in a regiment. Throughout the seventeenth century, however, this practice was increasingly replaced by a more formal, institutionalized schooling. It seems that the main factors that motivated this transformation were twofold: the king, his councilors, and the concerned nobles wanted both to reform the morals and manners of the nobility and to draw larger numbers of nobles (especially, poor and provincial ones) into military service by giving them opportunities to display their “application” before the king’s eyes, directly or metaphorically. From the early-modern point of view, of course, both of these goals were directly related to the practical requirements of military service: a good professional soldier was a noble, who possessed necessary moral virtues and was motivated to serve the king by his sense of honor and personal loyalty.

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63 The standard account is Mark Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat: The Education of the Court Nobility, 1380-1715* (Princeton, 1990), 123-168.

The transformation of the system of apprenticeship into a formal, disciplinary school was gradual. At first, royal pages began to be given instruction parallel to their palace duties. Later this system of apprenticeship was extended: royal household troops always included a certain number of cadets, but now prestigious Mosquetaires du Roi consisted nearly exclusively of them: more young nobles got the opportunity to serve in the vicinity of the king’s person, while simultaneously being segregated (at least in theory) from the morally corruptive influence of rank-and-file soldiers. It is in this light that the establishment in 1682 by Louvois, Louis XIV’s war minister, of nine compagnies de cadets-gentilshommes should be considered. (In the navy similar companies of gardes de la marine had been established by Colbert few years earlier.)

The French army had undergone a tremendous expansion during the reign of the Sun King, yet the demand for large numbers of officers did not immediately result in a transition to new, more institutionalized forms of training. At the heart of this system of compagnies de cadets-gentilshommes was the traditional concept of training through practice. The novelty of compagnies was, therefore, not so much in the military dimension of this establishment, as in its use as a modern instrument of social disciplining. As Guy Rowlands points out, Louis XIV and Louvois wanted “to reform the manners and practices of the nobility, and one way of attempting this was to make the cadet companies vehicles for moral regeneration.” Establishment of these companies meant segregation of young cadets from the troops. Eventually they were further walled off from harmful influences by being put into barracks, rather than being quartered in town. Round-the-clock monitoring by officers was encouraged. Brothels and even theaters became, in theory, off-limits. A contemporary diarist referred to these compagnies as “in reality, seminaries.”

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65 Rowlands, The Dynastic State, 178-185, 192-199.
As instruments of moral reform, the late seventeenth-century compagnies de cadets-gentilshommes patently failed. Yet, subsequent reforms executed or planned in the French military schools betray the same focus of their authors on shaping the students’ minds through monitoring and observation, detailed regimentation of daily activities, formalized assessment, and milieu control. A 1691 règlement of a Parisian riding academy demanded constant supervision (“no gentilhomme will ever be present without the director of the academy, who will stand guard.”) A 1726 project for the reestablishment of the companies of cadets gentilshommes proposed that the no “disorderly conduct” be tolerated, and that the officers make sure that cadets “make their beds, that their rooms are clean, and that they themselves are clean.” A 1722 règlement of the école des pages required that “the subgovernor … always be present, in order to see that both masters and pages remain assiduous.”

These increasingly pervasive mechanisms of social control were supposed to discipline, to discover individual abilities, and to motivate at the same time. As Jay M. Smith observes, in their drive towards total observation the authors of various proposals and regulations explicitly pursued two objectives. On the one hand, they hoped to motivate students to “apply” themselves; on the other, they recognized the need to “identify and cultivate distinct talents and abilities.” This focus on motivating students toward greater application might appear surprising, for, as is well-known, eighteenth-century military experts emphasized the need for uniform movement and for “maintaining order,” achievable through constant drilling, by instilling “habit” into soldiers, and by giving them as little as possible opportunity for “reflection.” Yet, this mechanistic vision of military service did not mean an attempt to create interchangeable automatons. On the contrary, it implied the need to recognize the peculiar “abilities” and “talents” of individual “parts” of the military
machine and to employ them properly. One had “to consider the scope of particular functions and determine the knowledge and talents demanded by each post, in order to choose and employ people usefully in the positions that suit them,” an observer wrote in 1738. A general must be “exact in the choice of the parts that compose the machine,” another expert demanded 15 years later. Each part, however, had to recognize its duties and to perform them willingly. According to the planners of the *Ecole Militaire*, “the spirit of subordination… has to do with knowledge of one’s duties.” That was the secret: if abilities and talents were assessed accurately, and officers were assigned to various positions accordingly, then “everyone happily does his duty; everyone loves his work, because it is always in proportion to talents and capacities, [and this is] the surest means of making the best use of officers.”

It is important to remember, however, that these innovations remained the exception, not the rule, which only underscores the fact that their raison d’être was disciplinary, not “practical,” and that the advances in military tactics and technology did not somehow make it necessary to set up formal schools. In fact, as David Bien has pointed out, the increasing emphasis on mathematics in eighteenth-century military education is best explained not so much by technical requirements of service, as by the desire to use it for disciplining minds and achieving “order, clarity, and precision of thought.” As far as practical skills were concerned, the majority of officers throughout the eighteenth century was still successfully trained through apprenticeship. The creation of military schools was often the result of a major defeat,

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66 Quoted in Smith, *The Culture of Merit*, 196-206.

when the elite felt that “something had to be done.” In Austria, an academy at Wiener Neustadt was created only in 1751, and the Theresanium – in 1752. Until then young nobles enrolled directly in regiments. Note that compagnies de cadets-gentilshommes in France were repeatedly created, disbanded, and then created again, while the École Militaire was founded only in 1751. Even in Prussia only about one third of officers in the mid-eighteenth century went through the cadet corps. Although this was a very high proportion for that period, two thirds of aspiring officers, of course, continued to be trained in regiments.

Partially this is explained by the resistance of the military establishments themselves. Study in formal schools made sense only if at the end the king granted successful graduates commissions in his armies. That, however, squared badly with the still prevalent venality of offices. (Russia was probably the only major country where companies and regiments were not bought and sold; even in Prussia venality survived although the monarchy managed to centralize promotion.) At the same time, as John Childs points out, strictly speaking, there was no practical need to waste the time of an eighteenth-century gentleman in the classroom: weapons and tactics were simple and evolved slowly, while drilling of the troops was in any case done by NCOs. (It was a great innovation on the part of Friedrich Wilhelm I to actually demand that his officers personally supervise the drilling.) The ideal concept of preparation for military services implied that a young noble should familiarize himself with military history and the deeds of great generals, ancient and modern (by reading

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68 For discussion of military reform in the mid-eighteenth century France, driven by the defeats in the Seven Years War, see Smith, *The Culture of Merit*, 227-261.


70 For situation in France, see Rowlands, *The Dynastic State*, 182-185.
their memoirs), prepare himself physically, and, perhaps, study one or two books on
theory, especially Vauban’s *L’Attaque et la defense des places*, memoirs of
Raymondo Montecuccoli, and *L’Art de la guerre par principes et par règles* by
Jacques de Puységur, marshal of France.\(^{71}\) (By 1740 all of these books had
considerable circulation in Russia.) Indeed, military experts of Petrine times doubted
the benefits of formal schooling: not only for infantry officers, but even for members
of technical branches, for artillerists and engineers. Vauban, the greatest military
engineer of early-modern Europe, said of the graduates of cadet companies that “they
brought nothing to the service, they have seen nothing, thought about nothing, and
know nothing but fencing, dancing and quarrelling.” In his own *corps du genie*
engineers learned through practice by drawing ground plans of fortresses and
entrenchments.\(^{72}\) It is not surprising, therefore, that in the 1730s a European traveler
commented on the cadet corps in St.Petersburg in the following way:

> I had every day the pleasure of seeing those young persons [cadets]
performing their exercises; but have been informed, that the state entirely
neglects to give them an education becoming them; and hence the advantage,
expected from this establishment, is frustrated. The *Muscovites* are grossly
mistaken, when they imagine, that the only qualification requisite to make a
good soldier, and a great captain, is the art of performing the exercises, and
knowing all the motions of military discipline. All those, who arrived at any
perfection in the military art, have had recourse to other sources, and learned
rudiments, very different from those taught in *Muscovy*.

This traveler suggested that instead of

educating a body of cadets, they ought to have established colleges and
schools, there to have taught the grand principles of religion and morality.
There they should have begun the reform they proposed; and, indeed, if due

\(^{71}\) Childs, *Armies and Warfare*, 91-92.

Münnich, the founder of cadet corps in Russia, had not have any formal schooling himself: by reading
books and by observing engineering works in his native Germany he learned enough to impress Peter I
in the early 1720s by competently and efficiently completing the construction of the Ladoga Canal.
care is not taken in the education of youth, how can the nation possibly be extricated from that barbarity, in which it has been, for many ages, involved?\textsuperscript{73}

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Turning to Prussian experience, one might recollect that the link between Protestant values and the superior professional ethos of an “ideal” (i.e. Prussian) bureaucracy was pointed out long ago by Max Weber. In the last few decades, however, there appeared a significant number of works linking the origins and success of the “Prussian machine” specifically to the collaboration between the Hohenzollerns and Pietism, a religious movement with “headquarters” at the University of Halle.\textsuperscript{74} This movement was the source of much of the clerical personnel and of some of the key disciplinary techniques employed by king Friedrich Wilhelm I. The latter’s agnostic son, Friedrich II, may have been “the meticulous king of small machines, well-trained regiments and long exercises,” obsessed with mechanical automata.\textsuperscript{75} But his ability to manipulate his largest toy, the Prussian army, is explained largely by the religious ethics instilled in his officers and men during the previous reign. It has been argued that it was thanks to this indoctrination that the Hohenzollerns were able to

\textsuperscript{73} Francesco Locatelli, \textit{Lettres Moscovites: or, Muscovian Letters. Containing an Account of the Form of Government, Customs, and Manners of that Great Empire. Written by an Italian Officer of Distinction. Translated From the French Original, Printed in Paris in 1735} (London, 1736), 126.


\textsuperscript{75} Foucault, \textit{Discipline and Punish}, 136.
transform their poor, sparsely populated and otherwise unpromising principality, lacking any natural resources, into a great military power.\textsuperscript{76}

Consider the role of Pietism in the formation of the Berlin Cadet Corps, the most disciplinary military school of its time. The key figure both in development of Pietist theology and educational theory and practice, and in orchestrating the movement’s cooperation with the Prussian state, was August Hermann Francke (1663-1727).\textsuperscript{77} The keys to Francke’s success as an educator were the institutional innovations that followed directly from his theological views. Pietists stressed the need for a personal “conversion experience.” According to Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705), the leading Pietist theologian, “the essence of our Christianity is to be found in the reflective, spiritually-reborn individual whose soul is possessed by faith and whose actions are the fruit of his faith.”\textsuperscript{78} The distinction between actions driven by inner conviction and by external coercion was, of course, central to the Lutheran doctrine in general. The Pietists, however, felt it necessary to call for a “second

\textsuperscript{76} Effectiveness of this machine should not be overestimated, however: as we are reminded in a classic work by Hans Rosenberg, the perfect Prussian state of Frierich II had its fair share of venality, corruption, nepotism, and un-meritocracy. Rosenberg, 75-87. Richard Gawthrop shows how the king’s attempts (including direct orders, regulations etc.) to institute a system of universal primary schooling in East Prussia produced next to no effect throughout much of the eighteenth century.

\textsuperscript{77} August Hermann Francke (1663-1727) was raised at the court of a leading Lutheran prince, Duke Ernst the Pious of Saxe-Gotha, Francke later acknowledged the influence of the duke’s educational reforms on his own pedagogical thinking. After a period of studies and work in Erfurt, Kiel, and Leipzig, where he invariably quarreled with the local orthodox Lutheran establishments, Francke in 1691 moved to Prussia and got a faculty position at the newly established university at Halle. Besides the university, Francke was also appointed a parish pastor at Glaucha, a seedy suburb of Halle. Appalled by conditions at that village, still suffering from the ravages of the Thirty Years War and a plague, Francke launched in 1695 a program of social and moral reform beginning with a founding of charity schools and, later, of an orphanage. Success of his first schools led to their rapid expansion, including the founding of the Paedagogium Regium, an elite boarding school for children of nobles and prosperous burgers, which prepared them for entering university or state service. Finally, the need for qualified teachers – qualified in terms of their learning, but also in terms of morals and of pedagogical skills - led Francke to establish in 1696 a Seminarium selectum praeceptorum, the first pedagogical institute in Central Europe. By the time of Francke’s death in 1727 his educational complex at Halle included a number of buildings, over 2000 pupils, and 175 teachers. Gawthrop, Pietism and the Making, 121-200; Melton, Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins, 31-36. On Francke and Pietism in general see F. Ernest Stoeffler, German Pietism during the Eighteenth Century (Leiden, 1973); F. Ernest Stoeffler, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism (Leiden, 1965).

\textsuperscript{78} Quoted in Melton, Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins, 26.
Reformation,” protesting both against the growing pomp and moral laxity of some Lutheran princely courts, and also against the dogmatism of “official,” orthodox Lutheranism, which allegedly became too formal and shallow, focused on observing the externals of the faith alone, and as a result failed to transform the morals of the flock.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Francke the pedagogue put a premium on a teacher’s ability to influence the morals of his pupils. According to him, “we are not to be satisfied if the child exhibits an outer show of piety, but at heart remains unchanged.”\(^7^9\) In order to cultivate the child’s ability to freely and voluntarily accept faith and works, however, teachers had first to transform, even to break his will. As Francke wrote:

> The formation of the child’s character involves the will as well as understanding. … Above all it is necessary to break the natural willfulness of the child. While the schoolmaster who seeks to make the child more learned is to be commended for cultivating the child’s understanding, he has not done enough. He has forgotten his most important task, namely that of making the will obedient.

This was to be attained by a number of pedagogical methods. One Franckean innovation was compulsory attendance. He therefore stressed the pedagogical importance of taking roll call. Another was a developed system of monitoring and recording, including the daily recording by teachers of each child’s progress and character. Further, Francke and his followers emphasized (on religious grounds as well) the need to “make proper use of your time” through introduction of clear schedule of daily activities, where every hour was consigned to a particular task. Among other things, they were the first to introduce in this schedule a special time for “leisure,” which was to be filled with instructive activities (such as observing models of buildings and machines, pictures of exotic animals, work of artisans, etc.). This

\(^7^9\) Ibid, 38–44.
setting aside of a special time for leisure also emphasized the fact that the rest of the time was to be devoted exclusively to work. Finally, Francke highlighted the need to strictly control and supervise student behavior at all times: the teacher was not to leave the classroom at the end of his period until replaced by the next instructor.

According to Francke,

>Youth do not know how to regulate their lives, and are naturally inclined toward idle or sinful behavior when left to their own devices. For this reason, it is a rule in this institution that a pupil never be allowed out of the presence of a supervisor. The supervisor’s presence will stifle the pupil’s inclination to sinful behavior, and slowly weaken his sinfulness.

This constant supervision was most easily attained, of course, at a boarding school and/or an orphanage, where conditions allowed for a round-the-clock monitoring and disciplining, not only of schoolwork, but of all of the child’s activities. “Wherever pupils may be, whether sitting in class, playing in the schoolyard, eating in the dining hall, sleeping in their alcoves, or changing their clothes, they must remain supervised,” Francke instructed the director of his orphanage. In short, according to James Van Horn Melton, he “sought to create a completely regulated and self-enclosed environment, neutralizing the impact of the outside environment and thus ridding pupils of any bad habits they might have developed outside the institution.” At the Paedagogium frequent trips home or visits by parents were strongly discouraged, and letters to and from students were inspected by the faculty – a practice that went considerably further than anything known in the Jesuit institutions. At the same time, corporal punishment was to be limited, and even discouraged. Instead, a premium was put on various ways of encouraging students through public recognition of their achievements, such as prizes, commendations, promotion to class monitor, etc.80 Note that for Francke disciplining of the body and

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disciplining of the soul were directly linked: “At all times and in all societies guard yourself against indecent demeanor and activity and disorderly posture of the body. These give witness to disorder in the mind and testify to your secret mental turmoil.”81

It is important for our purposes here to stress another element of Francke’s pedagogical theory and practice, namely, his emphasis on the “calling” (Beruf), or “inner vocation” (vocationem internam), of students. Pietist theology envisioned a divinely ordained social organism where every member performed an essential function depending on his “natural [i.e. God’s] gift,” thus recognizing inherent, “natural” differences between people in intelligence and other endowments. Indeed, Francke wrote that “the body of Christ consists of different members. Not every member can be a hand, foot, eye, or ear. Each member has its own task. … The foot should not desire to become an eye, nor the hand an ear.”82 In his Lectures Francke calls upon students “not to step beyond one’s limits,” “not to force something for which they are not skilled by nature.” Thus, exercise in (self)-discipline acquired broader purpose: one was to fulfill his calling by developing his gifts to the fullest. In fact, it would be equally a waste of God’s gift and of public resources both to push those of low abilities to pursue advanced studies and to relegate those with outstanding ingenia to menial tasks. The key task of educators and of the state was, therefore, selection and monitoring. Teachers had to distinguish among the “temperaments” (Gemüter) of the children not only “to know more about how each can be controlled and whether each should be treated more strictly or more softly,” but also “to discover the capacity of the intelligences and what in particular each child is skilled for, so that the gifts that God has implanted in each can be awakened and


82 Quoted in Melton, Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins, 29.
applied to the common welfare.” Organizationally, another of Francke’s innovations was meant to capitalize on these “natural” variations among the pupils. Instead of each age group receiving its instruction in all subjects from the same teacher, at Francke’s schools each subject had its hierarchy of classes through which the students progressed. As a result of teachers’ observations and periodic examinations, the pupil might find himself at different class levels in different subjects, corresponding to his varying abilities and achievements.83

While Pietists and their schools enjoyed the support of Prussian kings already in the 1690s-1700s, it was not until accession of Friedrich Wilhelm I in 1713 that their innovation in social control and indoctrination were utilized fully for the purposes of reforms launched by the new king. Initially Friedrich Wilhelm was hostile toward Pietists because of their alleged pacifism. A single surprise inspection of the Halle establishment, however, was enough for him to recognize their potential usefulness in his reforms aimed at making his army and bureaucracy more effective and efficient through instilling in officers and officials the spirit of duty, devotion to service, moral probity, and austerity. The army played a central role in this reconstruction of the Prussian state. Specifically, the king put a lot of effort into educating and religiously indoctrinating his subjects. His troops were made to regularly attend church sermons, and Pietist graduates of Halle received a virtual monopoly of appointments as military pastors (and in time, as pastors in general).84


The Berlin Cadet Corps, or Kadettenanstalt, was the single most important supplier of officers for the army. Whereas the older academies had concerned themselves primarily with providing a “general education fit for contemporary aristocrats,” thereby reflecting the less vocationally specialized conception of the noble officer’s way of life, the corps attempted to create an officer of a new type, one completely devoted to his king and service. Richard L. Gawthrop emphasizes Friedrich Wilhelm’s desire to make his officers “obedient instruments,” which required a “complete break from the cavalier conception” of the military profession: cadets were expected to “make fulfillment of their vocational duty the overriding factor in their lives.” On the one hand, the Kadettenanstalt, was formed through the gradual merger of three earlier Ritteracademien, and its curriculum combined elements of a proper gentlemanly education (including mathematics, foreign languages, riding, fencing, dancing etc.) with introduction to military drill. As was usual for early-modern military schools elsewhere, it catered to a large extent to poorer nobles, children of non-noble officers, and orphans. It was meant to produce polished gentlemen out of somewhat boorish Prussian Junkers and to draw them, often against their will, into state service (thus Friedrich Wilhelm’s goals were not

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85 Overall, one third of all officers in the eighteenth-century Prussian army came from the Berlin cadet corps. Other preferred educational institution included the Paedagogium at Hale and the Paedagogium attached to the orphanage at Zulichau, founded in 1719 and modeled after the Halle prototype. Gawthrop, Pietism and the Making, 235; Christopher Duffy, The Army of Frederick the Great (London, 1974), 28.

86 Gawthrop, Pietism and the Making, 233.

87 For a short overview, see John Moncure, Forging the King’s Sword. Military Education between Tradition and Modernization: The Case of the Royal Prussian Cadet Corps, 1871-1918 (New York, 1993), 29-33. Standard works in German are A. Crousaz, Geschichte des Königlichen Preussischen Kadetten-Corps nach seiner Entstehung, seinem Entwicklungs- und seinen Resultaten (Berlin, 1857); Jurgen K. Zabel, Das preussische Kadettenkorps (Frankfurt am Main, 1978). As was the case with compagnies de cadets-gentilshommes, the pressing need for such institutions was not immediately evident for the government. First Ritterakademie which served as a prototype for later Prussian military academies and for the Cadet Corps itself, was established in 1653 at Kolberg for 24 students only, but did not flourish, and was dissolved in 1701 by Friedrich I. In 1704 he established another Ritterakademie at the city of Brandenburg, but that one was abolished in 1713 by Friedrich Wilhelm I, his successor and he founder of the Berlin Cadet Corps. Dorwart, The Prussian Welfare State, 203.
dissimilar to those of Peter). After the Kadettenanstalt was formed, the king had the lists of all young nobles in the realm drawn up, from which he himself chose those to be admitted or, rather, drafted. Sometimes soldiers had to be dispatched to fetch prospective cadets to the Corps.\textsuperscript{88}

In order to achieve the transformative goals, however, the Berlin Cadet Corps employed all the key methods of “milieu control” perfected at the Halle schools, including the round-the-clock monitoring; recording of moral and scholarly progress; a rigid schedule of daily activities, etc. Cadets were put in barracks and organized into companies, which facilitated control over them. Incoming cadets were immediately confronted with a strict conduct code as well as a full, holyday-free schedule of classes, military drill, and religious observances. The cadets were under constant supervision by either staff or cadet “officers.” Every year the Corps’ commander was required to submit reports on the performance and moral conduct of every cadet and officer. These reports were read by the king personally and served as the basis for his personal examination of individual cadets and officers and hence, all promotions.

Strict discipline was accompanied by religious indoctrination: prayer, attending sermons, and Bible reading were all important elements of a daily schedule at the corps. The first commander of the Corps was a devoted Pietist, as were, of course, military pastors attached to the Corps.\textsuperscript{89}

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As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the Prussian experience is relevant for the purposes of this dissertation not only because it was a very prominent

\textsuperscript{88} Moncure, \textit{Forging the King’s Sword}. 29-33.

\textsuperscript{89} Gawthrop, \textit{Pietism and The Making}, 234-237. Physical environment was important as well: the king personally oversaw such matters as meals served to the cadets. Moncure, \textit{Forging the King’s Sword}, 29-33. Note that the king’s attempts to reshape the morals of his graduates did not stop with the cadets’ graduation from the corps: he issued numerous orders prohibiting his officers from “going into debt, playing cards, drinking excessively, and so on.” Gawthrop, \textit{Pietism and The Making}, 235.
example of the “disciplinary revolution,” but also because of numerous links between
Petrine Russia and early eighteenth-century Prussia, and Halle specifically. The Pietist
influence in Russia has been the subject of extensive study.90 By the year 1730 the
links between Russia and Halle were well-established, and a number of Francke’s
active followers had already been working in Moscow and St.Petersburg. Partially this
connection is explained by the traditionally strong presence in Russia (usually, in the
capacity of pastors at Lutheran communities, teachers, or medical practitioners) of
graduates of Jena, Leipzig, and other Mitteldeutsche universities that led to a natural
growth of contacts on a personal level.91 These contacts were all the more natural
since these universities were among the leading centers of European scholarship, far
ahead of their competitors in other parts of Europe in terms of both institutional
modernization and academic quality.92 Another reason was diplomatic: Russia and
Brandenburg-Prussia were allies in the Great Northern War, and Peter I made
significant efforts to expand contacts with this state. In fact, already in 1697 a treaty
of friendship signed by Peter and Elector Friedrich III included a clause allowing for
free movement of students between the two countries. Indeed, the first Russian

90 See especially E. Winter, Halle als Ausgangspunkt der deutschen Russlandkunde in 18.ten
Jahrhundert. (Berlin, 1953); idem, Deutsch-russische Wissenschaftsbeziehungen im 18.ten Jahrhundert
( Berlin, 1981); J. von Wallmann, U. Strater (eds.), Halle und Osteuropa. Zur europäischen
Ausstrahlung des hallischen Pietismus (Tübingen, 1998).

91 A.Iu. Andreev, Russkie studenty v nemetskikh universitetakh XVIII - pervoi poloviny XIX
veka (Moscow, 2005), 114.

92 For a short overview, see G. Muhlpfordt, "Sistema obrazovaniia v Galle i ee znachenie dlia
Rossii 1696-1831 g. (uchenye, uchitelia, uchilishcha, shkolnye reformy, knigi, didaktika).” In Nemtsy v
Rossii: russko-nemetskie nauchnye i kulturnye sviazii, (St.Petersburg, 2000), 159-169. For a German
version of the same article see G. Muhlpfordt, "Russlands Aufklärer und die Mitteldeutsche
Aufklärung." In C. Grau, S. Karp, J. Voss (eds.), Deutsch-russische Beziehungen im 18. Jahrhundert
(Wiesbaden, 1997), 83-171.
students who went to study in foreign universities, both voluntarily and on Peter’s orders, matriculated in most cases either at Halle or at Konigsberg.93

Significantly, Francke himself, driven by a strong missionary streak in early Pietism, displayed strong interest in building Halle’s ties with Russia and expanding his influence there. For him this missionary activity was a part of his overall attempt to spread “true Christianity.”94 Although skeptical of the overall prospect for awakening in the “so long moribund” Russia, Francke nevertheless hoped to penetrate the Orthodox Church by training Greek students at Halle.95 Here it is sufficient to stress the conscious and determined efforts of Francke to influence educational practices in Russia.96 Already in 1697 Francke wrote to one of his correspondents in Moscow, the pastor of the German colony there, that “we would like to receive the Russians here [in Halle], and also we would like them to receive our youth in their land. I will gladly apply our utmost zeal so that they [Russian students] return home as useful instruments of their Fatherland. Oh, how much good could come from such a *commertio nationum*!” Francke managed to arrange in the early 1698 for a visit to Halle of the members of Peter’s Grand Embassy, including Fedor Saltykov (see chapter 4).97 On May 10-13, 1698, Halle was visited by Peter I, although he and Francke never met. Francke, however, had extensive learned discussions with P.V.

93 Iu.V. Kostiashov, G.V. Kretinin. *Petrovskoe nachalo: Kenigsbergskii universitet i rossiiskoe prosveshchenie v XVIII v.* (Kaliningrad, 1999), 22-54; Andreev, *Russkie studenty*, 110-111.

94 In the early 1690s a mission by Heinrich Wilhelm Ludolf, private secretary to Prince George of Denmark, was highly important in this regard, and also resulted in a number of top-level contacts. Gawthrop, *Pietism and the Making*, 183-184, 187.


96 These efforts are well-known to students of Russian-German cultural transfers, but are ignored by students of Russian education. See, for example, G.I. Smagina, “Nemetskie obrazovatel’nyie idei i rossiiskaia shkola XVIII v.,” in “Vvod naia i obychai Evropeiskie v Evropeiskom narode: K probleme adaptatsii zapadnykh idei i praktik v Rossiiskoi imperii” (Moscow, 2008): 205-220.

Postnikov, another member of the Embassy, and personally supervised the education in Berlin of a son and a younger brother of Boyar and Grand Admiral F.A. Golovin. Francke tried to arrange for a transfer of these two young nobles to Halle, but that never happened. In 1699 Francke proposed to set up a permanent seminary for Russian students at Halle. He tried to find someone who could get Peter to address the Elector with such a request, but nothing came of this idea.\textsuperscript{98} With the passage of time, however, a significant number of Pietists and sympathizers, including Francke’s graduates at Halle, found work in Russia and rose there to positions of some importance.\textsuperscript{99} Keeping this context in mind, in the next chapter I will consider Peter’s educational policies.

\textsuperscript{98} Ibid, 116-117.

\textsuperscript{99} For example, as early as 1695 Francke dispatched to Russia a certain Scharschmid, one of the first Halle graduates, to be a pastor in Moscow and a private tutor to the sons of Lavrentii Blumentrost, the court medic; one of the boys was to become the first president of St.Petersburg Academy of Sciences. G. Mul'pfordt, "Sistema obrazovaniia v Galle.” Francke maintained correspondence with his Russian contacts until his death. Among them one finds a number of parents of future Corps’ cadets, such as Petr Meller, an owner of ironworks and a Jena graduate. Thanks to this correspondence, Francke managed to establish an extensive collection of books and manuscript materials on Russia at Halle. Besides his attempts to promote his ideas in Russia, Francke, being an expert on Oriental languages, was also extremely interested in Russia’s various exotic nationalities, like Kalmyks, Bashkirs, Tatars, etc. Among his students at Halle there was a Baptized Kalmyk sent to Germany by Scharschmid. After graduation he was dispatched by Francke back to Russia to teach at Gluck’s school. Ibid, \textit{Russkie studenty}, 115-119.
Chapter III

“Our Folk are Like Unschooled Children”: Peter I and His Idea of Schooling

The idea that Peter I wanted to transform Russia and to create a “new man” by introducing new forms of education is a commonplace. Indeed, Marc Raeff has an article specifically devoted to this topic: he insists that “schooling turned out to be an essential element in implementing Peter’s project of ‘transfiguring’ Russian man.”

Given the European context outlined in earlier chapters, the history of Petrine educational policies needs to be reconsidered. If the transition from pre-modern to modern forms of training must be viewed through the lens of the increase of the disciplinarian dimension of schooling, then the “utilitarian” nature of Petrine education, pointed out by historians long ago, acquires a broader significance. Peter’s lack of interest in formal schooling with its disciplinary practices and in the moral improvement of his subjects must be viewed as a reflection of his notions of governing in general.

The main form of training introduced by Peter for the nobility was apprenticeship. The practice of drafting destitute noblemen into regiments as foot soldiers was not unknown before Peter. His innovation was to make this practice universal and to re-conceptualize it as a form of training and the mandatory first step in a military career rather than a punishment for poverty. Although young nobles had been drafted as privates more or less throughout Peter’s reign, this policy was

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100 Marc Raeff, “Transfiguration and Modernization,” 341. The same idea, essentially, is found in his The Well-Ordered Police State.

101 This idea is found already in Vladimirskii-Budanov’s nineteenth-century Gosudarstvo i narodnoe obrazovanie (Iaroslavl’, 1874).
formally codified only in the mid 1710s, when the Great Northern War was nearly over, and the emperor started the second, major round of institutional reform. For the first time this rule was mentioned in 1714. In 1716 it appeared in the new Military Statute.\textsuperscript{102} Subsequently Peter insisted that for nobles the path to becoming commissioned an officer lay exclusively through the regiments of his own Life Guards. In 1719 he demanded that “nobody be admitted into any officer ranks … without having been a soldier in the Guards,” in 1723 - that “the children of nobles and foreign officers were not to be enrolled anywhere aside from the Guards.”\textsuperscript{103} By assigning his Life Guards this function, Peter was following, of course, the example set by France, where \textit{maison militaire} played a similar role, and by Sweden, where his arch-rival and “teacher” Charles XII issued commissions only to those who had served for a certain period as privates in his Life Guards regiment.\textsuperscript{104} On a number of occasions Peter included in his important decrees extensive passages giving the rationale for this or that innovation being introduced by him\textsuperscript{105}; in these cases, however, no such explanation was offered.

Note, however, that Peter – quite typically – did not think the system through. Already in the fall of 1723 he changed his mind and specified that only young nobles from “prominent” [znatnye] families be enrolled in the Guards, while the rest were to be sent into the army regiments. Still, he offered his military administrators no usable definition of “prominence,” provoking thereby a considerable discussion among his

\textsuperscript{102} PSZ #2789; #3006, p.39, etc.

\textsuperscript{103} PSZ #3265; Troitskii, \textit{Russkii absolutism}, 78. The same idea is twice repeated in Peter’s unpublished (and undated) notebooks. E.P. Pod’iampolskaia, “K voprosu o formirovaniy dvor’anskoi intelligentsii v pervoi chetverti XVIII v. (po zapisnym knizhkom i "memoriam" Petra I).” In \textit{Dvor’anstvo i krepostnoi strol Rossii XVI-XVIII v.} (Moscow, 1975), 185-187.

\textsuperscript{104} Childs, \textit{Armies and Warfare}, 93-97.

\textsuperscript{105} This tendency is discussed in detail in N.I. Pavlenko, “Petr I (K izucheniiu sotsial’no-politicheskikh vzgl’adov),” in \textit{Rossia v period reform Petra I} (Moscow, 1973), 40-102.
officials that lasted well after the emperor’s death. In any case, the two regiments of the Guards were physically not able to admit all young nobles, so the majority of them ended up in the army anyway. At around the same time Peter instituted a formal system of apprenticeship for nobles in the civil service. In February 1722, he decreed that “able” young nobles be sent “as iunkery to the Colleges [governmental departments] for training [dlia nauki].” Apprenticeship, in the emperor’s view, was thus a perfectly proper way to prepare for civil service: the General Regulation of 1720 stipulated that candidates “be admitted into the Colleges in advance so that through diligent copying of documents they could learn writing and arithmetic … so that eventually they could be gradually promoted to higher ranks.”

As for the schools as such founded during Peter’s reign, they could be roughly divided into two types. On the one hand, there were “technical” schools oriented towards teaching practical skills required by the army and the navy: i.e. mathematics and similar subjects. An early example of that type was a school established at the Preobrazhenskii Regiment in 1698. Apparently, officers of this regiment taught there the basics of arithmetic, geometry, and practical skills in fortification and artillery; little else is known about it. Another example is the “artillery school” (1701), created on the basis of the “gunners’ (Pushkarskaia) school” (1699). It had approximately

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106 Kalashnikov, 159-166.
107 PSZ #3897; C. Peterson, Peter the Great’s Administrative and Judicial Reforms: Swedish Antecedents and the Process of Reception (Stockholm, 1979), 106-113; Vladimirskaia-Budanov, Gosudarstvo i narodnoe obrazovanie, 261-262. Medical education was also based on the same principle: the Admiralty Regulation of 1722 stated the training of apprentice doctors and pharmacists was one of two major goals of the newly established hospitals. Of a similar type was the St.Petersburg medical school (1716). Vladimirskaia-Budanov, Gosudarstvo i narodnoe obrazovanie 272.
108 PSZ #3534, chapter 36.
109 For a short overview of Petrine schools in English see Hughes, Russia, 299-308. For more detailed coverage the old works by Vladimirskaia-Budanov and Rozhdestvenskii are still invaluable.
150-250 pupils depending on the year; they were taught mathematics, geometry, engineering, and other technical subjects. There are also mentions of the “second artillery school” (1712) at the 1st Artillery Regiment, run by its colonel, and the “third artillery school” operating at the “Petersburg laboratory house” in 1721.\(^\text{111}\)

It is on account of their secular, mathematical focus that these schools are usually hailed as innovative and modern. Institutionally, however, they were terribly pre-modern establishments: there were no class rosters, no detailed curricula, no internal regulations, no records of various exams and assessments. They were established, staffed, housed, and supplied by students on an ad hoc basis. There are no detailed studies of these schools, because we simply have no records of their activities. It is no wonder that historians have trouble establishing exactly how many of them there were, when a given school was established and when disbanded, and whether there was any continuity between different episodes of training being mentioned as taking part at a given location.\(^\text{112}\) Similarly organized were the two nation-wide networks of schools established during Peter's reign: the “cipher” schools (1714, see below), and the “Admiralty”, or “Russian” (as opposed to Latin or Slavonic-Greek) schools, attached to the major naval installations and supervised by the Navy (Beskrovnyi traces their origin back to the shipbuilding activities in Voronezh in 1703. They started to be re-established on a larger scale after 1717). Indeed, a typical Petrine school “more closely resembled institutionalized apprenticeship system” than a formal school.\(^\text{113}\)

\(^{111}\) Ibid, 293.

\(^{112}\) For a detailed study of such schools (in this case, schools at the Okhta wharf in St.Petersburg) see: S. Shcheglov, "Dve sankt-peterburgskiie shkoly v pervoi połowie XVIII v." Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshchenia, no. XXXIX (May 1911).

\(^{113}\) Okenfuss, Education in Russia, 63.
Finally, the most institutionalized schools of Peter’s reign were established not so much by the state, as by foreigners and foreign-educated Russian Orthodox ecclesiastics, although these might have been occasionally invited to do so by Peter. As a rule, these schools were explicitly modeled after one or another foreign school; they tended to have a somewhat clearly outlined curriculum; and to be staffed by expatriate teachers. One example of such a school was the already-mentioned Naval (or, Marine Guards) Academy modeled by Baron de Saint Hilaire on the French port schools at Toulon, Rochefort, and Brest. Other examples were the gymnasium set up by Pietist Pastor Gluck in Moscow in 1703 and a school opened by the Czech

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114 Its students were appropriately called gardemariny (corruption of gardes de la marine). For a brief overview of these schools see: Artz, *The Development of Technical Education*, 51-55, 102-103. In the mid 1710s these schools, particularly the one at Toulon, was attended by a group of Russian students. The disciplinary nature of the early-modern schools for nobility is especially evident if we consider that Peter resorted in this case to borrowing from the French model. This very fact is somewhat surprising: although he is known to have studied and used French practices, in naval matters he habitually relied on technologies, terminology, and experts imported from Sweden, the Netherlands, and England. The problem was that neither Sweden, nor the Netherlands, nor England – all of them leading naval powers – could offer the tsar a model for a naval school: neither of them had one. France, in fact, had such schools precisely because it wanted to catch up with Great Britain: Colbert created port schools because France, in his opinion, lacked pilots and skippers (as did Russia). The goal therefore was not so much training per se, as the creation of a culture of naval service: it was an instrument of social engineering, although an imperfect one. England, where such culture existed, did not need similar schools. Regarding the nature of education at the French port schools, note that according to the 1689 Naval Ordinance one a week a hour was set aside for the study of mathematics, while two hours a day – for dancing, fencing, and exercise with the pike. Even establishment of these schools, however, did not help the French to mold a cadre of qualified naval personnel: their officer corps remained terribly split along social lines, with naval artillerists, for example, being perceived as a totally separate – and inferior – caste. James Pritchard, *Louis XV's Navy, 1748-1762: A Study of Organization and Administration* (Kingston, 1987), 55-70. The most detailed study of the Academy and of the early eighteenth-century naval education in Russia in general is still F. Veselago, *Ocherk istorii Morskogo kadetskogo korpusa*. (St.Petersburg, 1885). The role of the Dutch and, especially, British models in Peter’s naval policies is demonstrated extensively in: James Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Culture* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), 40-61. For Peter’s use of French models in designing his institutions, see Troitskii, *Russkii absol'utizm*, 54-57; ZA, 75-77. Note, though, that Peter had Louis XIV’s naval ordinance translated and published in 1715 in 27 (!) copies. Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution*, 58. In England, equally characteristically, the Royal Naval Academy established at Portsmouth in 1729-1733 had a capacity of 40 students only, and even that was seldom filled. Students paid considerable fees for their education, and admission required “some progress in the Latin tongue.” The Royal Navy continued to train its future officers through apprenticeship on board until the end of the eighteenth century, and did quite well. N.A.M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (Annapolis, MD, 1986), 203-205, 382-394; H.W. Dickinson, "The Portsmouth Naval Academy, 1733-1806," *The Mariner's Mirror LXXXIX*, no. 1 (2003): 17-30. On officer training in the Dutch navy, see Jaap R. Bruijn, *The Dutch Navy of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Columbia, SC, 1993), 111-112, 173-191.
Jesuit in Moscow in the 1690s.\textsuperscript{115} The most famous example was the legendary Moscow School of Mathematics and Navigation (1701), modeled after the Royal Mathematical School founded at Christ’s Hospital near London in 1673, and run by three British expatriates.\textsuperscript{116} Finally, there were schools set up by Kiev-trained ecclesiastics and modeled after the classic Latin academy with its seven-step sequence of humanitarian studies. These included the Slavo-Greco-Latin Academy established in Moscow in 1687; schools set up by Archbishop Ioann Maksimovich in his dioceses (in Chernigov in 1700 and in Tobolsk in 1703-1704); the Kharkov Kollegium (1726), and others.\textsuperscript{117}

Our understanding of the proper place of these schools in the history of Russian education is impeded by a tendency to view everything happening during Peter’s reign as the direct expression of his personal ideas. This could hardly be true: I would argue that often even though certain actions might have been condoned or even supported by the tsar, they were driven, in fact, by individual agendas of this or that particular individual. The history of Petrine education provides a good illustration: the establishment of many of the key schools in the earlier part of his reign is best explained not so much by the needs of the state or desires of the monarch, as by the

\textsuperscript{115} Vladimirskii-Budanov, \textit{Gosudarstvo i narodnoe obrazovanie}, 275-278; Okenfuss, \textit{Education in Russia}, 27-45.

\textsuperscript{116} N. Hans, "The Moscow School of Mathematics and Navigation (1701)," \textit{Slavonic and East European Review} 29 (1951): 532-536; W.F. Ryan, "Navigation and Modernization in Russia," in \textit{Russia in the Age of Enlightenment: Essays for Isabel de Madariaga} (London, 1990), 75-105. Note, however, that the original school at Christ’s Hospital was intended for training not of officers, but of naval teachers – instructors who were dispatched on board naval ships to teach young boys undergoing apprenticeship there. The “proposal” of Marquis of Carmarthen, Peter’s host in England, makes it sufficiently clear. Cracraft, \textit{The Petrine Revolution}, 80.

missionary activism of various denominations and competition among them.\(^{118}\) It is reasonable to suggest that Peter’s support for these schools did not necessarily mean that he shared, or even comprehended, the educational ideas underpinning this or that particular model and its social implication: in fact, the simultaneous existence of such vastly different models suggests as much.

A telling example, emphasizing both this point and Peter’s overall indifference towards disciplinarian educational innovations, is the fate of Pastor Gluck’s school. Ernst Gluck was not an ordinary pastor. He had studied theology and oriental languages at Wittenberg, Leipzig, and, later, at Hamburg, where one of his classmates was Francke himself. Subsequently Gluck maintained a correspondence with Francke and was clearly influenced by his ideas. He was engaged in missionary work among Estonians, Latvians and Russian Old Believers in the Baltic provinces and persuaded the king of Sweden to support the establishment of Latin schools there. In Livland Gluck also translated the Bible and various school textbooks into Latvian and Slavic languages and, apparently as early as 1697, attracted the attention of F.A. Golovin, one of the nominal leaders of Peter’s the Grand Embassy to Western Europe, who supported his translating efforts. Moreover, Marta Skavronskaya, Peter’s future wife and empress under the name of Catherine I, was brought up in his house. Thanks to all these connections, after the conquest of the Baltic provinces by Russian troops Gluck soon found himself in Moscow enjoying (although against his will) the status of Peter’s “special guest.”\(^{119}\)

\(^{118}\) On the bitter rivalry between Kievan (Orthodox), Jesuit, and Lutheran educators in Moscow in 1701-1703, see Okenfuss, “The Jesuit Origins,” 116.

Having arrived in Moscow, Gluck quickly took over what was left of a school set up in 1700 by a certain Nicolaus Schwimmer. Originally it was meant to train young clerks of the Foreign Chancellery in foreign languages. Gluck, however, persuaded F.A. Golovin and Peter himself to support the transformation of this school into nothing less than a *Gymnasium Petrinum*. The curriculum of Schwimmer’s tiny school was dictated by the practical needs of a state at war (teaching the Swedish, Latin, German, and Dutch languages). Gluck, however, refashioned it into an academy for nobles. He intended to instruct pupils at his Gymnasium in ancient and modern languages, and also in geography, philosophy, “politics,” ethics, and rhetoric. Besides, he was planning to teach them “bodily orderliness [*telesnomu blagolepiiu chinom nemetskim i frantsuzskim*] according to French and German examples,” that is, fencing, dancing, rules of appropriate behavior, and horse-back riding. Indeed, his school was immediately recognized by qualified Russian contemporaries as an academy for the nobility: “That year there were schools established, to call them simply, academies, to study different languages and also noble sciences [*kavalerskikh nauk*] [such as] horse-back riding, and fencing, and [exercises with] flags, and music, and engineering,” Prince Kurakin reports. Meanwhile, teaching methods employed by Gluck at his Gymnasium were recognizably Franckean, including emphasis on supervision, on observing a detailed schedule with sharp delineation of work and leisure, etc.

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120 Note that earlier the Chezh Jesuits had also hoped to “formale scholarum a gymnasium a Moscovitica nobilitate.” Okenfuss, *Education in Russia*, 28.


It is noteworthy, however, that when Gluck’s successors (his own son and his second in command, Johan Werner Pause) started an ugly feud after the pastor’s death in 1705, the authorities allowed the Gymnasium to rapidly degenerate into exactly what it was originally meant to be, that is, into a “language school.” In 1715 its remnants were closed down altogether. Peter did not appreciate either Gluck’s Franckean pedagogical innovations, or his broader agenda of forming “true nobles.”

This lack of appreciation could sometimes be quite striking. Indeed, the emperor, who could be obsessively attentive to the details of his pet projects, never put any significant effort into working out the details of educational processes and procedures in his schools. Peter played a key role in shaping major institution introduced during his reign, and he personally drafted important pieces of legislation, such as, for example, the regulation for the Admiralty College, which was to serve as a model for all others, or the General Regulation. He could also personally edit successive versions of books he considered important. For example, according to his timetable for 1721, he planned to spend four days a week (Monday to Thursday) working on the Admiralty Regulation, whereas Saturday morning was set aside for work on the history of his war with Sweden. According to E.V. Anisimov, of all the decrees and laws issued during Peter’s reign, no less than half were either written by the tsar personally, or shaped decisively by his resolutions. Peter’s military regulation contains two hundred corrections and additions authored by the tsar himself.

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124 Andreev, Russkie studenty, 119-121; Kovrigina, Nemetskaia sloboda, 328-329.

125 Hughes, Russia, 379.

126 Anisimov, The Reforms, 149, 165; ZA, 294-308, 415-510. For Peter’s personal participation in drafting of the Table of Ranks, see Troitskii, Russkii absolutizm, 48-104.
know of no comprehensive document on education and schooling that attracted even remotely comparable attention from Peter and could be taken to reflect his own views rather than those of his lieutenants.

Indeed, most of Peter’s own (*imennyie*) decrees on schooling are exceedingly short: they are evidently nothing but oral orders barked out by Peter on some occasion and written down by clerks. One such decree is called, characteristically, *On Train Horses for Army Regiments, and On Sending Young Clerks to Konigsberg to Study the German Language*. The decree consists of two paragraphs: the order to increase the complement of horses at an infantry regiment to 300 comes first, the order to dispatch “30 or 40” clerks to study in Prussia – second. The paragraph on horses is twice as long as the one on studying.\(^{127}\) Evidently, both orders were ad hoc measures proposed in response to some specific instances of shortage of, respectively, horses and German-speaking clerks.

Even more comprehensive Petrine decrees that might be interpreted as meant to institute some large-scale educational innovations are still extremely short and vague. Here is, for example, the often-cited decree of 1714 introducing mandatory education for the nobility and establishing a country-wide system of secular “cipher” schools for members of the elite, the first such measure in Russia:

The Great Sovereign ordered: in all the provinces children of nobles and clerks, with the exception of *odnodvortsy* [single homestead owners], from 10 to 15 years old, are to be taught numbers and some geometry, and for that end a few students from the Mathematics school are to be sent to every province to bishops and prominent monasteries; they are to be given space for schools at the bishops’ residences and at the monasteries and a salary of 3 *altyn* and 2 *den’ga* a day from the provincial revenues; and they are not to charge their pupils anything; and when those pupils master these subjects completely, they are to be given certified letters signed by these students [i.e. teachers], at which point they [teachers] are allowed to take a ruble from every pupil; and without such

\(^{127}\) PSZ #2986.
certificates they [pupils] are not to be allowed to marry and not to be issued marriage certificates.\textsuperscript{128}

That is all that the legislator had to say on the subject (and that, moreover, was initially a \textit{verbal} order). The salary for teachers was specified, but the methods of instruction were not. Neither, for all practical purposes, was the curriculum: note the typically vague “some geometry” and “a few students.” The decree, it appears, implied that basic literacy was to be acquired by pupils elsewhere, but where exactly it was not clear. The next year the tsar repeated his order, as if the 1714 decree never existed. This time the decree was even shorter: “From the school of My Lord Grand Admiral take [students] who have already mastered Geography and Geometry, and send them to every province, two to each, to teach young children of various ranks.”\textsuperscript{129} The decree was repeated again in 1716. In 1719 the Senate repeated it again citing a report that of all the central provinces a school had been set up in Yaroslavl only.\textsuperscript{130}

In fact, the more comprehensive educational regulations produced in Peter’s reign were invariably written not by the tsar himself but by his lieutenants. Here the question of authorship of key ideas and concepts comes up again: traditionally, historians tend to treat the works of some of Peter’s lieutenants as directly reflecting Peter’s own views.\textsuperscript{131} This approach might not be necessarily justified, however.

\textsuperscript{128} PSZ #2668.
\textsuperscript{129} PSZ #2871.
\textsuperscript{130} PSZ #2979, 3447.
\textsuperscript{131} N.I. Pavlenko, for example, in his old work used the writings of Peter and Archbishop Feofan Prokopovich interchangeably, quoting the clerics’ works to illustrate Peter’s ideas of kingship. N.I. Pavlenko, “Petr I (K izucheniuiu sotsial'no-politicheskikh vzgl'adov),” in \textit{Rossia v period reform Petra I} (Moscow, 1973), 40-102. Evgenii Anisimov and Lindsey Hughes, for all the practical purposes, do the same. See, for example, Anisimov, \textit{The Reforms}, 203-216; Hughes, \textit{Russia}, 267 (on the decree on the assemblies). For a debate on the actual role of Prokopovich, Peter, and, possibly, other authors in drafting \textit{The Truth of the Monarch’s Will} and other texts, see James Cracraft, “Did Feofan Prokopovich Really Write Pravda voli monarshiei? ” \textit{Slavic Review} 40 (Summer 1981): 173-193; A. Lentin, ed. \textit{Peter the Great: His Law on Imperial Succession in Russia}, 1722. The Official Comentary.
Surely, Peter’s collaborators did not write anything that was blatantly contrary to the tsar’s views, but that does not mean that their more sophisticated ideas were necessarily shared and comprehended by him. In many instances Peter knew what he was doing far better than his contemporaries, and articulated it more clearly. But when compared to such highly educated individuals as Feofan Prokopovich or some of his foreign-born advisors, the tsar was way behind conceptually.

A good example of such collaboration is the relatively extensive Instruction for the Marine Academy of 1715. The Instruction laid out a set of rules of behavior for noble gardemariny. Besides military discipline, it also included measures meant to expose students to norms of conduct appropriate for a polite gentleman. Gardemariny were expected to “display all possible respect for each other, and call each other My Lord [Moim Gospodinom]” (Article 9), and “make an effort regarding their dress, and always to be clean both in their dress and their underwear” (Article 26). The students were to refrain from “drinking, swearing, and blasphemy,” (Article 18) and to behave orderly “without any confusion and without any affront to each other” (Article 3). Their day was to start with a common prayer (Articles 2).132

The author of the Instruction is not known. To launch the Academy Peter hired a French expatriate Baron de Saint Hilaire. Although textually the Instruction differs significantly from a proposal written by Saint Hilaire in 1713, he should probably still be considered its author. At the very least, the format of the Instruction is somewhat unusual for Petrine documents: most of the articles start with the formula “His Tsarist Majesty orders that…” (Ego Tsarskoe Velichestvo povelevaet…), as if the author speaks on the tsar’s behalf. Moreover, Baron de Saint Hilaire ran the Academy for the

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132 PSZ # 2937.
first two years, which probably would not have been the case, were his ideas rejected. His dismissal was a result, apparently, of his quarrels with Russian dignitaries.  

Similarly to Gluck’s Gymnasium – and despite significant attention paid by the tsar to his “favorite school” – all the disciplinarian principles outlined in the Instruction were soon forgotten, or rather, failed to be implemented. Weber, the Hanoverian envoy, reported a few years later that the school “only taught navigation and what belonged to it.” In terms of the teaching arrangements the Academy never moved beyond an “institutionalized apprenticeship.”

Serving as clear evidence of Peter’s own thinking on the subject are his additions to the final text of the Instruction, included in the version this document published in PSZ. (The very fact that he though it necessary to make them also suggest that the Instructions was not written by Peter). These additions are, indeed, telling. Article 7 of the Instruction dealt with absenteeism, and the tsar added that the “Director is not to allow anybody to leave the city for whatever reason without a letter signed by an Admiral.” Article 8 dealt with behavior in the classroom. Here Peter commands that

For subduing shouting and rioting choose from among the guardsmen good retired infantrymen, and put one of them in every classroom with a whip in his hands during the studies; and if a student starts rioting, beat him with this whip regardless of his family.

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133 Veselago, Ocherk, 37-47. For Saint Hilaire’s original (1713) project, see ibid, Appendix III.

134 Veselago, Ocherki, 47 passim; Okenfuss, “Technical Education,” 337.

135 Weber, 129. Elsewhere, though, he mentions that the students were instructed in “Languages, Fencing, and Bodily exercises.” This combination (especially the key phrase “bodily exercises” reflects, perhaps, not so much the actual curriculum, as the language of the decree. Weber, 80. For Peter’s own handwritten list of subjects to be taught at the Academy, see ZA. For a list of subjects approved by the Senate in 1719, see PSZ #3276.
At the end the tsar adds a resolution: “So be it. It is also necessary to add to each article [specific] punishment [for violating it].”\textsuperscript{136} Discipline for Peter is the same thing as corporal punishment.

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Much is made of Peter’s alleged belief in rationality of human beings. Indeed, many of Peter’s decrees betray a belief that the measures, taken by the state, ought to be explained, so that the rational subjects would see and recognize the beneficial results, to be expected from these innovations.\textsuperscript{137} At the same time, Peter knew that his God-fearing subjects did not automatically follow his order. On the contrary, as Marc Raeff noted, the emperor, in fact, “acted on the assumption that all of his innovations will be resented and resisted.”\textsuperscript{138} Hence, the promises of “merciless beating” and other punishments for offenders, so common in Petrine decrees. Peter had a tendency to supply his subjects with models of everything: of bayonets, knives, hats etc. – to be copied and used.\textsuperscript{139} He was thinking however, purely in terms of outward submission: in 1707 he ordered that nobody working at the Admiralty wear a Cossack-style cap, but rather use a hat of an approved model. The old-fashioned hats were to be taken off heads by the guards, and that was the end of the story.\textsuperscript{140}

There are, of course, other examples. In November 1723, commenting in a decree on the difficulty of promoting manufacturing in Russia, Peter wrote

> It is true that few are eager, inasmuch as our folk are like unschooled children who will never take up the alphabet if not compelled to do so by the master,

\textsuperscript{136} Veselago, \textit{Ocherk}, 37-47.

\textsuperscript{137} See Pavlenko, “Petr I.”

\textsuperscript{138} Raeff, \textit{The Well-Ordered}, 206.

\textsuperscript{139} Hughes, \textit{Russia}, 380-381.

\textsuperscript{140} See also his infamous decree on “beards” prohibiting both wearing traditional Russian dress and growing beard. PSZ #2874.
and who find it vexing at first. But once they learn it, they are grateful; and this is clearly true of all the current undertakings carried out under compulsion. For already gratitude is heard for much that has borne fruit.\(^{141}\)

The same idea, that practice makes habit, is found in a decree of one of the most famous of Peter’s cultural innovations – the *assamblei*, or assemblies, decreed by him into being in 1718 and meant to introduce to Russia the Western model of polite socializing. The author explains at the end of the preamble that the decree regulated “the manner in which these *assamblei* are to be held is explained below, for the period until it becomes habit.”\(^{142}\) Yet, we know that the decree was actually written by the chief of the St.Petersburg police, Anton Devier, a Portugalese expatriate.\(^{143}\) Surely, by commissioning Devier to draft this decree Peter wanted to send some sort of message to his subjects. But could this particular wording be interpreted as reflecting his personal sensibilities?

So, did Peter have any explicit notion of education, and specifically, of transforming his subjects through education? In a note to clerks compiling the history of his reign he lists among his key cultural achievements the establishment of the “navigation school” and “schools of German and other languages,” and also the expansion of the “Latin schools” – along with permitting his subjects to study abroad and forbidding them to grow beards. No explanation of importance of these measures is offered, however.\(^{144}\) Late in his life Peter commented on a lists of statements (quotations, apparently) prepared by some assistant and meant, the publisher of his papers suggests, to express the philosophy of his reign. He writes a heartfelt paragraph commenting on the issue of vengeance as a necessary element of rulership. The

\(^{141}\) Quoted in Anisimov, *The Reforms*, 35.

\(^{142}\) PSZ #3246

\(^{143}\) Hughes, *Russia*, 267.

\(^{144}\) ZA, 115-116.
statements that “The ignorant ones ought to be instructed,” and that “Reasoning is the highest of all virtues, for any virtue without reasoning is empty” are left without comment.\textsuperscript{145} Significantly, perhaps, he has not reacted in any way to the project for establishing formal schools (academies) for the nobility presented to him by Fedor Saltykov (see next chapter) and Baron Magnus Wilhelm Nieroth, a Franckean Pietist and an Estland landowner (who had actually set up such a school on his own and was asking for governmental support),\textsuperscript{146} or to two anonymous projects for establishing an “Academy of Politics” and “Slavo-Latin Academies.”\textsuperscript{147} Equally ignored were the projects presented by Leibnitz, including his idea to establish the College of Education – a governmental department in charge of schooling.\textsuperscript{148}

All this may sound unfair and ahistorical. To be sure, Peter clearly wanted to effect change in society, which was quite a radical break with the past in a society that was still essentially medieval in its attitudes towards time and tradition.\textsuperscript{149} Still, when Petrine schools are compared to the Berlin Cadet Corps instituted around the same time, this absence of any concern for modern disciplinarian techniques could not be more glaring. Peter studied Prussian examples quite extensively, yet as far as schooling was concerned, he chose to ignore them. The reason, I would tentatively suggest, is not his “practicality,” but rather his inability to see the mind as a separate object of manipulation and disciplining. He was not prepared to think in terms of

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid, 151-152.


\textsuperscript{147} Rozhdestvenkii, \textit{Ocheki}, 74-84. The projects are published in: Ibid, Appendices I-II.

\textsuperscript{148} Rozhdestvensii, \textit{Ocherki}, 102-110; V. Ger'e, "Otnoshenie Leibnitsa k Petru Velikomu." \textit{Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshchenia}, no. CXLVII-CXLVIII (1870); V. Ger'e, \textit{Sbornik pism i memorialov Leibnitsa, otmosashchikhia k Rossii i Petru Velikomu}. (St.Petersburg, 1873); ZA, 269-271.

\textsuperscript{149} Hughes, \textit{Russia}, 378-389.
contemporary discourse on body and mind, environment and nature, and, in essence, lacked a concept of “morality.” Proverbial shaving of beards was, therefore, totally consistent with Peter’s overall view of social pedagogy. At the end, nothing, probably, illustrates Peter’s indifference to these issues better than a decree demanding that “In Kazan and Azov provinces Bessurmen of the Mohammedan faith are to be baptized in a half year at most.”\textsuperscript{150} Whether it was the expression of Peter’s Westernized (of his increasingly outdated rationalistic notion of governability), or traditional (of the ritual-focused Orthodox religiosity, or of uncomplicated Russian view of society in general) outlook is hard to tell without a further in-depth study: most probably, it is one more case of the new, imported notions curiously strengthening the old, traditional ones.

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At this point, a brief overview of Peter’s policies towards the nobility is due. Indeed, in the second part of his reign the emperor took a number of significant steps toward the creation of a more “Western-like” nobility. This, his 1714 decree on “single inheritance” was meant to achieve two goals. On the one hand, the disinherited younger sons would be induced to join state service (which was mandatory anyway, of course), as they did in the West. On the other, this measure would help to avoid the splintering of landed estates: as a result of this new decree, the legislator argued, “Great families would not be declining [any more].”\textsuperscript{151}

This reference to the “great families” is significant, for even though Peter envisioned a unified nobility, gradations of birth mattered to him. \textit{Znatnost’} (literally, “prominence”) was routinely used as a social category in personnel decisions of his reign. This broad category gradually replaces in the governmental parlance the

\textsuperscript{150} Quoted in Anisimov, \textit{The Reforms}, 208.

\textsuperscript{151} PSZ #2789.
numerous older categories of servitors. In 1704, the decree announcing a review of young nobles enumerates “boyars, okol’nicchie, the Duma nobles, and all the palace personnel [palatnykh liudei].”152 In 1712, a similar decree is addressed “to the members of prominent families and the children of the nobility.”153 A still broader category of shl’akhstvo, derived from the Polish szlachta and embracing all the nobles, was first officially introduced by Peter himself in 1712, and in the 1720s-1730s it becomes a common way of referring to the nobility.154 Meanwhile, the category of “prominent” nobility remained very much in use. In his comment on the list of prospective candidates for the position of Master of the Heraldry, for example, Peter specifically orders that the members of the Military College be involved in the election of the Master, for “there are many prominent ones [znatnykh] among them.” Note that the list of candidates included two princes, three royal in-laws (Naryshkin, Apraksin, and Saltykov), and two members of old non-titled nobility.155 Even more tellingly, in a personal letter Peter berates Admiral Apraksin for drafting into the navy only the lower-born nobles: “only five [nobles] are drafted, and even those from the lower nobility [iz nizkikh] (we offer to the Lord only that what is not good enough for ourselves [a Russian proverb; na tebe Bozhe chto nam negozhe]).”156 Subsequently, the

152 PSZ #1960.

153 PSZ #2492.

154 The term came to be used since before Peter there was no generic term for nobility: the Russian dvor’anstvo (singular dvor’anin) was technically one of the lower ranks of the pre-Petrine service class; thus, a boyar was not a dvor’anin. Note that throughout the 1730s-1740s shl’akhstvo is used interchangeably with the Russian dvor’anstvo; later it was completely replaced by the Russian term.

155 ZA, 236.

156 Quoted in Veselago, Ocherk, 25.
decrees specified that “the prominent ones … are to be enrolled in the Guards, and the rest – into the army.”157

Yet, what exactly does this prominence implied was not clear. In fact, in 1724 the Military College requested from the Senate a clarification on which definition it should use in distributing young nobles among various regiments – whether the “prominence” should be measured in the number of serfs owned (100 male serfs and more), or according to the father’s position in the Table of Ranks. Both of these definitions were, in fact, used in contemporary administrative practice. Note that the Military College (upon the suggestion, of all men, its president, Prince A.I. Repnin) excluded “genealogy and titles” (po rodosloviu i titlam) from the list of possible definitions. Peter’s cryptic (and famous) resolution was “Znatnoe dvor’antsvo po godnosti schitat” (“Prominence of nobility is to be measured according to one’s fitness”).158

This resolution, however, contradicted Peter’s own established practice: in 1713, for example, it was decreed that all minors who had at least 130 serf household present themselves for revue in Saint Petersburg, and the rest – in Moscow.159 More importantly, it did not offer any definition of “fitness.” This resulted in a protracted correspondence between various agencies which continued after Peter’s death. In December 1724, the Heraldry vaguely suggested that, absent any clarification from the sovereign, “fitness” should probably be taken to encompass physically able body and certain age (16 years old of age or older), and, in some circumstances, literacy. A member of the Military College acerbically remarked that, according to this

157 PSZ #4349, 4334, 4379.
158 Kalashnikov, “Ofitserskii korpus,”164; ZA, 149-150.
159 PSZ #2652
definition, all the young noble servitors were “prominent,” for “the unfit ones are not enlisted in H.I.M.’s service.” Still, for the lack of any alternative, this definition was accepted as the criterion for selecting young nobles for service in the Guards.  

That was a very loose criterion, indeed, as at no point in time could all the able-bodied young nobles be accepted into the Guards. The failure of Peter to establish different criteria of fitness, ability, and merit is noteworthy, though. In his memoirs V.V. Golovin tells that in 1712 all the noble minors were summoned to St.Petersburg, and

at the end of May there was a revue, conducted by His Tsarist Majesty personally, who deigned to divide us into three groups: first, the older ones, [were called for active] service as privates, those in the middle, [were sent] overseas to Holland to study the naval science of navigation, (and I, sinner, was among them, to my misfortune), and the younger ones [were sent] to study at Revel.  

Age, thus, was taken by Peter to be the main criterion for sorting out the young nobles. Characteristically, the famed instrument of meritocracy, the Table of Ranks, contains no references to merit: it simply institutionalized gradual promotion from one rank to another, but whether this promotion should be based, for example, on seniority, or on election by fellow officers (two options used in the 1720s-1730s), was not specified. In short, nowhere in Petrine legislation does one find any notion of intellectual or moral qualities as a definition of the nobility or as a characteristic required of a servitor, that is, as something to be taken into account by the state and measured. It was precisely for this reason that Peter, as is well known, never envisioned anything like education specifically designed for the nobility as different from the technical training of future officers and bureaucrats.


Chapter 4

“To Equal the European States”:

Reconstructing the Russian Nobility, 1700s-1730s

In this chapter I attempt to present a broad outline of ideas on education, and especially on education for the nobility that are found in the writings of some of Peter’s younger contemporaries. The sources at my disposal here are few, and I in no way claim that the works discussed below represent any sort of consensus among the elite. On the contrary, these authors were clearly exceptional and highly atypical individuals, the key intellectuals of their time. In each particular case peculiarities of views expressed are, probably, better explained by the accidents of their education and career experience that brought to the attention of these authors one or another element of Western European educational discourse available at that time. As is the case with most of us, it would be fruitless to attempt to describe the views and perceptions of their authors solely as Lockean, Wolffean, Franckean, etc. Rather, they were usually a mixture that approximately reflected the key themes in contemporary philosophical and political discourse. While it would not be possible here to trace each and every intellectual influence and to attribute every particular idea to familiarity with specific Western works, I will, nevertheless, attempt to emphasize the uses and interpretations by Russian authors of such common themes of contemporary European pedagogical literature as human nature and environment, inclinations and ability, as well as the role of disciplinarian techniques.

Still, the ideas found in their works are important for a number of reasons. First, by discussing this body of texts I am hoping to further emphasize Peter’s
indifference towards educational theories of his time. Second, some of these individuals participated in the events of 1730 and, to some degree, in shaping the educational policies of Anna’s government in 1731-1732. So, an overview of their writing helps to put the foundation of the Noble Cadet Corps in a broader intellectual context. At the very least, I hope to demonstrate that the concepts underpinning the foundation of the Corps and the educational practices employed there ought to have been recognizable to the top members of the elite.

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Members of the Russian elite travelling to Western Europe during Peter’s reign invariably paid a lot of attention to the educational arrangements they encountered in various countries. These high-ranking Russian travelers observed the ways and mores of the European aristocracy. They identified themselves with this nobility and came to the conclusion that education of a certain kind was an important attribute of a noble. Prince Boris Kurakin lists in his diary various academies and universities in the countries he visited, and even observes knowingly (in September 1705) that in Berlin an “academy for cavaliers is only now being set up, and [so it is] not quite good [yet].”162 The same year Andrei Matveev, an okolnichii and the future count of the Holy Roman Empire, ambassador to Holland and son of Boyar Artamon Matveev (killed during the streltsy revolt of 1682) noted upon visiting Paris:

Truly, with great amazement should it be mentioned that not a single male or female member of French noble families could be found who has not undertaken the above mentioned studies for the sake of honest upbringing [ko svoemu chestnomy vospitaniiu].

The program of studies outlined by Matveev is quite typical, indeed, archetypical of a European schools for nobility in the late seventeenth - early

eighteenth centuries. It is also nearly identical both with that proposed ten years later by Fedor Saltykov and with the curriculum introduced 25 years later at the Cadet Corps:

In France children of high families, from their earliest years, are educated [imejut vospitanie]\(^{163}\) quite well in various languages and in all liberal arts, especially in mathematics, geography, geometry, arithmetic, in military exercises and horse-riding, and for that sake there are great academies set up in Paris, and also [nobles are educated] in dancing, and singing, and various musics.\(^{164}\)

By the time of his writing an attempt to set up such an academy had already taken place in Moscow. The fate of this Gymnasium, set up by Pastor Gluck, is outlined in the previous chapter. Although short-lived, it proved to be reasonably popular among the elite, especially after 1706, when the school’s new supervisor, A.D. Menshikov, ordered that the students be paid a “salary.” At this point their numbers rose to almost 100; 19 of them, however, studied at their own expense. Among the students one finds, apparently, not so much the likes of Andrei Matveev and Prince Kurakin, but rather mid-ranking noblemen and the sons of high-level clerks in the Foreign Chancellery.\(^{165}\) At the same time, the Jesuit school operating in Moscow in the early 1700s included among its students such names as the Naryshkin

\(^{163}\) Note that although Matveev here speaks about vospitanie, for him it has not yet necessarily acquired the meaning of “moral education,” or “upbringing,” as opposed to uchenie, or “acquisition of knowledge and skills.”

\(^{164}\) “Opisanie poezdki gr. A.A. Matveeva v Parizh v 1705 godu,” in Puteshestviia russkikh ludei za granitsu, 52.

\(^{165}\) Kovrigina, Nemetskaia sloboda, 316, 327. Note also the numerous instances of Russian dignitaries bringing from their trip abroad foreign tutors for their children. This option, of course, was available to truly wealthy ones only. Ibid, 350-377. One of the students was Johann, the nephew Pavel laguzhinsky, the future procurator-general of the Senate and the key participant of the 1730s events. Partially because to this connection laguzhinskii got involved with the affairs of the school and met a number of Pietist educators associated with it.
brothers (Peter’s young cousins), Prince Golitsyn, the Golovkin brothers, and others.

The idea that the nobility needed a special kind of education was, however, not self-evident. Consider, for example, proposals of Aleksei Kurbatov, one of Peter’s low-born associates, who was, among other things, a former superintendent of Moscow schools. Writing to the tsar in 1721, he called upon the government to create ecclesiastical schools for future priests, schools for sons of merchants to be instructed in the “art of commerce,” and also schools “to instruct young children of nobles, soldiers, gunners and other ranks in Russian grammar, arithmetic and geometric sciences for the multiplication of naval and artillery servicemen.” Kurbatov recognized nobles as a separate group within the existing social taxonomy. Yet their educational needs were defined in his view solely by their profession. Therefore, as far as schooling goes, nobles could be lumped together with other groups whose primary occupation was fighting. This approach is very much in line with the overall Petrine practice outlined in the previous chapter.

Compare these ideas with the stance taken in his writings by Fedor Saltykov (d. 1715), Peter’s emissary in London from 1712 until 1715. Whereas Kurbatov was born a serf, Saltykov owned 1300 serf households. Besides, he was a member of an old boyar family and a cousin of Tsarina Praskovia, the wife of Ivan V, Peter’s half-brother and co-ruler from 1682 to 1696. At the same time, he was highly “Westernized” for a member of his generation, at least in terms of his experiences. In


167 “Punkty o kabinet-kollegiume Alekseia Kurbatova”, in N. Pavlov-Silvanskii, Proekty reform v zapiskakh sovremennikov Petra Velikogo. Opyt izuchenia russkikh proektov i neizdannyie ikh teksty (St.Petersburg, 1897; reprint, Moscow, 2000), 239.
1697 he was sent to England and the Netherlands to study shipbuilding and navigation. Subsequently, he took part in a diplomatic mission to Poland, supervised shipbuilding efforts in the northern port of Olonets and in St.Petersburg. Finally, in 1711 he was dispatched abroad on a secret mission to purchase ships for the Russian navy.168

Saltykov’s two policy papers, Proposals (“Propozitsii”) and Declarations of state profit (“Iziavlenia pribytochnye gosudarstvu”) were sent to Peter in 1713 and 1714, respectively.169 Typically for documents of that type and period, they were lists of unrelated suggestions on vastly different matters: from justifications for Russia’s claims to Karelia, Finland, and Lifland, to feeding paupers, horse-breeding, promotion of markets, “rules for writing history,” etc. In many respects, Saltykov was a man of the Petrine era: that is, a believer in the omnipotence of the state. The essence of most of his proposals boils down to “strictly ordering” various individuals and groups to behave in one or another way. He fails to give any thought to the potential inability of the state to monitor and enforce implementation of the proposed measures, much less to the unwillingness or inability of subjects to follow these orders.

At the same time, Saltykov’s ideas on nobility and education bear clear signs of familiarity with contemporary Western concepts. In fact, it is thanks to the appropriation of these concepts that he was able to take a stance as a staunch defender

168 Saltykov’s mission was reasonably successful, yet Peter seems to had always mistrusted him for some reason, and in 1715 Saltykov died in London just in time to avoid being arrested by a special emissary sent by the tsar to England to investigate his alleged corruption and mismanagement. Pavlov-Sil’vanskii, Proekty reform, 27-33. Incidentally, in the early 1710s Russian ambassador in England and Holland and thus a supervisor of Fedor Saltykov was Prince Boris Kurakin, mentioned earlier.

169 Here I use the original publication Propozitsii Fedora Saltykova. (St Petersburg, [1890]). Iziavlenia were originally published in N. Pavlov-Sil’vanskii, Proekty reform. All the references here are to the modern reprint of Pavlov-Sil’vanskii’s book (Moscow, 2000).
of noble privilege\textsuperscript{170} and at the same time as a proponent of Westernization. The first five chapters of his \textit{Proposals} are devoted to reforming Russia’s social order along Western European lines. For example, Saltykov proposes to grant Russian nobles titles, such as \textit{Landgraf}, marquis, count, prince, duke, etc. That, of course, sounds very similar to what Peter actually did: by the time Saltykov was writing, the tsar had already begun to grant such titles. Yet there was a difference: Peter bestowed these titles on his closest lieutenants, often the low-born ones, and his motivation was primarily to assert his prerogative vis-à-vis both his own subjects and foreign sovereigns.\textsuperscript{171} Saltykov, however, seems to suggest that titles be given automatically to all nobles, depending on the size of their serf-holding. He also emphasizes that “in case somebody from a lower rank enriches himself, he should not be able to buy noble landholdings, or \textit{votchiny}, for those are appropriate for nobles only.” In other words, his proposal, if implemented, would have led to the entrenchment of the existing aristocratic elite. Saltykov also talks about introducing primogeniture, granting nobles coats of arms, hitherto unknown in Russia, establishing a “Ritterhaus” to keep track of heraldic matters and to publish annual lists of top dignitaries.\textsuperscript{172}

Petrine language crops up every now and then in the \textit{Proposals}. For example, Saltykov justifies bestowing titles in terms of “benefit to the state” by suggesting that a fee be charged for them. Still, his preference for nobility is clear. Consider his proposal for a Russian cavalry company to be attached to the headquarters of the Ukrainian hetman. The government should pretend that it was providing the hetman

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\textsuperscript{170} Pavlov-Silvanskii, \textit{Proekty reform}, 42-44.

\textsuperscript{171} O.I. Khorunzhenko, \textit{Dvor’anskie diplomy XVIII veka v Rossii}. (Moscow, 1999), 23-31. The first Russian to receive, rather than to inherit titles, were A. Menshikov and P. Shafirov (born commoners), Admiral Apraksin (royal in-law), and Peter’s old tutor, M. Zotov.

\textsuperscript{172} Pavlov-Silvanskii, \textit{Proekty reform}, 42-43.
with guards of honor, but in reality these troops were to spy on him. True, he admits, in previous years there had been not a company, but an entire Russian regiment, stationed in the Ukraine, yet it did not prevent Hetman Ivan Mazepa from going over to the Swedish side in the Northern war. Saltykov, however, explains this failure away by pointing out that the regiment was made up of common soldiers, strel’tsy, with the only noble there being the colonel himself. He therefore suggests that the cavalry company be made up entirely of nobles, for “those of noble rank are more loyal and reasonable because of their nobility and because of their [concern for their] relatives, so as not to cause the latter any dishonor [porok], but to serve His Majesty and the state more faithfully.”

According to Saltykov, nobles were useful to the state as better servants, but their usefulness is apparently based on their moral superiority.

It is in this context that Saltykov’s ideas on education should be considered. His central proposal, highly ambitious and unrealistic, was to establish in every province two “academies” with 2000 students each, housing them in monasteries (monks were to be evicted for this purpose). In the beginning of his section on education Saltykov wrote that the schools were to accept “children of noblemen, merchants, and people of other ranks,” yet afterwards he clearly referred to nobles only. Similarly, the curriculum clearly went beyond the practical needs of military profession, and replicated the educational pattern of an ideal Western European noble. It included a mixture of languages from Latin to French (“for socializing and conversing with various nations”), the seven liberal arts, mathematical subjects from arithmetic to artillery and architecture, and finally, riding, fencing, and dancing.

Saltykov’s approach to schooling is part and parcel of Petrine practice in general. Education for nobles was to be compulsory; fathers were to be fined for not

173 Pavlov-Silvanskii, Proekty reform, 201.
sending their children to school, while teachers were to be similarly punished for
keeping their students in school for too long, thus helping them to shirk state service.
Yet, he is clearly influenced by contemporary European ideas on education. To begin
with, Saktykov had a notion of individual ability: he admits that not all of these
students will master the prescribed program. Still, “even those who are not completely
learned will be better than those who are taken [into service] straight from their
villages, for they will understand faster various procedures and state duties.” Indeed,
when those young children from their early years on are always gathered
together among themselves, they will improve their natures [natury] through
continuous socializing [obkhozhdenienn]. In this case they will be much better
off than those noble children who are currently brought up in [their] villages,
growing up as a wild forest.174

This passage is significant in a number of respects. First, Saltykov refers here
to something he calls “nature,” which, apparently, determines the worth of an
individual: not only his worth in terms of service, but his social worth as well.
Second, this nature for Saltykov was not something constant, given from birth, but
needed to be “improved.” Saltykov thus contrasts the “natural” state of one’s nature to
the one created in the process of education. Third, this improved nature is shaped
slowly, by continuously exposing an individual to an appropriate environment.
Finally, note that this appropriate environment is created by exposing a young noble
not to teachers, but to other nobles, while exposure to a non-noble milieu (countryside
estate) appears to be detrimental. At the end of his chapter on education Saltykov
discusses in a similar vein the education of girls, likewise, clearly the noble ones.
These girls were also to attend schools to be set up in every province, “and when they
gather together, they will be much more clever and polite [obkhoditelnee] as
compared to [their current state] when they live until marriage at their fathers’ houses,

174 Propozitsii Fedora Saltykova. (St Petersburg, [1890]), 21.
not knowing how to behave in society and to converse [*ne znav obkhozhdenia liudskogo i razgovorov*].”\(^{175}\)

If Saltykov’s views are considered in their totality, he is proposing a program for the reconstruction of the Russian nobility. A scion of a boyar family himself, he defines nobility not only as a service category, but as a qualitatively different group with superior moral attributes. Yet, in his writings the defense of noble superiority takes the form not of opposition to the Petrine reforms and calls to return to some ancient order, but on the contrary, leads to proposals for improving the nobility through education. This meant remaking the nobles according to models he encountered in Western Europe. In *Propozitsii*, Saltykov directly expresses a desire that “our womenfolk also equaled [that of] the European states [*zhenskii nash narod uravnialstva s evropiskimi gosudarstvami*],”\(^{176}\) and by “our womenfolk” he clearly means Russian noblewomen. Saltykov did not believe that his program contradicted Peter’s intentions. Quite the opposite, he was hoping that these proposals would help him to improve his standing in the eyes of the Emperor. Indeed, on many counts Saltykov’s thinking on education and nobility appears more complex than that of Peter. As a minimum, he views education as a gradual process of improving human “nature,” and also attempts to indentify some factors that might be helpful or detrimental to such a process. Saltykov’s writings, however short, are still unique. They are the most comprehensive analysis of educational matters produced in Russia in the first decades of the eighteenth century.

As such, his suggestions on education, or on any other matter, were never implemented by Peter. At the same time, they were not rejected out of hand. Specific

\(^{175}\) *Propozitsii*, 26.

\(^{176}\) *Propozitsii*, 25.
proposals on various issues were sent for consideration to relevant officials and
government agencies, including the Senate, so they were likely to have been read by
many of those destined to become decision-makers in the late 1720s-early 1730s.  
The sources of his ideas, however, are poorly understood: Anthony G. Cross in his
magisterial study of Russians in England in the eighteenth century does not have
anything to say about Saltykov’s experiences and meetings there. We know, however,
that as a young stol’nik Saltykov was a member of Peter’s famous Grand Embassy to
Europe in 1697-1698. In that capacity he apparently visited Halle, inspected Francke’s
schools, discussed with the professor issues related to the education of Russian
students abroad, and even received a book of Pietist theology with Francke’s own
inscription in Russian.  

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Similar influences and ideas could be discerned in the works of the three leading
intellectuals of late Petrine and post-Petrine period – Archbishop Feofan
Prokopovich, Vasilii Tatishchev, and Prince Antiokh Kantemir. Besides their strong
interest in educational matters and their familiarity with the contemporary European
discourse on education, human nature, and nobility, all three of them were active
participants in the crisis of 1730, playing a key role in the overthrow of the Supreme
Privy Council and the restoration of the autocracy.

Archbishop Feofan Prokopovich (1681-1736) was, for all the practical
purposes, the author of the Spiritual Regulation of 1721, which besides establishing

177 Pavlov-Silvanskii, Proekty reform, 54-79.

178 Anthony G. Cross, “By the Banks of the Themse”: Russians in Eighteenth-Century Britain.
(Newtonwill, Mass., 1980), 154; D. Guzevich, I. Guzevich, Velikoe posol’stvo (St.Petersburg, 2003),
Appendix 2, no. 46; Andreev, Russkie studenty, 116.

179 PSZ #3718. The most comprehensive work on Prokopovich is still I. Chistovich, Feofan
Prokopovich i ego vremia (St.Petersburg, 1889). See also James Cracraft, “Feofan Prokopovich.” In
the new principles of church governance in general, was also the most comprehensive educational document of the Petrine reign. The *Regulation* pointed out that the Russian army had been “poor and weak” until Peter gave it a “correct education.” Similarly, the Church could not function properly without the “light of learning.” The *Regulation* demanded that each bishop in his dioceses set up a school for children of priests and for other prospective clerics, and that only graduates of these schools be appointed parish priests or admitted to monasteries. At the same time, the authors of the *Regulation* warned that not every education is beneficial: “it should be strictly observed that this education be good and well-established. For there is education which is unworthy of that name, and yet it could still be considered upright by some people who might be intelligent, but not sufficiently informed in these matters.”

The model for this upright education was outlined in sufficient detail. There is a notion of ability here: entering students were to be examined to see whether they were “dumb,” so that money would not be wasted on them. The author also criticized some unspecified schools for attracting great numbers of students without “considering how many sharp and good-studying ones there are among them.” The educator was supposed to identify those who give reasons “to hope for a great usefulness from them.” There is also a notion of human nature, which, in some cases, could not be reformed: “if a youngster turns out to be unshakable in evilness, wild, eager to fight, slanderous, rebellious, and there is no way to overcome him by a year of persuasion and harsh punishment,” such a student was to be expelled. Finally, some consideration is given to an appropriate environment for schools: the *Regulation* also advised bishops to set up their schools outside of towns, so as to avoid distracting

180 PSZ #3718; Znamenskii, P.V. *Dukhovnye shkoly v Rossii do reformy 1808 goda* (Kazan’, 1881; reprint, St.Petersburg, 2001), 56-58.
students by “noise” and unspecified “occasions” that might “carry away the thoughts of young men.” Once admitted, students had to promise to stay in the school until the completion of their course of study.  

The key role in drafting the Regulation was played by Prokopovich, and the subsequent history of church education suggests strongly that the passages on education reflected his vision and sensibilities. Besides being the leading ideologue of the reign, Prokopovich was one of the very few among Peter’s associates who had the personal experience of Western schooling (he studied at a Jesuit college in Rome), and he was known also for his familiarity with contemporary Western works on education. Enemies accused him of Protestant sympathies. What we know for a fact is that Prokopovich corresponded with Francke and, apparently, arranged for a few Russian students to go to study at Halle. 

In the years following the promulgation of the Spiritual Regulation Peter, it appears, did nothing to push forward implementation of its articles on education. The story of the church seminary in St. Petersburg shows that the driving force behind the attempt to actually launch it was Prokopovich; Peter merely acceded to his initiatives and demands for funds. The seminary designed by Prokopovich (which he proposed to call Peter’s Garden, “Petrov Sad”) was to accept boys no older than 10 years old of age, for they “have not really learned evil mores [zlonraviyu] yet, and even if they had, they have not yet gotten firmly entrenched in it through custom, so it is still possible to reform them.” While at the seminary, the students were to be

181 Znamenskii, Dukhovnye shkoly, 59-60.

182 E. Winter, “Feofan Prokopovich i nachalo russkogo Prosveshchenia,” in XVIII vek. Sbornik. Rol’ i znachenie literatury XVIII veka v istorii russkoi kultury (Moscow-Leningrad, 1966), 43-47. For letters, see Winter, Halle, 405, 437; Andreev, 126. For an overview of Prokopovich’s library, the largest in Russia, see S.P. Luppov, Kniga v Rossii v poslepetrovskoe vremia: 1725-1740 (Leningrad, 1976), 257-265.

183 Chistovich, Feofan Prokopovich, 133-137.
completely cut off from the wider world and not allowed to venture into the town or to see their families “until they get accustomed to being at the seminary and realize the great usefulness of such upbringing [vospitanie].” Only after three years at the seminary could the students be permitted to visit their relatives, and between any two of such visits students were to stay at the seminary for no less than seven days. In a Franckean spirit, students were to be constantly supervised: they were to visit their families only in the company of a special “inspector, or observer,” while any meeting with visiting relatives at the seminary itself was to take place in the dining room, or in the great hall, and in the presence of teachers. Moreover, each of the three “ages” into which the students were to be divided, was to be assigned a “prefect, or a supervisor,” someone of an “honest life; and a neither a cruel one, nor a melancholic.” These supervisors were supposed to prevent fights and cursing, and to make sure than students did only what they were supposed to be doing in any given hour.184

Teachers were also to take measures to “heal the boredom” [ko vrachevaniu skuku] of the students. Lunch and dinner were to be followed by a walk, during which the students were not allowed “even to take books into their hands.” Instead, they were to entertain themselves with “honest games [involving] movements of the body.” Meals were to be accompanied by the reading of history books describing the deeds of worthy men of the past. Students were also to observe occasionally such instructive spectacles as the construction works in St.Petersburg and in the fortresses, and even visit theater and learned disputation, for the latter would teach them the posture and oratory skills appropriate to future preachers. Note also his emphasis on finding truly qualified (“the best and certified”) teachers to be invited “from foreign

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184 The seminary was to “assign hours for the students for all business and leisure: when they are to go to bed, wake up, pray, study, go to the dinner table, go for a walk, etc.” Time was to be marked by the bells which the students were to obey “as soldiers obey their drums.”
academies.” The plan for the seminary, however, led nowhere. Still, in his capacity as bishop Prokopovich founded a lower-level school that was based on exactly the same principles: rigid daily schedule, regularization of activities, and seclusion (including the demand that people not be allowed outside without supervision).  

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Probably the most important works on education in the post-Petrine era, and certainly the most extensive ones, belong to Vasilii Tatishchev (1686-1750). Tatishchev was a member of a reasonably established, although not particularly aristocratic noble family; his career included, among other things, a few years spent in Germany (first, in 1706-1710, as a lieutenant with the Azov Dragoons and then, in 1713-1715 studying in Berlin and traveling on government business) and a mission to Sweden in 1724 to study the mining industry. His later posts included assignments as the top colonial administrator in Bashkiria on the Volga, as the governor of Astrakhan, as the head of the Mint, and as superintendent of ironwork and mines in the Urals. He wrote the first ever academic article on the Siberian mammoth, the first modern history of Russia, a large number of articles and policy papers on various economic topics, and undertook an unsuccessful attempt to produce the first Russian encyclopedic dictionary.

185 Ibid; Vladimirskii-Budanov, Gosudarstvo i narodnoe obrazovanie, 199-202, Pekarskii, Nauka i literatura, 561-564.

186 Chistovich, Feofan Prokopovich, 631-638. Prokopovich’s regulation for this school is published in Chistovich, 723-725.

187 Literature on Tatishchev is voluminous indeed; his active participations in the 1730 events, his work to promote Russia’s industrial development, and his extensive literary output made him especially popular among Soviet historians. For a bibliography of works on Tatishchev see V.S. Astrakhanskii, Bibliografija prizvedenij V.N. Tatishcheva i literatury o nem (Moscow, 1995). The most useful work on Tatishchev is still A.I. Iukht, Gosudarstvennaia deiatel’nost V.N. Tatishcheva v 20-kh-nachale 30-kh godov XVIII v. (Moscow, 1985), although the author does not discuss Tatishchev’s thinking on education and nobility. See also Conrad Grau, Wirtschaftsorganisator, Staatsmann und Wissenschaftler Vasily N. Tatishchev (1686-1750), (Berlin, 1963); Stephen C. Feinstein, V.N. Tatishchev and the Development of the Concept of State Service in Petrine and Post-Petrine Russia. (New York, 1971); Simon Blanc, Un disciple de Pierre Le Grand dans la Russie du XVIII-e
Tatishchev’s key texts on education and nobility are the *Conversation Between Two Friends on the Usefulness of Science and Schools* ("Razgovor dvukh priiatelei o pol’ze nauk i uchilishch"), *Testament* ("Dukhovnaia moiemu synu"), and *Memorandum on Students and Educational Expenditures in Russia* ("Zapiska ob uchashchikhsia i rashodakh na prosveshchenie v Rossii"), a short proposal for a restructuring of Russian education. All of these texts were written sometime in the 1730s and went through a number of revisions, hence to point out the exact date of their composition is hard. Tatishchev also touched upon educational matters in his *Discourse of the Russian Nobility* ["Proizvolnoe i soglasnoe razsuzhdenie i mnenie sobravshegosia shl’akhetstva russkogo o pravlenii gosudarstvennom"], a position paper on the 1730 crisis, and in his unfinished *Leksicon*. His writing were, of course, extremely heavily influenced by the contemporary Western European works he read. In his works he praised or discussed, among others, Puffendorf, Descartes, Erasmus and Leibnitz, but especially important for him were Christian Wolff and Christian Thomasius. A large part of his *Conversation*, however, seems to have been directly translated from Johann Georg Walch’s *Philosophisches Lexicon* (1726).

Tatishchev’s writings on education, apparently known to contemporaries in manuscripts, were rediscovered and published in the 19th century only. For *Memorandum*, I use the original publication: V.N. Tatishchev, *Zapiska o pol’ze nauk i uchilishch* (Moscow, 1887), 161-162. For *Conversation, Testament, and Discourse*, I use his collected works, V.N. Tatishchev, *Izbrannye proizvedenia* (Leningrad, 1979). See introduction to this volume for a history of discovery, attribution, and publication of his writings, and also for archival references to the original manuscripts. As a superintendent of the Ural mines in the 1730s, Tatishchev was very active in setting up professional schools for the lower orders to produce technical personnel for factories and mines, a subject I do not discuss in this dissertation. On Tatishchev’s educational activities in the Urals, including publication of some of the relevant document, see N.V. Nechaev, *Shkoly pri gornykh zavodakh Urala v pervoi polovine 18 stoletia. K istorii professionalnogo obrazования v Rossii* (Moscow, 1944). See also I.V. Toropitsyn, V.N. Tatishchev i sotsialno-ekonomicheskoe razvitie Rossii pervoi poloviny XVIII v. (Astrakhan, 2001).
especially the parts that deal with human nature. As one of his biographers notes, one more possible source of influence was a successful school set up by the Swedish Pietist prisoners of war in Tobolsk, which he had a chance to observe in 1720.

Human ability to learn, for Tatishchev, is determined physiologically. He argues that although “the soul in human body is, doubtlessly, perfect,” yet it acts and manifests itself through “bodily instruments,” which are, clearly, different for different people. He divides life into five “ages” defined by variations of mental agility and psychological traits (like stubbornness, curiosity, modesty, etc.). These differences are explained by the density and speed of the circulation of blood and “humors” (liquids) in the human body, which change from one age to another because of changes in other bodily processes (changes in of the body temperature, for example) and diet. Naturally, the younger ages are more appropriate for learning because (due to lower blood density) a child’s brain is like “soft wax”: it absorbs knowledge more easily. Similarly, differences in ability are explained by, among other things, the parents’ age: children born from older parents are generally less capable because parents by that time are burdened by “heavy thoughts” (that is, life problems), which in turn impact on blood density. Equally, the density of our blood might be influenced by heavy food, which narrows the “channels” and impedes the flow of “fluids” in the body. Another factor is practice: our body becomes more

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190 Herbert Michael Leventer, "Tatishchev: Science and Service in Eighteenth Century Russia." (Ph.D. Diss.: Columbia University, 1972), 133. On this school see Okenfuss, Education in Russia, 45-49.
skilled with exercise, and the same goes for our intellectual abilities, which is one reason why study is so important.\textsuperscript{191}

For Tatishchev the content of studies appropriate for the nobility is determined by two major factors. On the one hand, nobles are the “foremost and most honorable station \textit{stan} in the state, for they are the born \textit{prirodnoe} soldiers for the defense of the state and [born] ministers and town administrators – for government.”\textsuperscript{192}

Tatishchev therefore lists the usual “noble sciences,” including languages (especially German), mathematic and geometry, and also physical exercise (fencing etc.) Note that French is nearly as necessary as German for it is used by all the aristocracies, and also because “the best books on all the subjects useful for the nobles are written in this language.”\textsuperscript{193}

On the other, there is a very strong ethical element to Tatishchev’s thinking. He opens his \textit{Conversation} by stating that for parents the source of “true joy in [their] children is their reason and ability to acquire good and avoid evil.” Furthermore, “the foremost science for a man is learning to know oneself.” Our reason (or lack thereof) is, in fact, the source of happiness and unhappiness, for humans have a tendency to always desire more than they have already, and that results in passions, envy etc. Reasonable man, however, “disregards the opinions of others, and is satisfied with everything [he has] and calm in his consciousness; and having acquired this [state of mind] he feels as if he had been the owner of all the land.”\textsuperscript{194} This theme of moderation and reason is constantly repeated in Tatishchev’s writings. It is echoed

\textsuperscript{191} \textit{Conversation}, 65-68.

\textsuperscript{192} \textit{Leksikon}, 255.

\textsuperscript{193} \textit{Conversation}, 102-103.

\textsuperscript{194} \textit{Conversation}, 51.
also by a call for moderation in food, for example, for both indulging and restraining oneself too much equally lead to the disruption of bodily and, therefore, mental processes.195

This need for reason and moderation leads Tatishchev to divide all the “sciences” into five categories: 1) necessary; 2) useful (languages, literacy, eloquence, mathematics, history, natural sciences); 3) foppish, or entertaining (music, painting, horseback riding, dancing, which is good for one’s posture, for example); 4) driven by curiosity (astrology etc.), and 5) harmful (sorcery). First come, however, the “necessary sciences,” which, once again, boil down to reason and moderation for “perfecting body and soul.”196 Note in this regard Tatishchev’s attitude towards religion. Although strongly condemning “superstitions,” he time and again emphasizes the need for religious instruction. The alleged lack thereof is one of the main reasons for Tatishchev to criticize both home schooling of noble children and the program of studies at the Noble Cadet Corps in the mid-1730s.197 Another reason for him to condemn home schooling also has to do with morals: Tatishchev follows the example of Saltykov in stressing the harmful influence of the family environment, where “women, girls, and slave children” could teach young nobleman nothing but laziness, vanity, and cruelty, while politeness and respect for one’s equals and subordinates, which are “so much necessary for all nobles,” are not acquired.198 Note that in his 1736 regulation for schools in the Urals (although these were intended for

195 Conversation, 64.

196 Conversation, 89-94.

197 Conversation, 104-107. In his Testament he also begins the list of recommendations for his son by stressing the importance of religious education. Testament, 137-138.

198 Conversation, 105. Similarly, sending young nobles to study abroad is dangerous, according to Tatishchev, because of lax supervision and morally corruptive influences they might face there.
commoners) teachers were instructed to care for welfare of students “in everything, not just in their studies.” In particular, they were expected to concern themselves with the students’ health, while the students had to come to school “washed and with clean nails” and refrain from “indecent games,” “obscene language,” lying, and stealing. As for the personality of a model instructor, he had to be “wise, gentle, sober, not a drunkard, brute, fornicator, thief, liar,” and his “honest life” should set the example for his pupils.199

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Finally, in a discussion of the early eighteenth-century Russian reflections on education one should mention the satirical verses of another leading intellectual of that period, Prince Antiokh Kantemir (1709-1744).200 Although much younger, Kantemir together with Tatishchev played a key role in the 1730 crisis: both of them acted as spokesmen for the nobility, addressing the Empress with a call to nullify the “Conditions” and assume full autocratic powers. Another key actor and somewhat of a master-mind behind the restoration of autocracy was Archbishop Feofan Prokopovich, the Author of the *Spiritual Regulation*. All three men seem to have been in close contact at that time, and appreciated each other as intellectuals.201 In 1732, apparently


201 A well-balanced evaluation of long-standing attempts to construe these relationships as a sort of a “party” (“learned guard”) is presented in A.V. Chernysheva, "K voprosu o sushchestvovanii 'uchennoi druzhiny'," *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriia 7: Filosofsia*, no. 6 (1989), 40-43. Poetic exchanges between Kantemir and Prokopovich are discussed in "Proroche rogaty'i Fefofana Prokopovicha," in Alekseev *Sravnitelnoe literaturovedenie*, 93-96.
as a result of some court intrigues, Kantemir was dispatched as ambassador to London, and then, after the restoration of diplomatic relations – to Paris.\textsuperscript{202} Kantemir is primarily known as the author of “Satirical Verses”: the first five were written sometime between 1729 and 1732, i.e. in the very midst of the succession crisis and in it immediate aftermath.\textsuperscript{203} Satirical poetry being by that time a highly formulaic genre, these verses contain myriad references to works of ancient and modern European literature, including direct quotations. For our purposes it is enough to emphasize that among these references one apparently finds those to Fénelon, Locke, and Charles Rollin, not to mention earlier authors such as Montaigne and Erasmus.\textsuperscript{204} An important source of intellectual influences was also Kantemir’s studies of philosophy, natural law, and other subjects with the professors at the Academy of Sciences in the 1720s.\textsuperscript{205}

The central themes of Kantemir’s satirical verses, are, unsurprisingly, human (mis)behavior and (im)morality: passions and the need to restrain them, vice and superstition, etc., are, quite naturally, central to all eight of his satirical verses. The characters – a glutton, a drunkard, a fop, an ignorant and superstitious cleric, a corrupt judge, etc. – have traditionally been present in European poems of that genre, although Kantemir “Russifies” them with a very sharp eye for characteristic detail.

First and foremost, however, he criticizes the unworthy nobles – both those who are

\textsuperscript{202} He himself, it is suggested, wanted to be made president of the Academy of Sciences, even though he was only 22 in 1732: when the British ambassador to Russia pointed out to A.I. Ostermann the extremely young age of the new Russian envoy, the head of the Foreign College had to lie that Kantemir was, in fact, twenty eight years old.

\textsuperscript{203} P.N. Berkov, “Pervye gody literaturnoi deiatelnosti Antiokha Kantemira (1726-1729).” In \textit{Problemy russkogo Praveshcheniia v literature XVIII veka}, (Moscow-Leningrad, 1961), 190-220.

\textsuperscript{204} These references and quotations are catalogued in detail in Iu.K. Shcheglov, \textit{Antiokh Kantemir i stikhotvornaia satira} (St.Petersburg, 2004): 339-366. Kantemir’s \textit{Letters on Nature and Man} (1743) were based on Fenelon’s \textit{Démonstration de l’Existence de Dieu tirée de la Connaissance de la Nature}. Freydank, 162, n.22.

\textsuperscript{205} On this connection see M.I. Radkovskii, \textit{Antiokh Kantemir i Peterburgskaia Akademiia nauk.} (Moscow-Leningrad, 1959).
not Westernized and live ignorant, boorish lives, and those who are Westernized too much and became useless (and equally uneducated) fops. Satire II is a dialogue in which a young noble complains that despite his extensive pedigree, he has neither rank nor office worthy of his illustrious name. His friend, however, points out that all of his forebears were distinguished and virtuous soldiers and statesmen, whereas he cannot boast of any achievement whatsoever. In Satire III, “On Differences in Passions,” addressed to Prokopovich, the author inquires whether the differences in our passions are determined by nature – whether it was “Nature who, having provided people with bodies and souls in them, gave them also passions, so now they [humans] were not able to master them?”

Satire VII, which was, according to Kantemir’s own comments, written in 1739 in France, deals however specifically with education. Overall, it reflects the strong influence of Locke. Two themes are central to this poem. The first of them is the importance of moral, rather than utilitarian education: Kantemir has nothing against the arts and sciences as such; but he would rather deal with an uneducated, yet honest person than with a learned, but evil one. Education for Kantemir is about restraining passions: “The main purpose of education is to make sure that the maturing heart of an infant, having ridden itself of passions, become firmly rooted in good mores; through that your son will be useful for the Fatherland, agreeable and always welcome among people.” The second theme is the role of upbringing in shaping an individual. According to the author, most people believe that we receive certain “passions” from birth. Kantemir, however, repeats Locke nearly verbatim, insisting that “Most of our features, which are attributed to nature, upon mature consideration should be found to be solely an outcome of our upbringing.” Here

206 Antiokh Kantemir. Sobraniie stikhovyrenii (Leningrad, 1956), 89.
follows, predictably, a discussion of such issues as the importance of parental example and family environment in general, and as a subtheme, of perils associated with the detrimental influence of poorly chosen servants who have a tendency to flatter their young master, indulge his whims, or, in case of immoral female servants, to outright destroy his innocence.\textsuperscript{207} Note, however, that that although Locke warned against the harm that might be caused by immoral servants, the key dangers for him were associated with evil class-mates at school, so much so that he advocated home education. Kantemir, however – and before him Saltykov and Tatishchev – focused exclusively on the dangers of staying at home.

* * *

Thus one might tentatively suggest that by the 1730s the leading members of the elite displayed familiarity with contemporary European discourse on education and discussed it in terms of nature, body, and mind. Following this European discourse they stress the moral component of education. One might cautiously state also that their analysis of the state of education and morals in Russia leaves them unsatisfied. They believe, however, that this unhappy state of affairs is explained by the abandonment of Petrine principles. Kantemir, in his very first satire, “On the Scorners of Learning,” laments that

\begin{quote}
    Ignorance, in the seat of Learning placed,  
    Beneath the mitre flaunts its ornaments,  
    Gives judgment on the bench, leads regiments.  
    Learning is flayed, and dressed in rags or worse,  
    Driven from 'most all houses with a curse.\textsuperscript{\textit{208}}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{207} Ibid, 158-159.

The poet expresses only extremely qualified hope that the young emperor, Peter II, would be able to sufficiently support learning in the face of the silent hostility of unnamed “many” towards it:

Great hope, 'tis true, our youthful Monarch's name
Gives to the Muses; ignorance with shame
Flees him - Apollo's glory doth obtain
A champion who honors Phoebus' train
The god hath seen him striving without cease
Parnassus-dwellers' number 'to increase:
But many, out of fear, praise in the Tsar
What in his Subjects they would fain debar.\(^{209}\)

It is quite natural, of course, for an author, closely following the models set up by Juvenal, Horatius, and Boileau, to present an unfavorable comparison of today’s decay with past greatness and virtue, a discussion of the “golden age” lost.\(^{210}\) For Kantemir this “golden age,” already in the late 1720s, is associated with the reign of Peter I.\(^{211}\) There is nothing surprising about that, given the rapidly developing cult of Peter. Yet, it is noteworthy how Kantemir interprets Peter’s educational policy: in Satire VII he insists that “Peter, our gifted monarch,” recognized the importance of moral education and set up schools specifically so that “an obedient reason would have the opportunity to put infants on the path of virtue.”\(^{212}\)

Years later Tatishchev complained that:

There is no difference whatsoever in our land between a nobleman and a commoner [поляк], nor is there a law to this effect, but rather [all those are] considered [нoble] who own villages; clerks, priests’ sons who have bought or otherwise acquired landed estates assume coats of arms of their own invention.

\(^{209}\) Ibid, 1-2.

\(^{210}\) Shcheglov, 84-97.

\(^{211}\) Riazanovsky, 23 passim; Shmurlo.

\(^{212}\) “Большу часть всего того, что в нас приписуем \ Природе, если хотим исследовать зрело, \ Найдем воспитания одного быть дело. \…И знал то высшим умом монарх одаренный \ Петр наш отец никаким трудом угомленный \ Когда его труды нам в пользу были нужны. \ Училища основал, где промышел служебный. В пути ходителей имел бы наставить \ младенцев.” Kantemir, Sobranie, 158-159.
The notion of ideal nobility becomes for him inseparable from education and morals: “Nobility [in Russia] is not educated, and schools are not established…; but without education a man does not know what decency, morality, piety, duty, and privileges are, nor does he have enough sense to understand his own, and his country’s, good and harm.”213 Thus, given his insistence that nobility is the “foremost station,” formation of a proper nobility – the one which would possess appropriate education and virtues and fulfill appropriate functions in the society – becomes, really an issue of constitutional (in the early-modern sense) importance. However, the period immediately after the death of Peter appears to be especially closely associated for Tatishchev with the abandonment of Petrine policies towards nobility. In his Testament he openly complains that “shameless profit-seekers [srebrolyubivye], because of their cunning pride [kovarnogo samolyubia] or ignorance, forsaking the welfare of their Fatherland, at first covertly, and during the reign of the underaged sovereign [i.e. Peter II, 1727-1729] openly, destroyed” the rules of noble service established by Peter. Among those rules he mentions the requirements that the nobles should participate in local administration, have a monopoly on officer-rank positions in civil service, and be trained to this end through apprenticeships at the government bureaus and at Russian embassies abroad.214

Thus, overall, the late 1720s-early 1730s were a period of quite intense (by the Russian standard of the day) thinking among the leading members of the elite about the directions to be taken by the state, not only in education.215 It was only natural, therefore, for Tatishchev and other members of the elite to view the beginning of a

213 V.N. Tatischev, Izbrannye proizvedeniia (Leningrad, 1979), 386.
214 Tatishchev, Izbrannye proizvedeniia, 142.
new reign in 1730 as a chance for renewal, when the state policy towards the nobility would be set right. Putting education of the nobility on a firm footing was the key element of any such renewal.
Conclusion

In part I of this dissertation I outline the evolution of thinking on education and learning in the early eighteenth-century Russia and place it within the wider European contexts of social disciplining. Contemporary Western discourse was defined by notions of human nature that put emphasis on disciplining minds and bodies through methods of milieu control, monitoring and assessment, regulation of daily schedule and seclusion. These methods were alien for Peter I: despite his close familiarity with contemporary European educational practices, he chose to ignore these educational innovations completely. When actually faced with proposals presented by various advisors and based on these principles, he likewise demonstrated remarkable indifference. Contemporary European concepts of human “nature” as something to be taken account of and manipulated were alien to Peter. That is why it would be unwarranted to describe his policies in general, and his policies towards the nobility in particular, as an attempt to “transform” Russia and the Russians – at least to transform them in terms of the early eighteenth-century educational discourse. In his sensibilities he was, essentially, a pre-modern ruler.

At the same time, I demonstrate the growing awareness of this discourse among the members of the elite. Already during Peter’s reign the members of the elite attempted to use this discourse to legitimize their own visions of the nobility, where its claims to special status were conceptualized in terms of the moral (educational) superiority – superiority which was, allegedly, characteristic of an European nobility and which the Russian nobles were yet to attain. By 1730 the dissatisfaction of the leading intellectuals with the present state of the Russian nobility and their calls for
the creation of a “true nobility” became clear and loud. Anna’s reign was expected to bring about a moral reformation of the nobility as a key prerequisite for putting the Russian state in general in good order. It is in this context that I turn in Part II to the discussion of the establishment of the Noble Cadet Corps, of educational practices employed there and their theoretical underpinnings, and of Anna’s policies in general. The overall theme of these chapters is the gradual shift from practical learning towards a focus on the need to shape the morals of the elite.
Part II

“Among the Honest Nobles”:

Reforming the Russian Nobility, 1730s

On January 1, 1740, Colonel von Tettau, the Director of the Cadet Corps, congratulated Empress Anna with the beginning of a new year on behalf of the Cadet Corps and presented to her verses composed by a young cadet, Aleksandr Sumarokov, the future leading mid-eighteenth century poet and playwright.\(^{216}\) In his verses the young nobleman described the happiness and gratitude felt, supposedly, towards the reigning monarch by his fellow cadets and by the nobility in general:

They [cadets] appeal to you raising their hands:
ANNA, with THOU we see the light of learning,
ANNA, be our MOTHER forever,
We are becoming humans \([\textit{liudi}]\) out of nothing:
If THOU, our MOTHER, were not the master here,
Years of our lives would have been wasted for nothing.
THOU! ANNA ist our MOTHER, MOTHER of all your subjects
And, because of your kindness towards us, MOTHER of the entire nobility.\(^{217}\)

\(^{216}\) Two hundred copies (70 of them printed on expensive paper of various sorts) were prepared to be distributed on the day. RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1818, ll. 21, 24. Overall, the Corps congratulated Anna by presenting to her verses three times at New Year (1736, 1737, 1740), twice on the anniversary of her accession to the throne (1735, 1738), and once on her birthday (1737). On these verses and their literary context see Elena Pogosian, \textit{Vostorg russkoi ody}, 23–84; "Mikhail Sobakin: Mladenchestviushchaia rech’," \textit{Annaly}, no. 3 (2007); P.N. Berkov, "U istokov dvor’anskoi literatury XVIII veka. Poet Mikhail Sobakin," in \textit{Literaturnoe nasledstvo}. Vol. 9-10. (Moscow, 1933). On the role of the Corps in the festivities of Anna’s court, see, among others, A.I. Save'ev "Pervye kadetskie smotry. 1734-1737 gg.," \textit{Russkaia starina} 66, no. 5 (1890): 351-352; Curtiss, \textit{A Forgotten Empress}, 214-215.

\(^{217}\) Вопят те всегда воздевая руки:
АННА мы ТОБОЙ видим свет науки,
АННА нам и впредь МАТЕРЬ буди буди,
Мы из ничего становимся люди,
Ты ж бы здесь когда МАТЕРЬ не владала,
Жизнь бы наших лет даром пропадала.
Ты! Нам АННА МАТЬ, МАТЬ всего подданства,
Милостью же к нам МАТЬ всего дворянства.
This description of subjects loudly thanking their sovereign is not particularly unusual, but the line on “becoming humans out of nothing” is striking indeed.\textsuperscript{218} The theme of creating Russia out of nothing was not new, of course: Peter was traditionally portrayed as a demiurge, or as Pygmalion bringing to life his Galatea-Russia. This time, apparently, the same myth was applied to Anna. Still, the bluntness of Sumarokov’s assertion is noteworthy: for all practical purposes, he is saying that until their enrollment in the Corps the young noblemen were but “nothing.” Moreover, the idea of recreating the Russian nobility through education is presented here as an element of an officially approved description of the regime’s achievements. After all, Sumarokov most likely consulted his superiors before composing the poem to be presented by the Corps’ director to the Empress, to the members of the court, and to the generals on its behalf. In this chapter I address the “meaning” of the Cadet Corps by analyzing the decision-making process that led to its establishment and educational practices employed at this institution. I also address the reform of noble service implemented in 1736-1737. As a result, I am hoping to illuminate the nature of the political regime in the 1730s and the relationship between the state and the nobility during that decade; by extension, I am also hoping to shed new light on the crisis of 1730.

\textsuperscript{218} Regarding the theme of “becoming humans out of nothing,” one is reminded of the often quoted remark by Ivan Nepliuiev, one of the nobles sent by Peter abroad to study navigation. In his memoirs he commented on Peter’s death by saying that the late emperor “taught us to recognize that we are human beings as well [\textit{shto i my luidi}].” Zapiski Ivana Ivanovicha Nepliuieva (St.Petersburg, 1893): 122. Equally famously, he admitted in his memoirs that upon their return to Russia, the young “volunteers” (himself included) were “not only hated by our equals, but we were even ridiculed and abused by our relatives for the European manners evident in us.” Ibid, 96.
Traditionally, the creation of the Cadet Corps is presented as a “concession” to the nobility: the nobles, it is assumed, did not want to serve in the “low and demeaning ranks” and demanded in 1730 a right to avoid beginning their service as privates by enrolling in some sort of special school. Likewise, the reform of 1736-1737 (which included, among other things, limiting the term of obligatory service for the nobles to twenty five years) is treated traditionally as a concession to the nobility that represented a major step toward the “emancipation” of the nobility from the state and, eventually, towards the emergence of an autonomous public sphere. How exactly the nobility was able to wrest these concessions from the autocrats is not clear, however. While the theory that mid-eighteenth century Russia was a dvorianskaia imperiia is not in vogue anymore, the leading contemporary historians do not seem to offer a coherent picture of the relationship between the post-Petrine state and the nobility. Typically uncertain in this respect is Robert E. Jones, who argues that in pursuing these policies the government had its own goals in mind (“using the service of the nobility more efficiently and productively”), “although [it] was not unaware of the nobles’ desire for a shorter service and easier requirements.”

Overall, however, historians of all stripes and persuasions assume the foundation of the Corps and reform of 1736-1737 to be a response to the demands voiced by the nobility in 1730. Brenda Meehan-Waters believes that Anna “granted many of the demands of the projects and petitions [presented in 1730] in the early years of her reign.” E.V. Anisimov insists that the mentality of former servitors had been undergoing a transformation in the post-Petrine period, and so “the government

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could not ignore their demands and ideas any longer.” While there were different views on the optimal political arrangements in 1730, all the nobles “were united when it came to their soslovye [“estate”] interests.” So, after the crisis was over, “Anna took the traditional path, satisfying the soslovye demands of the nobility, thus broadening the social base of her rule.”

According to A.B. Kamenskii, in 1730 “the state authorities for the first time faced the fact of existence in the country of a social group capable of self-organization and defending its soslovye interests.” These “tensions” between the state and the nobility, in turn, reflected the “transformation of the nobility in the first quarter of the eighteenth century and, in way, is a result of Petrine reforms.” There was a growing perception of common interests among all the strata of the nobility and a feeling that in defending their common interests nobles, in fact, struggled for the “good of the Fatherland,” or “the common good.” Speaking about establishment of the Cadet Corps, Kamenskii mentions that by doing so the state “satisfied another important aspiration of the nobility.”

The authors of the most recent specialized works on the 1730s do not offer a more coherent picture either. N.N. Petrukhintsev, the author of a study of Anna’s policies regarding the army and the navy, concludes that after 1730 the nobility “had neither organization, nor leaders, and was incapable of action.” Still, he feels obliged to insist, somewhat awkwardly, that the governmental policies in the 1730s, “although a direct response to the noble demands of 1730, were not forced” upon the government, but rather reflected the class nature of the “feudal state.” Petrukhintsev calls the establishment of the Cadet Corps a “measure of a clearly soslovnyi

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221 Anisimov, Rossia bez Petra, 289-290, 356.

222 Kamenskii, Ot Petra I, 214-215, 218, 236, 251.
Lee A. Farrow, writing about the abolition of the “law of single inheritance” shows convincingly that the nobility resented and circumvented this law, yet she has virtually nothing to say about how exactly this resentment influenced the decision-making process in 1731. With the exception of Petrukhintsev, however, none of these authors studied the policies of Anna’s government in any detail. And none of them is able to quote a single document indicating, however indirectly, that the government in the 1730s was at all concerned with the attitudes, desires, and demands of the nobility, or that it viewed the nobility as a political force. It is simply assumed that if the measures mentioned in 1730 resembled those implemented by the government in the subsequent decade, there must have been a direct casual connection between the former and the latter.

Finally, Valerie A. Kivelson believes that by creating the Corps and reforming the system of noble service, Anna “responded favorably to all requests [of the nobility] except those that encroached upon autocratic authority.” This assertion is of central importance for her argument regarding early-modern Russian political culture in general – the argument that seems to be becoming the dominant orthodoxy in recent years. Overall, she proposes, quite reasonably, that a traditional distinction between “political” (i.e. limitation of autocracy) and “bread-and-butter” (reform of noble service) demands of the nobility is misguided. According to Kivelson, the nobles acted very much within the framework of a traditional political culture – a culture where “kinship politics was politics and autocratic culture meant clan

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223 Petrukhintsev, Tsarstvovanie, 66, 100, 117, 299.

224 Lee A. Farrow, Between Clan and Crown: The Struggle to Define Noble Property Rights in Imperial Russia (Newark, 2004), 85-90.
maneuvering under the carapace of tsarist rule.” In fact, it was “the rank-and-file nobility’s focus on service, family, and inheritance” that “propelled that group onto the national political scene and forced the nobles to express an abstract political vision” in 1730. Thus, even though the idea of constitutionally limiting the autocracy was discarded, the nobles – by forcing the monarch to establish the Corps, to reform the system of service, and to abolish the law of single inheritance – still achieved their basic “political” goals. The outcome of the 1730 crisis meant that autocrat was “obligated … to hear noble complaints and meet noble needs.” This confirms the broader thesis, put forward by Kivelson, Nancy Shields Kollmann, and some others, regarding the “traditional consultative relations between a mutually dependent tsar and the nobility.”

In the following chapters I offer a radically different reading of the establishment of the Cadet Corps and of the reform of noble service in 1736-1737. The key to this reading are the administrative and pedagogical techniques and practices, which were employed by the Corps’ officials in a surprisingly coherent and determined way. Using the contemporary European concepts of human nature, outlined in chapter 1, as a lens through which to read these techniques and practices, I attempt in chapter 9 to reconstruct the broader concepts of governing and governability that informed them. I focus here on ideas and agendas of the two leading ministers of Anna’s reign, von Münnich and Ostermann, who played key roles in the establishment of the Cadet Corps and in formulating the policies of the reign in general. This approach allows me to inquire into whether these notions also informed other policies of the 1730s, and as a result, to reinterpret the trajectory of Anna’s reign.

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225 Kivelson, “Kinship Politics / Autocratic Politics,” 25-26. See also note 10 (p.6) of this dissertation.
and the dynamics of the relationship between the state and the elite in the immediate post-Petrine decades.

In Chapter 5, I reconstruct the policy discussions that led to the establishment of the Cadet Corps. Although the creation of the Corps reflected the general consensus among the ruling elite on the need for moral/cultural reformation of the nobility, the process of decision-making and the actual design of the Corps are best understood within the context of the court politics of the day. In Chapter 6, I turn to discussion of educational practices employed at the Corps. I demonstrate that the Corps officials employed an extensive arsenal of disciplinary measures, such as seclusion, monitoring, shielding from harmful influences, and creating an artificial Westernized environment, to turn young cadets into “honest nobles.” In Chapter 7, I outline the curriculum and the system of examinations used at the Corps. I emphasize here the importance for the thinking of the Corps’ authorities of various procedures for discerning differences in human ability, assessing them, and “sorting out” the youngsters on that basis. This assessing and “sorting out” was meant to identify the unreformable cadets and to remove them from the Corps to avoid harmful influence on the mores of their fellows. At the same time, such assessments were viewed as a pedagogical tool, since identifying and justly rewarding the worthy ones (or punishing the unworthy) was also meant to “encourage” other cadets to apply themselves more “diligently.” In Chapter 8, I emphasize the centrality of such notions as “inclination,” “nature,” or “natural inclination” for the thinking of the Corps’ founders and authorities, and, increasingly, of other officials as well. In Chapter 9, I move from the discussion of the Corps towards the discussion of policies of Anna’s reign in general. I analyze the decision-making process that led to the reform of noble service in 1736-1737. I argue that the practices employed at the Cadet Corps reflected the broader
thinking of such key personalities as von Männich and Ostermann: I reconstruct here something of a “theory of governing” apparently shared by them. Building on this assertion, I argue that the reform of noble service in 1736-1737 was not conceptualized as a concession to the nobility, but rather reflected this “theory” and was thus part and parcel of the social disciplining practices used at the Cadet Corps. The creation of the Corps and the reform of 1736-1737 were meant not to give any freedom and privileges to the nobility, but to reform and reshape it according to the government’s vision.
Chapter 5

“Diligent Discussion in the Palace”:

Court Politics and Education for the Nobility, 1730-1732

In chapter 4, I argue that by the late 1720s the leading members of the elite were notably dissatisfied with how the transformation of the nobility was progressing. This mood, I would suggest, should be taken into consideration when assessing the events of 1730-1732. The foundation of the Cadet Corps has traditionally been described as a concession granted by Anna to the nobility as a result of the 1730 crisis; as a revision of Petrine policy towards the nobility; or as a step towards “normalization” in a country exhausted by the excessive demands of the Petrine reforms. At the same time, we know relatively little about the policy discussions that took place in the first months of Anna’s reign. The Supreme Privy Council had already been disbanded, and the Cabinet had not yet been formed, so there was no institutionalized forum for debating policy at the highest level. Consequently, there are no records of any such discussions that might have taken place. The Kamer-fur’erskii zhurnal for 1730-1731, or the official records of the sovereign’s daily schedule, including his meetings and visitors, has not survived either.\footnote{P.A. Zaionchkovskii, ed., Spravochniki po istorii dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii: bibliografia (Moscow, 1971), 177.}

By reconstructing (as far as such reconstruction is possible) events preceding the formation of the Corps, I hope to demonstrate that far from being imposed upon the government by the nobility, this decision reflected concerns and goals shared by the key leaders of Anna’s emerging regime. At the same time, the monarch, the abstract state, and the equally abstract nobility do not figure as actors in this chapter.
Instead, the key actors here are the leading ministers of the reign with their political rivalries. While there was a wide consensus among the top members of the elite regarding the need to reform the nobility, the actual design of the Corps, and even the very fact that it eventually came into being, are best understood within the framework of court politics.

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The decree announcing the creation of the Cadet Corps was issued on July 29, 1731.227 Ernst von Münnich, the son of Field Marshal Burchard Christoph von Münnich,228 claims in his memoirs that the idea of creating that institution was his father’s from the very beginning. According to Ernst von Münnich, the Field-Marshal “submitted to the sovereign various proposals with the goal of improving the state of the military, which were approved and entrusted to him for execution.” Among them was a project for “establishing a corps of cadets, so that four to five hundred young nobles and officers’ sons could be educated there and taught both the physical and military exercises, and also foreign languages, arts, and sciences.”229 This assertion is

227 PSZ #5811. According to Stroev, the dating in PSZ is inaccurate, and the decree was issued a month earlier, on June 27, 1731. Stroev, Bironovshchina, Part 1, 69, footnote 1.

228 Burchard Christoph von Münnich (1683-1767), a native of Oldenburg, spent nearly twenty years in the armies of France, Hesse-Darmstadt, Hesse-Cassel, and Poland, before finally joining the Russian service in 1721 as a military engineer. By 1730 he was the governor of St.Petersburg and the head of artillery. In the 1730s he became field-marshall, count, and the head of the Military College; he also led the Russian armies in the War of Polish Succession and against the Ottomans. For (outdated) biographies, see M.Vischer, Munnich (Frankfurt, 1948); Francis Ley, Le Marechal de Munnich et la Russie au XVIIIe siecle (Paris, 1959). See also M.D. Khmyrov, "Fel’dtsekhmeisterstvo grafa Minikha," in Zapiski grafa Minikha, ed. S.N. Shubinskii (St Petersburg, 1874), 217-387. For a review of the historiography, see Brigitta Berg, Burchard Christoph von Münnich: die Beurteilung, Darstellung und Erforschung seines Wirkens in Russland in der deutschen und russischen Historiographie; der Versuch einer Perspektivenuntersuchung an Hand von Beispielen (Oldenburg, 2001).

also repeated by Christoph Hermann von Manstein, Field-Marshal Münnich’s aid-de-camp, who asserts in his memoirs that von Münnich began promoting the idea of the creation of the Corps “from the very beginning of 1731” until “the project was well-received and approved.”

This version is plausible: although throughout most of the period von Münnich stayed in St. Petersburg, he did spend January and February 1731 in Moscow, where he was favorably received by the Empress and promoted to General-Fel’dtsekhmeister (the Commander in Chief of the Artillery). And indeed, von Münnich, as I show in the following pages, played the key role in making the Corps a successful institution and also in shaping it according to his own ideas. In all fairness, he has the right to be called its founder. At the same time, the Field-Marshal is somewhat uncharacteristically modest in this regard: in his memoirs he claims that “he established the Cadet Corps according to the order” of the Empress. Von Münnich lists the foundation of the Corps among other military reforms he executed, such as the restructuring of the guards and the army regiments, the foundation of the

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230 For the standard Russian translation, see: Zapiski Manshteina o Rossii. 1727-1744 (St Petersburg, 1875). All the references here are to the modern reprint: Kh.-G. Manshtein, "Zapiski o Rossii," in Perevoroty i voiny, 9-272. The quote here is from page 43. It should be noted however that these are unreliable witnesses. Von Münnich the younger in the late 1720s-early 1730s was posted at the Russian embassy in Paris, and hence was not "present at creation": indeed, he gets the number of cadets wrong. As for von Manstein, he arrived to Russia only in 1736, and became the Field-Marshal’s aid-de-camp still later, in 1739.


232 The memoirs, or “Essay,” were first published as: Burchard Christophor von Münnich, Ebauche pour donner une idee de la forme du Governement de l'empire de Russie (Copenhagen, 1774), for a standard Russian translation see: Zapiski fel’dmarshala grafa Minikha (St Petersburg, 1874). All the references here are to the modern reprint of that translation, see: "Ocherk upravleniia Rossiiskoi imperii," in Perevoroty i voiny, 273-318. The memoirs were written by von Münnich much later, see: David L. Ransel, “The ‘Memoirs’ of Count Münnich,” Slavic Review 30, no. 4 (December 1971): 843-852.
first cuirassier regiments and of the specialized military engineers units. He does not, however, mention any earlier (pre-dating 1731) projects or proposals of his regarding the Cadet Corps.233

Meanwhile, the first project for the establishment of the Corps is found already in the papers of the Supreme Privy Council.234 According to the project, the Corps was to have 200 cadets, commanding officers, and support personnel, as well as teachers of artillery and fortification (military officers), riding and dancing, arithmetic, geometry, drawing, and foreign languages. Also, separately from the teachers, there were to be four professors (of jurisprudence, geography, history, and “politics”). The document itself is neither dated nor signed. If the label is to be believed, the project should have been produced somewhere between 1726 and 1730. In many details (including the direct references to the Berlin model) this project is very close to the actual charter issued in 1731.

It was not unexpected, therefore, that the idea of a special school for the nobility arose during the crisis of 1730, when the Supreme Privy Council, at the moment of its most intensive negotiations with the rest of the elite, suggested in one of its documents that “special cadet companies [should be created] whose graduates are to be promoted directly to field-officer ranks.”235 This proposal is found in a so-called “Articles of Oath” composed, according to G.A. Protasov, by the Council in the last days of January 1730, which marked the high point of the political crisis.236 Thus,


234 RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 76, ll. 1-4 ob. The document bears a label “From the papers of the Supreme Privy Council” attached by the nineteenth-century archivists who apparently removed it from the files where it was originally held. Thus, there is no way to ascertain this attribution.


236 Protasov argues that this document was written after the original “Conditions” had been already accepted by Anna, but before the submission by the nobility of their “opinions.” It was meant
in a way, it is not unreasonable to suggest, as historians traditionally do, that the Council achieved its own “oligarchic” goals by forcing Anna to sign conditions – and was now trying to attract rank-and-file nobles to its side by introducing a package of additional measures designed to appease them.

Yet, as demonstrated in Part III of this dissertation, the vast majority of the nobles were not necessarily interested in the opportunity to avoid serving as privates by spending a few years at school. Nearly all the projects mentioned the need to limit the term of service for the nobility, but the need for educational opportunities was barely broached: besides the documents produced by the Council, the issue of schooling was brought up explicitly only in the project presented by Prince Cherkasskii and composed, apparently, by none other than Vasili Tatischev.237 Hence I would suggest that the Council’s proposal was a part of a dialogue between the Council and other educated members of the elite regarding the further reformation of the nobility, not an attempt to placate the rank-and-file.

Indeed, this proposal came as part of a larger package of suggestions on the overall constitutional arrangements and the status of the nobility. Thus, after spelling out in some detail norms regulating the role of nobility in a future limited monarchy, the “Articles” called upon the monarch to “relieve the nobility from service as private soldiers and sailors” and “in degrading [podlykh] and lower ranks” in general; to renounce the practice of confiscating the family property of nobles condemned for

as a way of extending the “Conditions” without actually correcting them, for a straightforward correction would have required their recall by the Council, resubmission to Anna, and securing her approval all over again, an understandably risky process. See also A.B. Plotnikov, “Programmnii dokument Verkhovnogo tainogo soveta v 1730 g.,” in Rossia v XVIII stoletii. Vypusk I (Moscow, 2002), 38-49; idem, “Prodolzhenie’ Konditsii i poslednii politicheskii proekt Verkhovnogo Tainogo soveta v 1730 g. Verkhovniki za izucheniem predlozhenii ‘znatnogo shl’akhetstva’.” In Rossia v XVIII stoletii. Vypusk II (Moscow, 2004), 221-232.

various crimes, and of persecuting their kin; to award ranks “on the basis of merit and worth, not of passions and bribes”; and not to admit peasants and serfs into civil service. To sum up, the Council suggests in the “Articles” that “the entire nobility be maintained on a similar footing to that of other European states, duly respected and in Her Imperial Majesty’s good favor and consideration.” None of these demands had any basis in Russian history: it was clearly not a restoration of rights and privileges taken away by Peter. For example, the Russian nobility had never been secure in its property rights, and the wholesale purge of clans deemed disloyal was standard practice. Instead, the “Articles” read as a plan for further reconstruction of the elite and for turning it into a “true” nobility, something quite necessary for the proper functioning of the state.

It was apparently at this time that Tatishchev, that great enemy of the Council, began writing his *Conversation Between Two Friends on the Usefulness of Science and Schools*. The dates mentioned in his *Conversation* are somewhat confusing, and Tatishchev was clearly writing and rewriting this essay throughout the entire decade, a fact that also reflects his sustained interest in the matter. Significantly, he mentions in his *Testament* that the work on *Conversation* began after discussions with Prince Sergei Dolgorukov, Archbishop Feofan Prokopovich, and Prince A.M. Cherkasskii (and also with professors of the Academy of Science).²³⁸ Both Tatishchev and Prokopovich played key roles in the overthrow of the Supreme Privy Council, while Prince Cherkasskii, due to his name, wealth, and rank, was the undisputed (although, it is sometimes suggested, nominal) leader of the anti-Council party.²³⁹ Prince Sergei


²³⁹ Prince Aleksei Mikhailovich Cherkasskii (1680-1742) was one of the wealthiest landlords in Russia: he had over 70,000 male serfs. His first wife was a Naryshkin, a first cousin of Peter I, the second – a Princess Trubetskoï, from the same clan. Although he has not, unlike many of his relatives,
Dolgorukov, however, was a relative and supporter of the Council’s leading members, Princes V.L. and A.G. Dolgorukov.240 As pointed out by S.N. Valk, Prince Sergei Dolgorukov, along with his kinsmen, was already exiled from Moscow by April 9, 1730, so the conversation between him and Tatishchev must have taken place before this date. It is reasonable to suggest, therefore, that the conversations that gave the initial impetus for writing Conversation took place in Moscow between late 1729 and early 1730.241 It means that in the first weeks of 1730, in the very midst of a major political crisis, the education of the nobility was very much on the mind of the members of both pro-Council and anti-Council parties.

Some clues regarding the subsequent discussion of a school for nobility can be found in Tatishchev’s correspondence. He spent 1730 and 1731 in Moscow, where the court resided, and was actively involved in a number of important policy measures of that period, including the preparations for the coronation and a massive program of reforming copper coinage. For his efforts he was promoted to the rank of Actual State Councilor.242 In the summer of 1731 his daughter married Lieutenant of the Guards A.L. Rimskii-Korsakov, and the empress herself acted as a matchmaker.243 In short, it

been sent by Peter to study abroad, he was put in charge of construction of St.Petersburg, and spent the last years of Peter’s reign as governor-general of Siberia. Throughout the 1730s, he was one of three members of the Cabinet – the highest governing body. Despite all this, he is widely regarded by observers as a political non-entity. Some of the foreign diplomats present a more favorable picture of him, but it is still true that as a member of the Cabinet he seems not to have had any political influence. RBS, 24, 183-194; Korsakov, Votsarenie, 193-194.

240 Among other things, he was a graduate of the University of Leipzig. Andreev, Russkie studenty, 124.

241 Tatishchev, Izbrannyie proizvedenia, 14-18.

242 See, for example, his letter of July 14, 1731, in V.N. Tatishchev, Zapiski, pis’ma 1717-1750 gg. (Moscow, 1990), 144. On his activities in 1731, see A.G. Protasov, "Zapiska V.N. Tatishcheva." For a different view of his role in the political crisis and for a detailed study of his post-1730 works, see A.I. Iukht, Gosudarstvennaia deiatelnost’ V.N. Tatishcheva v 20-kh-nachale 30-kh godov XVIII v. (Moscow, 1985), 190-267, 293-294.

243 See memoirs of the bride’s granddaughter in: Rasskazy babushki: Iz vospominanii p’ati pokolenii, zapisannye i sobrannye eie vnukom D.Blagovo (Moscow, 1989), 10-12, 16-17.
can be safely assumed that Tatishchev was highly informed about court politics and the policy discussions of 1730-1731.

His correspondence, if fact, contains references to policy debates on education held in 1731. In the letter of April 1731 to J.D. Schumacher, librarian of the Academy of Sciences, Tatishchev refers to unspecified educational projects which had already been discussed, yet had not so far materialized. He complains that the “establishment of schools here [in Moscow, where the court resided at that time] is being quite delayed, and I cannot see when they will be started.” Apparently, the discussions (which were being “delayed” at the time of his writing) began quite a while before, as Tatishchev had enough time to bring his son Evgraf back to Moscow from Revel in the vain hope that there soon would be opportunities to educate him in the old capital. Yet, Tatishchev despairs that his son “had lost much time for nothing, and will lose still more.”244 Discussions on educational policy continued, however. However, on May 24 Tatishchev was happy to report to Schumacher that “yesterday there was a diligent discussion in the palace regarding the establishment of a gymnasium here according to my proposal.”245 (It is not clear from his wording whether Tatishchev means that this was a discussion of a specific proposal submitted by him, or that it was he who proposed to have a discussion.)

One month later the creation of the Corps was formally announced. In his study, N.N. Petrukhintsev discusses a series of decrees issued on June 1, 1731, which he construes as a program of Anna’s government. Thus, the discussions regarding the need for a Cadet Corps went on against the backdrop of broader discussions of the

244 Tatishchev, Zapiski, pis’ma, 140.
245 Ibid, 143.
most urgent policy measures to be taken by the new regime. 

During the first few months of its existence the Corps seems to have been under the supervision of the Senate and Pavel Iaguzhinskii (1683-1736), the procurator-general of the Senate and a leading supporter of Anna in 1730. Indeed, the decree of July 29 was “given to the Senate” (Imennoi, dannyi Senatu), and so the Senate started looking for an appropriate building (initially, the Corps was to be located in Moscow, with Frantz Lefort’s mansion, vacated by the recently-exiled Prince Menshikov, being suggested).

Enrollment into the Corps was initially administered by the Heraldry, which was directed by Iaguzhinskii in his capacity as procurator-general. Meanwhile Iaguzhinskii himself declared to the senators “that he would submit a project regarding the foundation [of the Corps] and teaching the cadets, and also a list of teachers.”

In a letter to Schumacher on August 16, 1731, Tatishchev reported that “here [in Moscow] the procedures for the establishment of a cadet corps are already being composed, so I hope this will really be executed, that is, as soon as the necessary personnel for directing and teaching are found, they can start to gather cadets.”

Throughout the fall of 1731 von Münnich stayed in St.Petersburg, so he

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246 Petrukhintsev, Tsarstvovanie, 69-77.

247 Pavel Ivanovich Iaguzhinskii (1683-1736), of an unclear national and confessional background and probably a commoner by birth, had been a close collaborator of Peter. Iaguzhinskii was sent on a number of important diplomatic missions, and after 1722 he was the procurator-general of the Senate. In early 1730 he opposed the plans of the Supreme Privy Council and was arrested for that. After the repeal of the “Conditions” he became a senator, a colonel of the Horse Guards, procurator-general, and was also created a Count. RBS, 25, 7-27; Serov, Administratsiia, 83-84; Hughes, Russia, 426.

248 RGADA, f. 248, kniga 2018, II. 10-12. The Senate was, apparently, ordered by the Empress to “prepare the rules on how to maintain this Corps, and how to teach [there],” as well as to decide on the number of necessary teachers and officers, their salaries, and the sources of revenues to cover these expenses.

249 RGADA, f. 286, op. 1 d. 116.

250 Quoted in Petrukhintsev, Tsarstvovanie, 118.

251 Tatishchev, Zapiski, pis’ma, 147.
could not have been among those drafting the charter “here” in Moscow. That work had most probably been conducted by Iaguzhinskii.

Indeed, Tatishchev later reported in his *Leksikon* that the procurator-general at some unspecified point submitted to the Empress a project for the establishment two cadet corps (in Moscow and St. Petersburg), each with 500 cadets. In fact, Iaguzhinskii was qualified for such work as during the reign of Peter I he was commissioned on a number of occasions to study Prussian and Danish governmental practices. If Tatishchev is to be believed, the project was approved by Anna. Yet “Iaguzhinskii, due to animosity towards him from Münnich and [Count Karl Gustaf] Loewenwalde, was relieved [of his posts] and sent to Berlin, [and so] Münnich has corrupted this institution according to his whims.” This story sounds plausible in the sense that von Münnich and Iaguzhinskii seem to have been bitter rivals, and even writing twenty years later von Münnich could not conceal his hostility towards the procurator-general, long dead by then. Indeed, in the fall of 1731 Iaguzhinskii was rapidly losing influence and finally realized that he would not be made a kabinet-
His frustration led to a public outburst against his rivals at the court. As a result, on November 8 Iaguzhinskii was relieved of his posts and dispatched as ambassador to Berlin.\textsuperscript{258} Ten days later it was announced that the court would return to St Petersburg, and on the same day (November 18) the Charter (\textit{Ustav}) of the Corps was published.\textsuperscript{259} At around the same time (actually, during the discussion regarding the Charter) it was decided that the overall direction of the Corps was to be entrusted to von Münnich, who was rapidly rising in the empresses’ favor.\textsuperscript{260} Whereas originally Iaguzhinskii was originally planning for a corps in Moscow, the charter firmly placed it in St.Petersburg. At the end of the day, it was von Münnich who oversaw the creation of the Corps, drafted its new charter in the spring of 1732, and lobbied for increase in the number of cadets from 240 to 360, and for a rise in the institution’s budget from 33,000 to 63,000 rubles.\textsuperscript{261}

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In this chapter I show that the need for improved schooling for the nobility was very much on the mind of all the key individuals and elite groups circa 1730: it was discussed both by members of the Supreme Privy Council and by their opponents. Even more importantly, however, the story did not end in 1730. In the first year and a half after the crisis there was an impressive number of proposals and ideas in circulation (they are summarized in Table 2.1). Moreover, this was not the end of the story. At some point in the next two years a new proposal regarding the Corps was prepared by Vasilii Tatishchev himself. Fifteen years later he claimed that this

\textsuperscript{258} Serov, \textit{Administratsiia}, 83; Petrukhintsev, \textit{Tsarstvovanie}, 55-63.

\textsuperscript{259} PSZ #5881.

\textsuperscript{260} Petrukhintsev, \textit{Tsarstvovanie}, 64-65, 118.

\textsuperscript{261} PSZ #6050; Petrukhintsev, \textit{Tsarstvovanie}, 118-119.
proposal caused his removal from the capital to supervise the mining and metals industry in the Urals: “Her Majesty received [the proposal] with gratitude, yet the Germans in their envy not only caused it to be rejected, but also led to my … exile to Siberia.”

As for the proposal itself, Tatishchev most likely refers to the document that was eventually found among the papers of Ernst Biron, Anna’s favorite. We do not know exactly how it ended up there and what the circumstances of its creation were. However, the fact that it was written in both Russian and German is highly suggestive: Biron was the only member of the highest leadership who might have needed a German translation. In this memorandum Tatishchev suggested increasing the number of students at the Cadet Corps from 360 to 500, while at the same time cutting down annual expenses from 65,000 to 48,000 rubles. Besides, he proposed the establishment of two “academies, or universities” with 2,000 students (“for bringing to perfection theology and philosophy”), four gymnasiums with 6,000 students, and “120 to 200 seminaries for males and females for basic education in all the towns” with 12,000 students.

A similar proposal for vastly expanding the school system is also found in Tatishchev’s Conversation. Characteristically, he discusses the Corps under the rubric of “schools for the nobility,” or [schools for] “studies for nobles” (“shliaketskie shkoly,” “nauk shliketskii”). It appears plausible that Tatishchev’s

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262 Quoted in A.G. Kuzmin, Tatishchev (Moscow, 1981), 182.

263 Tatishchev was only one among many officials who took care to routinely submit “parallel” reports in German to Biron. On this point see Kurukin, Epokha, 231.

264 RGADA, f. 17, op. 1, d. 54, published as “Zapiska V.N. Tatishcheva ob uchaschikhs’na i raskhodakh na prosveshenie v Rossii,” in V.N. Tatishchev, Razgovor o pol’ze nauk i uchilishch. S predisloviem i ukazaniami N.A. Popova (Moscow, 1887), 161-162.

265 In his Conversation, Tatishchev, writing sometime in mid-1730s, recognizes the Cadet Corps as “the best school so far.” Here he also pushes for cutting down the expenditure, insisting that the Corps in its present form could be maintained on 300,000, not 700,000 rubles a year. At the same time he proposes to spend the “extra” 400 000 rubles on educating a further 600 students in the regions (gubernii), that is, in Moscow –200, in Little Russia or Belgorod and Kazan –100 in each, in Voronezh, Nizhnii Novgorod, Smolensk, and Vologda –50 in each. In reality, however, the Corps cost the treasury
insistent criticism of excessive expenditure at the Corps was implicitly aimed at von Münich. Even if the proposal was not directly commissioned by Biron, who viewed von Münich as something of a rival, it must have been highly convenient for the favorite.\footnote{The idea that von Münich was overspending on the Cadet Corps is repeated again by Tatishchev in his dictionary. Tatishchev, Leksikon, 304. Note that a few years later Artemii Volynskii, apparently began formulating proposals for reducing the size of army and army expenses after discussing it with Biron. Petrukhinsev, Tsarstvovanie, 203. Hence, the criticism of allegedly excessive expenditure on the army appears to have been a standard way for Biron to keep pressure on von Münich. On the rivalry between Biron and von Münich see, for example, Khmyrov, “Fel’distekekmisterstvo.” 347-348. Incidentally, von Münich seems to have been more or less the only dignitary to resist cutting down expenditure on the army after the death of Peter I. See S.G. Nelipovich, “Pozitsia B.Kh. fon Minikha v diskussii 1725 g. o sokrashchenii armii i voennogo budzheta Rossii,” Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal, no.8 (1990): 3-8.}

Two conclusions can be drawn here. First, contrary to the assumptions prevailing in the historiography (see the introduction to Part II of this dissertation) there appears to be no reason whatsoever to believe that the establishment of the Corps was an echo of the crisis of 1730, much less a direct concession to the nobility. It was an important measure supported by the key members of the government, who, in fact, fought over the right to be put in charge of the new project. There is simply no evidence that the government viewed the establishment of the Corps as a measure forced upon it from the outside: on the contrary, being put in charge of the project was clearly taken to be an enviable assignment and a sign of Imperial favor. Tatishchev, as we saw, tried to take part in the court intrigues around the project, but was quickly pushed out by much more powerful players. Two “fathers” of the Corps forcefully pushed through the idea in 1731-1732, namely Field-Marshal von Münich and Pavel about 63,000 rubles a year: the 700,000 rubles mentioned by Tatishchev is an absolutely fantastic figure for that period. Tatishchev, Conversation, 129-130; PSZ #6050. To further emphasize the centrality of issues related to the moral reformation of the nobility, one might mention that, among other things, Tatishchev is known to have been working in 1733 on a translation of a work by Dietrich-Hermann Kemmerich, professor of law at Wittenberg. According to Tatishchev, this book is where “the rules of sound reason and well-being are shown”: that is “morality [nравоучение] and natural law and law of nations” which pave the way for “rational life.” A.I. Andreev, “Trudy V.N. Tatishcheva po istorii Rossii,” in V.N. Tatishchev, Sobranie sochinenii, Vol.1 (Moscow, 1994), 5-38.
Iaguzhinskii: the former – a German mercenary, the latter – the ultimate Petrine “new Russian,” a parvenu through and through. Both are highly unlikely champions of the “bread-and-butter” demands of the rank-and file Russian nobility. Even if the nobility was able to wrestle any concessions from the autocracy, the establishment of the Noble Cadet Corps was not one of them.

Second, there is little room in this story for a “state,” much less for any abstract “state policy.” While there was a broad consensus regarding the need for such an institution, the final design of the project took shape within the context of highly pragmatic and cynical court intrigues and interpersonal rivalries. This is not meant, however, to juxtapose the “high politics” of ideas to the “low politics” of power-grabbing and backstabbing. As I demonstrate in the following chapters, one does not exclude the other. Having assumed the leadership of the Cadet Corps, Field-Marshal von Münnich implemented there a highly coherent program of molding the cadets into “true nobles.”

267 Von Münnich refused to become a Russian subject well into the 1730s, making a point of renegotiating short-term contracts and maintaining his right to leave the country after their expiration.
Table 2.1
Discussing a School for the Nobility, Late 1720s-Early 1730s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author of an Idea/Proposal</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Key Features</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1725-1729</td>
<td>Corps of cadets, 200 students</td>
<td>Papers of the Supreme Privy Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supreme Privy Council</td>
<td>Late January - Early February, 1730</td>
<td>“Cadet companies”</td>
<td>“Oath of Allegiance” prepared by the Supreme Privy Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Von Männich</td>
<td>Early 1731</td>
<td>Corps of cadets, 400-500 students</td>
<td>Memoirs of Ernst von Männich and Hermann von Manstein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatishchev(?)</td>
<td>May 1731</td>
<td>“Gymnasium” in Moscow</td>
<td>Tatishchev’s letter to Schumacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iaguzhinskii</td>
<td>1731</td>
<td>Two cadet corps (in Moscow and St.Petersburg), 500 cadets each</td>
<td>Tatishchev’s <em>Leksikon</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iaguzhinskii</td>
<td>August 1731</td>
<td>“Project regarding the foundation [of the Corps] and teaching the cadets, and also a list of teachers” (unfinished)</td>
<td>Senate papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iaguzhinskii or von Männich</td>
<td>November 1731</td>
<td>Charter of the Corps: Corps in St.Petersburg, 200 cadets</td>
<td>PSZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Von Männich</td>
<td>Spring 1732</td>
<td>New charter, 360 cadets</td>
<td>PSZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatishchev</td>
<td>1731-1734</td>
<td>Expanding the Corps to 500 cadets plus establishing gymnasiuims and seminaries in the provinces</td>
<td>Tatishchev, a memorandum for Biron</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 6

“Well-Mannered Cadets”: Everyday Life, Foreign Languages, and Disciplinary Practices

The decree announcing the creation of the Noble Cadet Corps in 1731 also explained also that the new institution would follow the model of “Prussian, Danish, and other royal cadet houses.” Moreover, the Corps’ founders made a point of staffing the Corps with foreign officers, including some who had actually served at the Berlin Cadet Corps.\(^{268}\) As pointed out in chapter II, the Berlin *Kadettenanstalt* was not just any school: it was an extreme example of the “disciplinarian revolution” that defined the essence of the ongoing transformation of state and education in the early eighteenth century. The choice of such a model to follow appears highly significant: it meant a break with Petrine notions of education, of human nature, and of the state’s role.

Indeed, the most striking feature of the new Noble Cadet Corps was that, unlike earlier Petrine schools, it was organized in such a way that not only teachers and books, but also the very environment at this institution, the structures of everyday life would have an educational, or rather, a formative influence on the students. The Corps’ authorities employed the full arsenal of disciplinary practices, such as structuring and regulating everyday life, secluding the cadets, monitoring their behavior, and creating an artificial Westernized environment. Peter, of course, also forced his nobles to wear Western dress and to learn foreign languages. However, the

\(^{268}\) See, for example, RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 8011. Mentioned, among others, are officers of the French, Danish, Prussian, and Hesse-Cassel armies. While some of the officers were hired on the “international market,” or were transferred from other units of the Russian army (which they had previously joined for a variety of reasons), at least a few were obtained directly from the King of Prussia in exchange for recruits for his famous “tall grenadiers.”
efforts made to this end by the Corps’ officials, their persistence, and the comprehensiveness of these efforts mark them as not only quantitatively, but qualitatively different from those of Peter. In the eyes of the Corps’ authorities learning polite manners and European languages was not only a matter of outward conformity, but also of moral transformation. Young nobles had to internalize the values of discipline, restraint, and order. The very possibility of formulating such goals, of course, implied certain assumptions about human nature: it was both something to be taken into account and to be sorted out, governed, and improved.

*   *   *

Disciplinarian practices at the Corps were based on the explicit notion that the arriving cadets were bearing the kind of habits and mores which, if left unattended, would prevent young nobles from succeeding at the Corps. It was believed that if left to their own devices the young nobles would follow these objectionable habits and might even corrupt their comrades. As it was explained in one of the Corps’s internal regulation, the reason for creating the document was that “some uneducated [nevospitannye] cadets show daily signs of their wicked character. Due to their madness, they not only persist in their wickedness, but also through their indecent examples lead other, well-mannered, cadets toward evil.”

269 Therefore, supervision was necessary. Since the students’ customary way of life was to be changed in its entirety, replaced with a prescribed daily routine from dawn till dusk, the supervision was to be similarly all-embracing. This supervision was to fence the students off from harmful influences, to identify transgressions and to point them out (both to the offenders themselves and to their comrades) through punishment.

269 Luzanov, Shl’akhnetnyi kadetskii korpus, appendix 6.
The attempt to isolate the students from the corruption of the outside world is evident at the earliest stages of the Corps’s existence. From its foundation the Noble Cadet Corps in St.Petersburg was housed in an enclosed compound. This made the Corps different from earlier Russian schools, which were usually housed in random buildings, often sharing them with other institutions, such as military units or governmental bureaus. The Artillery School founded by Peter in 1701 was located at the “Artillery Yard”; another was attached to the Artillery Regiment, the pupils of the third school, set up in 1721, studied at the “Petersburg laboratory house.” An engineering school founded in 1719 was initially located “in the antechamber of the Artillery Chancellery”; it was then moved to the “large hall at the Gunners’ Quarter,” and not until 1724 did it get a separate building. The Naval Academy through most of this period had to share premises with various Admiralty departments and with the Apothecary.270 When a school was given a separate building at all (the Sukharev Tower in Moscow, for example, was given to the Navigation School in Moscow, and the Kikin Mansion in St.Petersburg was given to the Naval Academy), no attempt was made to separate the students from the surrounding environment. Normally they did not reside on the premises, but lived with their parents or relatives, or rented rooms on their own. Although the regulation of the Naval Academy demanded that all of its students board at the Academy itself, this was simply not the case. Mikhail Danilov, a student at Moscow Artillery School in 1737, reported later in his memoirs that he and his brother stayed with a relative of theirs, a certain Miloslavskii, at his house by the Stone Bridge, and had to walk every day “to the artillery regimental yard by the Sukharev Tower,” that is, nearly to the other end of town.271 Note that Vasilii


Tatishchev in his *Conversation* sees no need to have boarding facilities for students at his proposed schools for the nobility in provincial capitals: instead he calls upon the government to fund a “few rooms for the poorest” nobles.\(^{272}\)

However, the Corps from its very foundation was located at the palace of Prince A.D. Menshikov, the exiled favorite of Peter the Great, on Vasilievskii Island. Menshikov began construction of the palace in 1710, and by 1713 it was a four-storey mansion facing the river. Subsequently it was supplemented with two two-storey wings, and with the construction of one more, northern, wing the palace formed an enclosed quadrangle with an internal courtyard and covered galleries running along its inner perimeter. At around the same time two more two-storey wings were added: a “western” wing facing the river, and an additional wing running at a straight angle to it. With the addition of a gated wall on the northern side these new wings a second enclosed courtyard. By the 1720s the Menshikov palace was really the largest and, according to a contemporary, the most luxurious building in the new capital, surpassing even the imperial residence itself.\(^{273}\) By the time the Cadet Corps moved in, gilded mirrors and expensive furniture had already been removed from the palace, and it was rapidly falling into disrepair. Still, the exquisitely painted ceilings and walls, fashionable Dutch tiles, expensive wooden floors, and a row of statues running atop the main building’s facade reminded one that it was from here that Menshikov de-facto ruled the empire at the height of his power in the late 1720s. On the northern edge of the palace was a “large garden with a beautiful greenhouse and numerous service buildings”; it was also surrounded by a wall. The garden was sufficiently large

\(^{272}\) Tatishchev, *Conversation*, 129-130.

that the cadets could subsequently entertain themselves by shooting birds there. The complex also included stables and warehouses. Later the Corps’ authorities built a large covered hall for equestrian practice and converted two chambers into an in-house church and a hospital.274

How meaningful was the fact that the authorities granted this palace to the Corps? Certainly it showed that the new institution enjoyed special imperial patronage. It probably reflected the growing influence of its high commander, Field-Marshal von Münnich. At the same time, redistribution of spoils, such as the movable and immovable properties of disgraced officials, was standard practice in the period. In 1732 the Naval Academy moved into the mansion confiscated from Prince Aleksei Dolgorukii (but had to share it with the Admiralty and the Apothecary). In the early 1740s the Academy attempted to appropriate for their schools the confiscated palaces of exiled dignitaries from Anna’s reign (Ostermann and Count Golovkin).275 As mentioned in the previous chapter, originally Pavel Iaguzhinskii originally considered installing the Corps at the late Frantz Lefort’s mansion at the German Quarter in Moscow. From the government’s point of view, accommodating the Corps at the Menshikov Palace was probably the most expedient way of solving the problem: it did not require additional funds for construction, and the building was ready to be used.

Yet, once the opportunity was there, the Corps’ authorities definitely tried to make the most of the fact that the palace was actually an enclosed compound. All the enrolled cadets had to reside in the complex, and the authorities tried to accommodate the faculty and the officers of the Corps. A foreign traveler reported that all the cadets


275 Veselago, Ocherk, 82, 85.
“live in this house, and it has only one large gate.”276 (Another foreigner believed that the palace had “as many rooms as there are days in a year”277). In other words, here was an attempt to create a self-contained entity with limited (especially as far as the cadets were concerned) contact with the outside world.

The Corps’ founders clearly believed that such a separation had an educational purpose. Indeed, they agreed that exposure to the right sort of environment was a prerequisite for the formation of a “true” noble. Thus, the Corps’s founding documents mention that it should be located in St.Petersburg because the cadet could benefit from being close to the Academy of Sciences, various state agencies and military units, all of which would be valuable resources in the education of young nobles. On the other hand, an average Russian noble family was hardly a source of beneficial cultural influence. Echoing the writing of Tatishchev and, still earlier, of Saltykov, the charter insisted that the students had to be brought to the capital in order to separate them “from their relatives, estates, and homes, especially when their relatives themselves have little desire for learning or do not consider it useful.”278

Once brought into a secluded compound, cadets were to avoid contact with the outside world, which could lead them astray. In June 1732 von Münnich ordered Baron Johann Ludwig Pott von Luberas, an engineer and diplomat in Russian service, and the first director of the Cadet Corps (from November 18, 1731, to February 16, 1734)279 to prohibit the Corps’s officers from visiting taverns and coffeehouses “where there are billiard tables and other entertainments” because such behavior not


278 Luzanov, Shl’akhetnyi kadetskii korpus, 15.

279 Ibid, 80.
only led to unnecessary expense, but also because “quarrels and fights and other indecencies” that take place at such establishments made it inappropriate for the Corps’s officers. Von Luberas was also to ensure that the cadets did not go there either.\textsuperscript{280} The Corps’s authorities were weary of other possible sources of harmful influence: a woman named Ekaterina Lursenig, “of Prussian birth,” for example, was deemed unworthy of washing laundry for the cadets because of her “ill fame.”\textsuperscript{281} Later on the authorities issued an order prohibiting the Corps’s personnel from letting any outsiders live at their apartments in the Corps “permanently or temporarily.”\textsuperscript{282} Appropriately, the gates in the wall surrounding the Corps were guarded by sentinels. Special rules regulated the cadets’ access to the city, depending on the season and the time of the day.\textsuperscript{283}

The principle of seclusion was closely related to that of surveillance. While at the Corps cadets were to be kept under constant “supervision,” which was described as crucial for their improvement. The imperial decree proclaiming the foundation of the Corps stated that “it is necessary that all the cadets of the Corps live in one house, following the example of the Prussian, Danish and other Royal Cadet houses, so that they waste less time on walking around, inappropriate behavior and entertainments, but rather [spend their time] on their studies as well as on all other activities under constant supervision.”\textsuperscript{284} The idea of putting young nobles under “supervision” is reinforced in a later decree, which mentions that the earlier practice of sending young nobles abroad to study did not produce the desired result. This was precisely because

\textsuperscript{280} RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1632, l. 64.

\textsuperscript{281} RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 8011, ll. 6ob-7.

\textsuperscript{282} RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2570, l. 1.

\textsuperscript{283} Luzanov, \textit{Shl’akh etnyi kadetskii korpus}, 58-59.

\textsuperscript{284} PSZ #5881.
the youngsters “did not have sufficient supervision” while in foreign countries, and hence wasted time on various objectionable activities. Overall, the supervisors, according to the decree, were to “diligently watch their mores, habits, and deeds, so that they behaved according to the demands of virtue, politeness, due humility, and honor, while lies, unfaithfulness, and other vices inappropriate for nobility were rooted out from them early on.” Teachers were to submit monthly reports on the academic progress of each cadet. In addition, company officers were expected to produce similar reports on their behavior.

At the Corps the cadets themselves were involved in supervising each other. Each room had to have a cadet “headman.” The best among the cadets were promoted to be an NCO. A regulation written in 1750 specifies their duties: besides carrying out ordinary military tasks, like standing on guard, etc., they entail primarily “overseeing” and “supervising” other cadets. The Corps authorities tried to establish their control over the cadets even when they were given leave. In July 1732, for example, director von Luberas ordered that in such cases “two or three or more of them should go to the

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285 PSZ #5894.

286 PSZ #5881.

287 Not only cadets were to be disciplined and monitored, but the instructors as well. According to a government decree, besides good teachers, there were also “the lazy ones, who have so much forgotten their duty” that they spend their time in the classroom “chatting and in indecent conversations, and do not display any true zeal and diligence in teaching.” In 1736 it was decided that if a teacher had to miss a class, he was to warn the officer on duty and the ober-professor beforehand. An ober-professor, in turn, was supposed to produce reports on the teachers’ diligence every four months. Absence from classroom without an acceptable excuse was to be punished by a fine: for each missed hour the teacher was to lose his weekly salary, for every missed day – his monthly salary. In practice, however, absenteeism among teachers seems to have been reasonable high. The records for the first months of 1736 show that the teachers were especially prone to be late or absent on January 2 and January 29 (January 28th being the Empress’s birthday). Contrary to the order, in practice for each missed day the teachers were fined to the tune of their daily (not weekly) salary, plus they often got a “discount” when the overall amount of the fines accumulated by them was calculated at the end of a four-month period. RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1794, l. 96 ob.; d. 1757.

288 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2343, passim.
same place, and one of them is to have supervision over them so that they behave decently and go everywhere together and not alone.”

“Supervision” also meant that the cadets were to observe a set of rules that attempted to regulate nearly every detail of their daily life. The Corps papers are full of references to the desire of its commanders (especially von Münnich, who appears to have concerned himself with the everyday minutiae of the Corps life) to establish a daily routine that in itself would discipline the cadets. The need for a detailed daily schedule was already stressed in the late 1720s, in the very first proposal for a Cadet Corps, which quoted such a schedule at the Berlin Corps as an example: “5am to 6am – getting up and dressing; 6am to 7am – prayer and breakfast; 7am to 11am - lunch,” etc. At 11am “they are put in a proper formation by the captain on duty and led to lunch.” A similar schedule was introduced at the Corps in St.Petersburg, but besides, the authorities produced a number of surprisingly detailed documents which attempted to regulate various aspects of the everyday routine. There were, for example, Rules on how to act in the grand hall where the cadets dine (discussed below) and a Regulation on how to behave in class (which prescribed the correct ways of leaving and entering the class, etc.). Taken together these documents, as well as daily disciplinarian practices were designed to create a certain way of life, which emphasized discipline and order, cleanliness and self-control over one’s mind and body.

It must have been a dramatic change for noble youngsters accustomed to a carefree life on their fathers’ estates to be subjected to a strictly observed daily

289 Luzanov, Shl’akhetyi kadetskii korpus, 34.

290 RGADA, f. 16, op.1, d. 76, l. 4.

291 Luzanov, Shl’akhetyi kadetskii korpus, appendix 6.
schedule, which at that time was not necessarily the case even in military units (the
regiments were not regularly drilled and the vast majority of them did not have
barracks). Cadets were woken up at 4:45 am, and went to prayer at 5:45 am.
Afterwards they had classes until noon and then again from 3 pm to 6 pm.\textsuperscript{292} The
authorities also wanted the cadets to be dressed “properly,” that is, to wear clean,
buttoned down uniforms and to have an appropriate haircut. After one of his visits to
the Corps, von Münnich was disturbed by the fact that “many of them wear dirty
jackets and instead of neckties they wear silk scarves.”

Ultimately, the bodily movement was also to be controlled and regulated.
Military drill was a central part of education at the Corps (which organizationally
formed a battalion), and in fact marching in formation was the very first thing that the
cadets were taught at the newly created Corps. Already in 1732 the empress was
pleased to observe a parade of a cadet company. Moreover, in theory cadets were
supposed to march to and from their meals, prayers, and classes in formation (in
reality, they hardly ever did so). At the same time, however, the rules of polite and
polished conduct were similar to the military drill in that they were also a kind of
orderly and regulated movement. Von Münnich insisted that “on the streets as well as
in public places cadets are to act respectfully (uchtivo) and politely (vezhlivo) and to
greet important gentlemen and ladies and officers with due humility.” In the 1730s,
when Münnich was the Corps’s high commander, cadets were assigned to him as
orderlies. Four days before their turn, all of them were sent to a dance teacher, who
was to “give them extra lessons on how to approach their commanders, how to leave

\textsuperscript{292} Ibid, 53-54.
and how to greet.” Von Münnich demanded that even candles at the Cadet Corps were to stand in chandeliers in a “straight and proper” manner.293

The cadets’ meals were also to be strictly regulated. It is clear that meals were supposed to be more than just a time for eating, but were to be a kind of cultural experience. The author of an anonymous project of the late 1720s emphasized that “for appropriate maintenance special cooks ought to be appointed, and also the necessary tableware.”294 The founding charter of the Cadet Corps prescribed that “during their meals, as well as on other occasions cadets are to behave politely, and at the table they are in turn to read aloud something from the rules, regulations and decrees, and also from the history books and newspapers etc.”295 Indeed, the documents suggest that, indeed, at lunch, while the cadets ate, Russian and German newspapers were read to them in turn.296 Moreover, in 1733a special Instruction for tafeldeker, or table supervisor, specified that the white tablecloths, for example, were to be clean and washed twice a week, while the room itself and the tables had to be cleaned every Saturday. When cadets came for lunch, each of them was to find in front of him three plates (one of them a soup bowl), a napkin, a knife, various forks, and a spoon. The authors of the instruction found it necessary to emphasize that all of the cutlery was to be clean, and in fall and winter the room was to be lit with candles.297

293 Ibid, 9-10, 53-54, 58.

294 RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 76, l. 1ob. It also specifically mentioned the need to take care of the accommodation, that is, “distribution of room, linen, beds, etc.”

295 PSZ #5881.

296 Luzanov, Shl’akhnetyi kadetskii korpus, 49-50.

297 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1679, ll. 175-177, 180-189. To give one more example, in 1736 von Münnich ordered to replace all tables and chairs with new ones made according to a “model” provided by him. RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1804, l. 2.
An important element of this artificially-created environment was the learning of foreign languages. The attempt to use the study of languages as a means of molding the new elite was built into the organizational structure of the Corps. First of all, the student body of the Corps consisted of two linguistic groups: “Russians” and [Baltic] “Germans.” Both of them, in the vast majority of cases, came to the Corps without prior knowledge of the other group’s language. According to the Corps charter, a third of all students were supposed to be drawn from the Baltic provinces, and indeed, the Russian and Baltic German (or simply “Germans,” as they were referred to by contemporaries) students were brought together under the same roof specifically in order to facilitate the merger of the two elites. The charter even suggested that servants of “Estland and Lifland” origins should be assigned to Russian students, and Russian servants – to the Germans, so they would “better learn other languages and get used to them.”298 In practice, however, it meant that “Russian” and “German” cadets were almost invariably taught the basic subjects separately in their own languages.

Secondly, due to the nearly complete absence of Russian textbooks and qualified teachers well into the 1750s, Russian cadets were effectively prevented from learning advanced subjects unless they knew a foreign (i.e. German) language. In the founding charter the government already voiced the fear that it would face serious problems in finding enough qualified teachers, especially natives. In case “it proved impossible to find enough teachers skilled in Russian, all the cadets should be taught foreign languages - French and German - for it would be easier for the young people to learn the languages in which they are taught, rather than for the teachers to learn to

298 PSZ #5881.
explain their subjects in Russian with due perfection." These fears proved to be well-founded. The director von Tettau reported to the Cabinet of Ministers in 1739 that lack of progress exhibited by the Russian cadets in advanced classes was because “the reason is that upon their entry into the Corps they knew nothing of the German language, and therefore had to be taught it first.” In another report he elaborated:

[Russian cadets] were greatly impeded by the fact that they did not know any German before their entry into the Corps, while the teachers they were assigned to were all foreigners who did not know any Russian. Therefore these cadets had to be forced (for they themselves were inclined toward French rather than German) to learn German.

Thus, it was the German that served young Russian nobles as a gateway to advanced learning. At the same time, it appears that the two languages had something like different “area of responsibility.” French was the language of literature, both modern (Fénelon, Boileau, and others) and ancient, and, incidentally, of fortification and artillery, the two fields dominated by the colossal figure of Vauban. It also appears that Greek and Roman authors, as well as classical mythology, were absorbed in Russia in French translation or as retold by French writers. Yet, the Russians almost invariably began learning French only after mastering German. It also appears that at least in some cases German was a medium for teaching French. Russian students were often expected to translate from German into French and the other way around. Among other languages mentioned in the Corps’ founding charter, Latin was taught, but only taken by a tiny minority of students. Although German cadets were incomparably more likely to know Latin upon coming to St.Petersburg, very few bothered to study this language at the Corps. In fact, there were almost as few

299 PSZ #6050.
300 RGADA, f. 177, op. 1, d. 70, l. 31.
301 RGADA, f. 177, op. 1, d. 70, l. 5 ob.
Germans taking it as Russians. Two other languages – Italian and English – were never taken by more than one or two cadets simultaneously, and it appears that for long periods of time they did not offer it at all. Table 2.2, based on a catalogue compiled by an officer at the Corps in 1750, shows the distribution of books at the Corps’ library according to language. It appears from the table that German, French, and Latin were more or less equally represented. It is unclear, however, to what extent it takes into account numerous textbooks and “authors” used in the classroom. These books, in fact, were issued to the students and their teachers, rather than kept in the library, and their life cycle must have been relatively short).

Table 2.2.

Books at the Library of the Cadet Corps by Language, 1750302

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin&amp;German</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian&amp;German</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>497</strong></td>
<td><strong>2355</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The records of the Corps also mention some texts used in the classroom. More often than not the teachers had trouble finding appropriate manuals. Thus, in 1737 the documents note the absence of a Russian grammar book which could be used by German students, and so the basic rules of grammar were read out loud by the teacher, while the students wrote them down. The existing Russian grammar books in foreign languages – particularly, Latin Grammatica Russica by Ludolf (1696) and Vasilii Adodurov’s short grammar in German (1731) – were apparently neither used on any large scale, nor even available to the cadets. This is in spite of the fact that Adodurov himself took an active part in “general examinations” at the Corps in the late 1730s. As for Russian grammar books in Russian, the first edition of Mikhail Lomonosov’s Russian Grammar did not appear until 1755. Students in German and French classes had the advantage of being able to use grammar books printed abroad, which were apparently purchased in quantities sufficient to make them available to every student. In 1746, for example, the Corps purchased 140 copies of German grammar books\(^{303}\) - a huge number, given that a standard press run for a book in the Petrine period, for example, was about 1200 copies.

Besides grammar books, language teachers at the Corps also used such texts as the Russian and German versions of the Military Regulation in the classroom, as well as St.Petersburg newspapers in Russian: these helped German cadets to learn the bureaucratic Russian necessary for their future careers. At advanced stages of their language training the students at the Corps also widely used the so-called “authors,” or unabridged texts, which were routinely divided into “easy authors” and “difficult authors.” Not all books were deemed suitable for use in the classroom. Thus, although the Corps’s library was one of the largest in Russia, the teachers in 1746 complained

\(^{303}\) RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2074, ll. 13, 19.
that the cadets who were being trained to translate from German to French had “no book or author for them to translate,” so the authorities approved the purchase of two copies of a German newspaper for use in each French class. At the same time the German cadets studying Russian apparently used the twenty five available copies of what they called The Azov History, but the teacher complained that they went over it so many times that the students knew it “almost by heart, so it became useless.” Meanwhile, the teachers pointed out that the bookstore of the Academy of Sciences had a book called True Politics (“Istinnaia politika”), “which is translated by a born Russian and therefore more coherent and thus better for teaching.”

The importance of studying foreign languages, however, went far beyond simply providing students with certain technical skills. The languages were also a central element of the cultural environment that the Corps’ authorities strove to create. In addition to being used in classrooms for teaching, newspapers were also read to students during lunch. In 1740, for example, the Corps subscribed to an Amsterdam newspaper in French, Lübeck newspapers in German and Latin, a “Postman” from Hamburg, Italian newspapers from Vienna, and St.Petersburg newspapers in Russian and German. The Corps’s documents also mention newspapers from Utrecht and Leiden. Newspapers, as mentioned earlier, were used for language instruction. At the same time, the emphasis on their availability to the cadets indicated that the young nobles were also expected to develop a feeling of belonging to a wider European

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305 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2074, ll. 13, 19.

306 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1838, l. 5; d. 1685, l. 4.
community of the educated and the worldly, who were concerned with the affairs of other countries.

The teaching of foreign languages provided ample opportunity for moral instruction, which was especially important since very few Russian students actually studied such subjects as history, philosophy, or law. The text that the cadets were given at their exams always had a didactic message. Andrei Kvashnin-Samarin, for example, had to translate into French an instructive passage on the importance of learning foreign languages:

L’expérience confirme tous les jours, qu’on ne peut pas parvenir à la perfection d’une langue, sans en avoir beaucoup d’envie. Il est donc fort nécessaire qu’on soit convaincu combien il est utile de savoir plusieurs langues, et quand on est assuré, qu’elles sont le moyens d’offrir toutes sortes d’emplois, on n’es par naturellement aussi pour les apprendre.307

The future playwright Aleksandr Sumarokov was instructed to translate a passage on Henry VIII of England and his testament. According to this short text, the king sent his son, the future Edward VII, to study at Oxford and Cambridge, where he learned philosophy, politics, and seven languages.308 Prince Aleksandr Dolgorukov translated from Russian into German a passage on Xerxes, king of Persia. Upon assembling a huge army in order to invade Greece, Xerxes started crying, for the sight of such a multitude of men, none of whom would be alive in a hundred years, reminded him of the brevity of human life. For his translation from German into Russian Dolgorukov was assigned a passage on the usefulness of rhetorical skills. Thanks to these skills “mortal humans can acquire nearly immortal fame.” Besides being a lesson in human nature, this was clearly also a lesson in leadership:

307 RGADA, f. 177, op. 1, d. 70, l. 21.
308 RGADA, f. 177, op. 1, d. 70, ll. 29-30 ob.
Most important enterprises are sometimes brought to a happy ending by eloquence alone, rather than by the force of thousands of armed men, for it [eloquence] opens up the path to human hearts, which are harder to defeat than the strongest fortress and cannot be overrun by any external force. One who wants to influence human hearts is attempting something important.  

Other exams contained references to the cadets’ future role in governing the state. Ivan Ozerov translated from Russian into French a “dispatch from Hamburg …dated June 16, 1739.” This dispatch represented a report from a Russian agent, who learned from the “latest letters from Copenhagen that the English resident there received credentials from his court and thus was appointed minister extraordinary and plenipotentiary.” According to the same dispatch, the British government had decided to send a “large fleet” into the Baltic in case the French decided to do so, while the Danish court had not made up its mind yet. The rivalry between the French and the British, the possibilities of a foreign navy making its appearance within the reach of the Russian ports of St.Petersburg, Riga and Revel (Tallinn), the uncertain stance of the court of Copenhagen – all of these were not just fictitious circumstances, but very real elements of Russia’s everyday diplomatic concerns. Graduates from the Corps were not only supposed to be at ease talking about foreign courts, ambassadors, and navies, but also to assume perspectives beyond Russia’s narrowly conceived interests. In short, they were supposed to be members of the European elite.

In classes in Russian and German “stylistics” the beginners took dictation, while the advanced students composed “letters” following special rules. The

309 RGADA, f. 177, op. 1, d. 70, ll. 22-23.
310 RGADA, f. 177, op. 1, d. 70, l. 34-35.
311 Materialy dlia istorii imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk. Vol.3 (1736-1738). (St.Petersburg, 1886), 465-466. The importance of letter-writing from the point of view of the Corps’ authorities is further emphasized by the fact that when the prospective language teachers were examined, they were made to translate a polite letter expressing sentiments of friendship, gratitude, etc. RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, 1710, ll. 36-40. On letter-writing in eighteenth-century Russia and its role in the development of “polite” culture, see, most recently, Lina Bernstein, “The First Published Russian Letter-Writing Manual: Priklady, kako pishutsia komplementy raznye . . .,” The Slavic and East European Journal 46,
documents often mention cadets’ ability to write “letters” as a key element in the study of a foreign language. In doing so they quite literally meant letters: the most common task advanced students were given at language exams was to compose (or translate) a personal letter, one in which a student was to exhibit not only the mastery of grammar and vocabulary, but also the mastery of appropriate forms of polite discourse among polished members of the elite. The students had to know not only how to address a superior or an equal, but also what sentiments to express. Thus, the letter, translated by Andrei Kvashnin-Samarin opens with “Most noble Sir” and ends with “Your Excellence, my most revered Sir, I remain your most humble servant.” The sentiments, conveyed in this letter are also very telling: Kvashnin-Samarin expressed proper (and properly phrased, with references to the value of friendship) gratitude for being invited to spend a summer at a friends’ estate (“nothing could be better than to spend the best time of the year with a true friend”). He, however, had to apologize for having to decline the offer, for duty prevented him from coming. For a true noble, his duty obviously took precedence even over friendship: “As you know, there will be an annual general examination in our Cadet Corps at the end of the summer, for which I have to study all through the summer with the utmost application.” At the end of the letter, he shows himself to be aware of the existence of a larger community of nobles, of which he wants to remain a polite member by sending best regards to all those who are able to make it to the said estate.\footnote{312 RGADA, f. 177, op. 1, d. 70, ll. 19-21.} It is hardly surprising therefore, that the books, or “authors,” used in the classroom were also supposed to have a certain moral message. In 1738, the cadets in the “second"
class “explained” [expliquent] *The Adventures of Telemachus* – one of the most important contemporary texts on moral education, the meaning of true virtue and the ways of attaining it.\(^{313}\) Another text used at the Corps, the *True Politics*, mentioned earlier, was in fact a translation by Vasilii Tretiakovskii of Nicholas Remond des Cours’ *La véritable politique des personnes de qualité* (1692) – a tract that dealt, among other things, with the need (for a noble) to be “useful to the public,” and with the issues of “talents” and “inclinations.”\(^{314}\)

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In a way, however, the attempts to create an orderly routine clashed with the fundamental realities of Russian noble life defined by a semi-natural economy and serf ownership. This conflict was most clearly embodied in the prolonged campaign that Lieutenant Gottfried Ieremias (the master housekeeper of the Corps, or *Hofmeister*) waged against the serf menservants (*khloptsy*, as they were called, or “lads”) described in the Corps’ documents as an embodiment of disorder, which was so detrimental for “true nobles.” All the enrolled cadets were housed in the Menshikov Palace, 8-10 cadets per “chamber,” and many of them had serf “lads” who lived in the same chambers and, apparently, slept on the floor by their masters’ beds. The fact that the “lads” lived with the cadets “in the same chamber, socialize[d] with them, play[ed] cards, or converse[d]” was viewed as quite inappropriate by the officials: it was expected that the “lads” would disrupt the prescribed, regulated way

\(^{313}\) RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1629, l. 22.

of life in general and discipline in particular. According to Ieremias, the “lads” were “a source of much theft and are careless with fire and cause damage to the rooms and bring in dirt. On top of this they walk around so poorly dressed that it is scary to look at them.” In the dining hall the “lads” were blamed for the excessive quantities of meat and bread consumed during the meals and for the loss of or damage to cutlery, tablecloths, etc. Ieremias suggested that all the “lads” be banned from the Corps and replaced by a few retired soldiers who would clean the room, keep the fires going in the stoves for heating, and perform other chores. It was as a result of Ieremias’ jeremiads that the Corps’ chancellery issued in 1736 special Rules on how to act in the grand hall where the cadets dine. According to these rules, back doors to the dining hall were to be locked and guards were to be placed at the entry. The Corps’s own servants were to remain in the room after the meals until the supervisor of the table counted cutlery and checked the tablecloths. The “lads” were to be admitted into the room only with special permission from the officer on duty.

Overall, the ability of the Corps’ authorities to establish the desired level of seclusion and supervision is highly doubtful. The vision of a completely isolated and self-sufficient compound was slow to materialize, as was the ideal of seclusion and constant monitoring. The documents of the Corps mention numerous cases of cadets going to town alone and without permission, drinking, fighting, stealing, etc.

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315 Luzanov, Shl’akhnetnyi kadetskii korpus, 50-52. In that respect they were, in a way, similar to the hunting dogs, another necessary element of a traditional noble life on the estates, which were kept by the cadets in their chambers and were also a source of disorderly influence: Ieremias reported to the director in 1737 that “from the bones, feces etc., left by these dogs, there is a great stench and heavy air in the chambers that I don’t know how [the cadets] are living there. It is very unpleasant for a stranger even to enter the chambers.” According to the Corps records, the cadets dragged these dogs into the dining room on leashes to feed them, giving them food on plates from their table. Ibid, 47-48, 60.

316 Luzanov, Shl’akhnetnyi kadetskii korpus, 53.

317 Danchenko, Kalashnikov, Kadetskii korpus, 29-30, 45.
Nor was there effective supervision within the walls of the Corps. When a large group of cadets was graduating in 1736, the authorities were unable to account not only for a number of smaller items (like belt buckles etc.), but also, mysteriously, for five mattresses and three beds. The historian is left to wonder what young noblemen could have possibly done with them, and how the authorities did not notice their absence earlier. Consider also the case of Petr Vladislavlev, an eighteen-year old cadet. In 1749, while in a tavern (itself a violation of von Münnich’s rules) he met a certain Swiss man. After a while (and after a few drinks) the new friends went for a walk, and Vladislavlev managed to steal his companion’s silver watch with a golden chain and run away. He pawned the stolen items, lost the money playing billiards and, upon his return to the Corps was placed under arrest and diagnosed with a “suspicious” (i.e. venereal) disease. Vladislavlev was, admittedly, an exceptional case, yet the frequency of his transgressions make them almost routine between 1745 and 1749 he was arrested and/or subjected to corporal punishment on 26 occasions: for going to town without permission; for playing cards; for stealing; for visiting taverns where he spent whatever he could earn by selling the stolen property; and for returning to the Corps so drunk that he “could not wake up for two days.” Moreover, as a result of investigation of Vladislavlev’s case, twelve more cadets became implicated in stealing, buying stolen goods, or not reporting such behavior. On the practical level, the vision of a regulated and orderly environment intended to produce well-mannered “true nobles” remained just that – a vision.

318 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1790, ll. 88-93.

319 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2233, ll. 3-23.
Chapter 7

“Easy and Useful Subjects”:

The Curriculum and Examinations at the Corps

The vision of a “true” nobility to be created at the Corps implied a certain uniformity of acquired skills and internalized values codified in the Corps’ curriculum. At the same time, having established the Corps, the government solemnly promised to reward cadets with ranks according to “their studies and their worth.” This presupposed a system for assessing their progress at the Corps. And, indeed, the differences in student achievement were noticed, measured, and directly translated into ranks. Upon graduation most, as promised by the sovereign, were promoted to be ensigns and sub-ensigns (praporshchik and podpraporshchik), while the best students became lieutenants and sub-lieutenants (poruchik and podporuchik). A considerable number of cadets, however, were sent to the regiments as NCOs, and the worst students (usually those guilty of some serious offence) were to serve as privates in the infantry. There were further gradations, however, within each rank. Upon receiving commissions, the better students were assigned to the regiments of the line, became regimental aides-de-camp, or even aides-de-camp to various generals, while the weaker ones could be sent to the semi-regular regiments of the landmilitsiia guarding the fortified border with the Tatars in the South. The academically strongest students were left at the Corps as teachers. Many of them were eventually assigned to staff duty at the army or divisional headquarters. The presence of this very strong meritocratic (for lack of a better word) element in the governmental policies of the 1730s is thus very clear. Although the authorities’ attempts to put their vision into
practice were not unproblematic, the Corps did function as a mechanism that allowed for conversion of acquired cultural skills into positions within a social hierarchy.

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According to the first project for the creation of a Cadet Corps, prepared in the late 1720s, the proposed establishment was to be divided into two orders to teach not only military matters, but also “political and civil affairs.” As for the “political and civil” part, the project mentions only that it was to include the study of “politics,” jurisprudence, history, geography, and also “various state laws, which are to have separate professors.” The military component was discussed in more detail. According to the author, the program was to include “military economics” (voennaia ekonomiia), “discipline, or order,” and “military action”; having mastered that, the young nobles were to be “taught theory, that is, the basic approaches to practice,” and only after that “to be used in practice.”

The actual curriculum at the Cadet Corps resembles this plan in many important ways. At the same time, the differences are also telling. The program of studies at the Noble Cadet Corps was very ambitious indeed, considering the general level of education of the Russian nobility and the complete novelty of most of the subjects for a young provincial nobleman of that time. According to a decree of July 29, 1731, which announced the establishment of the Corps, the cadets were to be taught “Arithmetic, Geometry, Drawing, Fortification, Artillery, Fencing, Riding and other subjects necessary for a military career.” Some cadets, moreover, were to be given the opportunity to pursue civil, rather than military careers, and therefore, to study “foreign languages, History, Geography, Jurisprudence, dancing, music and

320 RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 76, ll. 1.
other useful subjects.” One might notice here the presence of such traditional gentlemanly skills as dancing, music, and fencing that were not mentioned in the original project in the late 1720s. In December, this list of subjects was repeated with the addition of “Grammar,” “Rhetoric” and “other such useful military and political subjects”: the document summed up the outline of the curriculum by asserting that those were the subjects that the young nobles “could have learned in foreign academies.” The authors of the decree promised that those able to master these topics would then be “worthy to serve the State and to bring honor, benefit and glory for themselves and for the Fatherland.”

Organizationally the new institution consisted of the Noble Cadet Corps, which was a military unit led by its commanding officers, and the so-called “Knightly Academy” (i.e. the direct translation of German Ritterakademie), which comprised all the teachers. In practice, however, the distinction between the two was soon forgotten, and the term “Knightly Academy” fell out of use. The composition of the faculty, however, emphasizes the ambitions of the Corps’ founders. According to the initial plans, the staff of the “Knightly Academy” was supposed to include one professor of mathematics, two adjuncts, and two instructors; one professor juris and one adjunct; professor humaniorum and an adjunct; and instructors in the humanities (who were to teach “style of writing [shtil’] and rhetoric, politics, genealogy, geography, moral philosophy, heraldry, and other gentlemanly sciences”). There were also to be teachers and assistant teachers of languages, including such “exotic” ones as Italian and English. On top of that there was to be one mechanicus with an assistant and apprentices, for “making various optical and mathematical instruments,” and finally,

321 PSZ #5811.
322 PSZ #5894.
six “writing masters” (three for Russian and three for German) “who also have to teach the basics of arithmetic.”

The multitude and variety of the subjects to be taught at the Corps called for some systematization. The founding charter of the Corps suggested that the cadets (and the subjects) be divided into four classes. In the fourth, or lowest class, cadets were to study Russian reading, writing, and arithmetic; in the third class – geometry, geography and “grammar”; in the second – fortification, artillery, history, composition and “style” in writing, rhetoric, jurisprudence, moral philosophy, heraldry and “other military and political sciences.” Finally, in the first (the highest) class cadets were to concentrate on advanced studies in one of the professional fields such as fortification, artillery, cavalry, infantry, or civil service.

This plan for dividing cadets and subjects into four classes was never actually implemented. Rather, the rules for the “general examination” (described later in this chapter) suggested another way of dividing them into groups. According to the rules, all the subjects taught at the Corps were split into five broad areas: 1) military drill, dancing, fencing, horseback riding and drawing; 2) languages and composition; 3) history (including “universal history” and history of the Holy Roman Empire), political and physical geography; 4) mathematical subjects, including arithmetic, geometry, mechanics, fortification, and artillery; and 5) “philosophical sciences,” that is, logics, moral philosophy, physics, and jurisprudence.

323 PSZ #6050; RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1632, ll. 26-37.
324 PSZ #5881.
325 PSZ #7369.
This description rather accurately outlines the general structure of the curriculum at the Corps in one major respect: rather than moving from one class to another every year or two, cadets were expected to move up a number of separate “chains” of subjects. A cadet, for example, had to stay in arithmetic class until, in von Münich’s words, he “completely masters one subject, so he can move to a higher one.” Upon mastering arithmetic, a cadet would move up to geometry and so on, all the way up to artillery. Meanwhile, in languages, he could remain in the lowest class all this time. Each cadet moved from one class to the next on his own, when he was ready. This was a somewhat unusual arrangement; it might be cautiously suggested that it reflected the influence of Francke who, as described in Part I, pioneered such an approach. There was, moreover, no fixed course of study at the Corps. Rather, cadets left the Corps at the age of twenty or twenty-one. By this age, the authorities believed, the worthy ones would have learned all they needed, and unworthy ones – all they could. In other words, the cadets’ comparative merit was expressed not only in their grades, but also in subjects they managed to move up to.

A good example is mathematics, which was a core subject at the Corps, taken by all cadets without exception. Following Petrine tradition, mathematics was viewed as a key element in the education of a military officer, and von Münich himself casually noted on the margins of one report that geometry is “necessary for every military man.” The documents of Catherine’s Legislative Commission clearly demonstrate that by the 1760s belief that mathematics was a sine qua non of a

326 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1737, l. 10-11.
327 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1743, l. 17.
nobleman’s education was deeply ingrained in the minds of the nobility. At the Corps mathematical subjects formed a chain of consecutive classes starting from basic arithmetic through geometry and various sections of trigonometry to fortification and artillery (and, ultimately, to “optics” and “mechanics,” which were hardly ever taken by any cadets). This view of a set of subjects forming an ascending scale was codified in the Corps’ charter, which specified that the instructors in mathematics were to teach “arithmetic, geometry, mechanics, architecture, fortification, geography, parts of physics, astronomy, etc.” Geometry (together with drawing) also served as an introduction to geodesy and mapmaking. While there were no classes in these fields taught at the Corps, von Münnich wanted some cadets to be sent annually for “practice” in the summertime, so that all graduates could potentially be used as geodesists if needs be. In 1737 such “practice” involved twelve cadets making a map of von Münnich’s estate. Some cadets later participated in making a map of St.Petersburg. In the 1730s graduating cadets were assigned to the construction of the Ladoga Canal, and in the early 1750s a large number of graduates were assigned as mapmakers and surveyors to the General Land Survey.

Yet, the teaching of mathematics was also structured in such a way that it became a scale for measuring one’s worth rather than a unifying cultural experience or common technical skill. Not only mathematical subjects themselves were arranged into a sort of chain, but also each subject was in turn divided into separate and consecutive steps. In lower arithmetic classes these steps were simply “multiplication” or “division.” In fortification, for example, “attacking fortresses,” “defending

328 See M.D. Kurmacheva, "Problemy obrazovaniia v Ulozhennoi komissii 1767 g.," in Dvor’anstvo i krepostnoi stroi Rossii XVI-XVIII v. (Moscow, 1975).

329 PSZ #5881.

330 See, for example, RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1784, ll. 3-13.
fortresses,” and “drawing regular fortresses” were separate steps, while artillery consisted of “studying various types of guns,” “drawing tools belonging to guns,” etc. Rather than giving a student a grade for mastering each of these steps, teachers simply indicated how far he was able to move.

Other subjects were taught in a similar fashion. The teaching of foreign languages was divided into separate, consecutive steps. First of all, passive and active knowledge of a foreign language were viewed as distinct skills, as was the ability to speak. Thus the Corps’s records contain lists of “German cadets who study Russian language in the morning hours, as well as reading and writing [in Russian].” On their way to mastery of a foreign language, cadets passed through a number of stages, including “learning the alphabet,” “learning to read po slogam,” “writing regulations,” “learning vocabulary,” “learning dialogs [by heart],” and “taking dictation.” At the top were such categories as “explaining from one language to another” (most likely, the first stage of learning to translate, explaining the essence of a given text in a student’s own words), “understanding [easy] authors,” “translating easy authors,” “translating” into and from one’s own language, and finally, translating from one foreign language into another. Parallel to this went such elements of mastering the written language as “learning style,” “learning grammar,” and “writing letters.” Once again, all of those were viewed not as learning techniques, but as separate stages. In other words, one went on to “learn dialogues” only after learning “vocabulary,” and taking dictation was quite separate from, and came much earlier than, learning grammar. Since there was no fixed course of study, it was very common and, indeed, normal for cadets to leave the Corps having learned the “dialogues” without ever making it to grammar.
The most striking examples, perhaps, are history and geography. In history (that is, the history of the Roman and Holy Roman Empires) rather than receiving a general overview first, the students moved from one reign to another in chronological order. Accordingly, their exam record instead of grades include descriptions like “knows up to Charlemagne,” “knows up to Titus,” or “knows up to the division of [Eastern and Western Roman] Empires.” In geography students began with the study of the globe and parts of the world. Only after this did they move on to the study of maps of separate European countries, so that their exam records might read “learned the map of Italy and moved on to Spain.” It was perhaps in reaction to this situation that Professor Grech emphasized in 1750 that a new geography textbook he was working on was

To be written in such a way that for beginners there would be a short extract, or the most important places and events from the broader geography printed in big letters, and each land is to have a note on its ancient and medieval history, in other words, in what state it was in ancient and medieval times.\(^3\)

The big question, however, is what were the social implications of this way of organizing the curriculum. As such, it was not terribly novel. In the early 1720s Peter I himself initially ordered the authorities at the Naval Academy (where mathematics formed the backbone of the curriculum) to teach all subjects simultaneously, setting aside one day a week for each of them. Peter, evidently, saw the possibility to teach them parallel to each other. After his death, however, the Admiralty, upon the recommendation of the teachers from the Naval Academy, overrode this order and approved the teaching of mathematical subjects one after the other, as consecutive steps on the same ladder.\(^4\) By doing so it reproduced, in a way, the approach used in European universities since the Middle Ages (and practiced in Russia at the Moscow

\(^3\) RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2316, ll. 1-2.

\(^4\) Veselago, Ocherk, 95-97.
Slavobic-Greek-Latin Academy and other church-run schools), where the seven “arts” were taught in a particular sequence as consecutive steps on one ladder, each preparing the way for the next one. In the case of the Naval Academy the humanities were replaced by similarly interlinked mathematical subjects. Equally traditional, if not conservative, were the absence of a regular yearly progression from one class to another and the practice of keeping students in one class until they achieved complete mastery of a given subject. The real novelty, I would argue, was combining this approach with the rigidly hierarchical system of the Table of Ranks. To put it simply, medieval universities did not award military ranks on the basis of academic progress, while the Cadet Corps did.

* * *

The single most important book on education and morals in the eighteenth century Russia was, arguably, Fénelon’s *Adventures of Telemachus*. It went through at least four separate translations and appeared in numerous editions. Its first Russian translation, dating from 1734, was published by the Corps in two volumes in 1747. Eventually, a second translation by Cadet Petr Zhelezniakov was also published at the Corps. One of the central works of the century (according to one estimate, the second most popular book in France after the Bible), Fenelon’s *Telemachus* was the story of a prince who in the course of his travels came to view himself as God’s instrument in achieving public happiness. Included in this treatise on the nature of

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333 The delay in publication is explained by the fact that the first translator was, most likely, A.F. Khrushchev, a member of A.P. Volynskii’s circle beheaded in the last year of Anna’s reign. On Fenelon in Russia in the 1730s, see Freydank, “Some Remarks”; A.S. Orlov, “’Tilemakhiada’ V.K. Trediakovskogo,” in *XVIII vek. Sbornik statei i materialov* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1935): 5-56; Kelly, *Refining Russia*, 19-20. For translations, see SK #7708 in 1747 (second edition in 1767, SK #7709); SK #7712 in 1788-1789); SK #7712 in 1797-1800; SK #7714 in 1786 (second edition in 1788, SK #7715); SK #7716 in 1799. There was, of course, also the *Tilemakhiada* by Vasilii Trediakovskii.

kingship is a discussion of the nature of merit: Fenelon insists that there should be
adopted “constant principles” and “fixed standards” for judging it. According to him,
“the essential purpose of the government is to discern well the different characters of
mind in order to chose and employ [men] according to their talents.”

This was exactly the purpose that guided the organization of the educational
process at the Corps: an extensive system of monitoring, assessing, and examining the
students was created in order to measure their “worth,” according to the standards set
by the state. The Corps’s charter promised that the students would be awarded ranks
“depending on their progress and their worth (po dostoinstvu).” On a certain level this
approach is certainly similar to Peter’s supposedly meritocratic Table of Ranks. Yet,
although the Table did organize all the ranks in state service hierarchically, I would
argue that it lacked the key elements of any meritocratic system – the precise
definition of merit and the means of discovering and measuring it. Moreover, we do
not find in the wording of Peter’s decrees any attempt to use the occasion to admonish
his subjects to be better servants, besides simply asserting that seniority in service and
in social context is to be defined by rank, and not by some other criteria. In the Corps’
charter, however, the government explicitly pledged to take note of one’s worth and to
measure it, thus encouraging students to apply themselves. This, in turn, required a
system of assessment that made each person’s worth obvious to everyone, especially
his comrades, for a just reward for one of the cadets was supposed, at the same time,
to have a pedagogic impact on all the others. Such a system had to be carefully
regulated and public.

The central event in the academic life of the Corps was a periodic “general
examination,” which served as a focus for the Corps’s various attempts to monitor and

335 Quoted in Smith, The Culture of Merit, 193-194.
assess its students. According to the Corps’s charter, the cadets were to be examined three times a year in all their subjects. Once a year there was to be a “general” examination in the sovereign’s own presence or, if the sovereign was unable to attend, in the presence of his “ministers, generals, and other church and secular dignitaries.” The sovereign, alas, never made it to the exam. Depending upon their performance on the exam, the cadets were to be promoted to the next class or to receive their commissions.336 This provision of the Corps’s charter, however, was never observed in practice, and there was no “general examination” until 1737. In his report to the Senate dated August 2, 1737, Director von Tettau337 explained the reasons for such negligence. The academic backgrounds of 360, who had been initially accepted, were so varied that it proved very difficult to divide them into classes. Some of them, moreover, were approaching the age of twenty, and to teach them foreign languages and humanities would have been, according to the common wisdom of the day, a waste of time and money. Therefore, they were given a sort of a crash course in basic subjects necessary for military men: reading and writing in their native languages, arithmetic, some geometry and “gentlemanly exercises” (fencing, dancing and horseback riding) – and were then sent into the army. Even after that, the age, origin (Russian and Baltic German) and previous training of the remaining cadets was still too diverse for them to be easily assigned to classes.

Yet, the authorities felt a need “to turn this endless confusion into order and to sort all the cadets out.” Two teachers charged with this task spent all of 1733 trying to divide the cadets into classes, but to no avail. After this failure Captain de Bodan,

336 PSZ #6050.

337 Abel Friedrich von Tettau, captain of the Guards, was appointed Director in November 1734. RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1706, l. 1.
with the assistance of Captain de Raden,338 labored long and hard to compile a 
“general table” of the entire Corps. This “consisted of 36 tables where all 360 cadets 
were listed according to their [progress in] studies (naukam), worthiness 
(dostoïnstvu), sharpness (ostrote) and seniority (starshinstvu).” After that the “ober-
professor” was charged with keeping the table up to date on the basis of monthly 
reports produced by the teachers (on the cadets’ academic progress) and officers (on 
their behavior).339

The issue of the “general examination” came up again in 1737. On February 9 
of that year the government issued a decree, according to which all the noble minors 
were to undergo examinations at the ages twelve and sixteen (see the detailed 
discussion in the last chapter of Part II).340 As far as the Corps was concerned, this 
attempt led to another decree, issued on March 30, 1737, when the government 
announced that the cadets should also undergo an examination at the same age as all 
other young nobles. As with the other young nobles, the second examination was to 
be the day of final reckoning, when the worthy youths were separated from the 
unworthy:

those who wasted time in hanging out (guliannii) and other inappropriate 
behavior and learned nothing should upon reaching the age of sixteen be sent 
to the Admiralty and drafted [into the navy] as sailors without right of

338 These two officers played the key role in composing the “General Table” and “sorting all 
the cadets out,” so their personalities are of some interest. Captain de Bodan had, in fact, previously 
served in Prussia in the “Cadets de Prince Royale.” Note, however, that he was not recruited because of 
this special expertise. He first arrived in Mittau in the late 1720s, where he obtained a letter of 
recommendation from Anna and traveled to Moscow on his own. He served in the army and 
volunteered to be transferred to the Corps. RGADA, f. 11, op. 1, d. 405, chast’ 1, ll. 213-214 ob. 
Friedrich von Raden (d. 1744), however, was recruited by von Luberas directly from Prussian service. 
According to his resume, he had studied at Konigsberg, which was increasingly coming under the 
influence of the Halle Pietists. In 1738, after the transfer of de Bodan to the army, he became the 
major, i.e. the senior executive officer, at the Corps. RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2515, ll. 10-12.

339 Materialy, 451-456.

340 PSZ #7171.
promotion. For no use is to be expected from those who did not show any zeal in mastering such easy and quite necessary subjects.

This examination was viewed as an event of state importance and was meant to be a public display of academic merit, since it was to be held in the presence of one senator and teachers from the Academy of Science, Naval Academy and Engineering School. To make a more profound impact upon the cadets, this decree was to be read to them twice a week. Yet only three months later, on July 6, 1737, this measure was declared insufficient to monitor the cadets’ progress, to encourage them to exhibit more “zeal,” and insure the timely expulsion of those deemed incapable of improvement. The government decided that it was not enough to examine cadets only when they reached the age of twelve and sixteen, for in this case “cadets’ behavior and success in studies would not be known until they reached these ages, and so many of them could waste time or spend it in an inappropriate behavior.” For this reason “in order to better maintain order and to encourage cadets to study” and to make sure that the Corps “was useful to the State and bore due fruit to the State,” it was found necessary to examine all the cadets twice a year, on March 15 and September 15. In this case the examinations would better serve their purpose, which was to urge the cadets to study and to “find out who has ability for study and who does not.” The latter were considered unworthy of “wasting money on.”

In its decree the Senate charged the Academy of Sciences with drawing the rules and procedures for the “general examination” at the Corps. First of all, the teachers were to prepare reports about their students and to submit them to the examiners beforehand, so that at the actual exams they could compare them to the cadets’ performance and better decide what they had learned and “whether they have

341 PSZ #7213.
342 PSZ #7313.
fulfilled their duty.” When the day of the exam came, the cadets were to be examined not class by class, but rather subject by subject, so as to make their comparative worthiness more visible. This way, “those who show more ability in some subject as compared to others [cadets] could be recognized and judged according to their merit.” Cadets were asked questions in front of the examiners, by their own teachers, who had to follow the textbooks they had been using in class; occasionally the examiners were also expected to ask questions. The ultimate goal of the exam was to make the comparative merit of the cadets visible and thus to divide them into the worthy and unworthy ones – “to separate those cadets who have the ability for studies from those who do not, and to find out who applies himself and who does not.”

Soon, however, it became apparent that this examination format was impractical. In particular, the requirement that one of the senators be present at the exam was felt to be an onerous task for the Senate members as they had numerous other business matters to attend to, and also because most of them, being old Petrine hands and “not having the education, necessary for this examination, except for military drill,” were hardly competent to preside over such an event. There was only one person in the entire Senate, Privy Councilor Naryshkin who was considered by his colleagues to be sufficiently educated to make any sense of what was going on at the exam, but he was overloaded with other commissions. In 1740 it was decided in that the government should be represent at the examinations by von Münnich himself. A more serious problem was the fact that the examinations took too much time. The first “general examination” started on September 21, 1737, and only ended on December 23. In 1738 and 1739 cadets were only examined once a year, and it was not until 1740 that two exams were actually held in one year. There are strong reasons to suspect, however, that from the beginning the “general examination”

343 PSZ #7369.
344 PSZ #8253.
345 Luzanov, Shl’akhetnyi kadetskii korpus, 45-46.
ceased to be a public evaluation and turned into an empty formality. The examination of 1737 was viewed as disastrously time-consuming, and so the next year, thanks to a “newly invented method,” the exam took only eight days. Thus on October 23 in just four hours, from 2 pm to 6 pm, the Corps’s authorities somehow managed to examine 88 cadets in Russian reading and writing, 68 cadets in Russian grammar and composition, and 242 cadets in German grammar, writing and translation from that language into Russian. This newly-invented method, apparently, consisted of merely reading out loud and approving en masse evaluations of individual cadets prepared by their teachers.

Nevertheless, the best cadets were to be given an opportunity to display their worthiness. Already the founding charter specified that the cadets who received commissions were expected to make a public speech.346 So, even though the examination lost its public character, the Corps’ authorities had some cadets demonstrate their achievements at the beginning of the exam. Cadet Adam Olsufiev delivered an “oration of his own composition” in French, Georg Kaiserling – in Latin, and Gustav Udam – in Russian. Later on Ivan Melissino and Frederick Magnus von Fok also delivered their “orations” in Latin, while jurisprudence examination concluded with “orations” delivered in German by Jackob Lilienfeldt and in Latin by Johann Heinrich Rosen, Heinrich Voldemar Rosen and Franz Lintmeier.347 Merit had to be displayed publicly, after all.

346 PSZ #6050.

347 RGADA, f. 248, kniga 396, ll. 543-551.
Chapter 8

“Genie, That Is, the Natural Inclination”:

Nature, Merit, and the Definition of Nobility

The two most crucial conceptual innovations evident in pedagogical practices employed at the Cadet Corps were the notions of natural “ability” and “inclination,” absent, for all practical purposes, from Petrine educational and administrative practices. In the late 1720s the anonymous author of the very first Cadet Corps project suggested to select for the study of “military action” those young nobles who “have genie [zheni], that is, the natural inclination” for that profession. Further on, the author wrote about the need to “discover the pupils’ inclinations,” which were to form the basis for composing the schedule of classes. The use of the French word is quite characteristic: the concept was being directly borrowed from modern European discourse. Indeed, the author of a contemporary French dictionary wrote in his entry on Génie that “Les Anciens faisoient un Deu du genie, mais parmi nous c’est un certain esprit naturel qui nous donne une pente à une chose. … Inclination naturel d’une personne.” For late seventeenth-century French authors, the notion of génie was directly linked to the notion of naissance, which, in turn, “evoked ‘moral’ inclination and the set of behaviors appropriate for those inclinations.” According

348 RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 76, l. 1ob.


to Abbé Bellegarde whose book on “perfect education” appeared in Russian translation in 1747 as Sovershennoe vospitanie detei, “virtue is the inclination, or movement of the soul, towards goodness … if a man is so inclined he will not move away from the straight path.” As demonstrated in Chapter 1, this notion of individual abilities and inclination was a necessary element of the complex series of ideas that underpinned the general design of the Cadet Corps.

In Europe, however, these concepts were more or less wedded to the notion of positive family influence. Traditionally virtue and martial spirit were thought to be passed through blood, and, thus, inherited by the nobles. However, the advent of the concept of honnête homme, which was defined through essentially moral characteristics, the nobility was able to adapt. As David A. Bien has demonstrated, the spread of Lockean ideas actually allowed noble theorists to argue that the virtuous environment in the noble households endowed children with virtues and inclinations that were unavailable to the offspring of common families. This was not the case in Russia. Theorists of the nobility, such as Saltykov and Tatishchev, abhorred the detrimental influence of an unreformed Russian household on the morals of young nobles. In fact, one of the main purposes of the Noble Cadet Corps was to remove noble youngsters from the family. Within such a conceptual framework, the ruthless application of notions of “ability” and “inclination” at the Corps undermined, it would seem, the notion of the nobility of birth.


The purpose of the “general examination” at the Corps, and of the system of monitoring and assessing in general, was not only to measure the students’ progress, but also to determine who is unfit for study, to “find out who has ability for study and who does not,”\textsuperscript{354} or, in the words of another document, “to separate those cadets who have the ability for studies from those who do not.”\textsuperscript{355} Earlier, the Corps’ charter proposed to divide the senior cadets into specialized classes geared towards different branches of service according to “inclination [for a particular subject], application, and comprehension” demonstrated by them in lower classes.\textsuperscript{356} Thus, one’s “nature” was to decide one’s choice of career and one’s station in life. Cadets had to be sorted out, and born cavalrymen were to be separated from born civil servants. The founders of the Corps thought it necessary to explain, somewhat defensively, that the new institutions would teach “political and civil” subjects because “not every man is inclined by nature toward military service.”\textsuperscript{357}

That the state was willing to recognize “nature” as a legitimate excuse for a nobleman to pursue a civil, rather than military, career was a radical departure from the Petrine practice of universal and indiscriminate mobilization. At the same time, the authorities never offered a comprehensive definition of what the “inclination” (or “nature”) was. The early eighteenth-century usage of the word “nature” [\textit{priroda}] and “natural” [\textit{prirodnyi}] suggests a multitude of meanings, all of which refer to the notion of inborn and inherited qualities. One could be described as a Georgian, a

\textsuperscript{354} PSZ #7313.

\textsuperscript{355} PSZ #7369.

\textsuperscript{356} PSZ #5881.

\textsuperscript{357} PSZ #5811.
Tatar, or a foreigner by “nature,” that is by birth; it could also refer to an ethnic race. Alternatively, one could “remember his peasant nature” [krestianskuiu prirodu], or be a “natural nobleman” [prirodeny dvorianin]. It could also refer to moral qualities, as one could be deemed “evil by nature,” or even a “traitor and thief by nature.” Finally, “natural” might mean something inherited in a very direct, legal sense, or pertaining to a clan, or rod, like a “natural” family seal [prirodnaia pechat’].

At the Cadet Corps the notions of nature and inclination could be interpreted in a number of ways. Regular examinations would be held so that the cadets’ “natural inclinations can be seen and [they] are assigned to classes accordingly.” Thus, natural inclination could refer to “ability,” or aptitude for a particular subject, and, for example, Prince Aleksandr Dolgorukov is noted, among others, for his “exceptional understanding of languages.” The connection between a perceived natural ability and future career is most clearly expressed in the program for the training of civil servants at the Corps. In August 1740 Prince Trubetskoi, the Prokurator-General, wrote to the Senate suggesting that twenty-four cadets of “Russian nationality” be selected for an intensive program that due to the extreme shortage of qualified personnel in the civil administration. Appropriately, they were to concentrate on “the parts of mathematic and jurisprudence necessary for civil service” and relieved from other classes, military drill and other duties at the Corps so they could enter the service as soon as possible. Significantly, candidates for this program were to be

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358 Slovar’ russkogo iazyka XVIII veka. Vol.19, 266-267. Note that at this stage the words priroda and prirodeny do not seem to have acquired the modern meanings of “nature” as environment, or “natural” as opposed to “artificial.” For the uses of “nature” in the early eighteenth-century Europe, see Roger Smith, “Language of Human Nature,” in Christopher Fox, Roy Porter, Robert Wokler (eds.), Inventing Human Science: Eighteenth-Century Domains (Los Angeles, 1995): 88-111

359 PSZ #5811.

360 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2205.
selected from among those who showed “natural inclination” for civil service.361

Sometimes, however, the authorities’ belief in natural ability resulted in a much more narrowly determined future for a student. The authorities, for example, would attempt to groom an individual student for a specific job (and social status), for which he was “naturally” fit. In this case he could quite literally inherit his father’s profession. Thus, Fedor Pavlovskii (entered the Corps in 1739), a son of a translator at the College of Foreign Affairs, was accepted into the Corps at the request of that College with the purpose of training him as a translator. He showed aptitude for languages (besides Russian he spoke Turkish and Walachian), and was expected to master Latin, French, and Italian at the Corps. 362

Moreover, one’s “ability” (or lack thereof) could decide his future in a much more dramatic way. Thus, in 1750 Director von Zigheim suggested that four cadets be relieved from studying “civil subjects.” Two of them were described as “having neither comprehension, nor diligence,” while two others “besides having the aforementioned natural defects, also show no interest whatsoever in Latin.” 363 In this case, the lack of interests in a subject is merged with a lack of “comprehension” and “diligence” and interpreted as something of a “natural defect.” On the other hand, Dmitrii Taganov, baptized son of a Muslim Caucasian aristocrat (murza), who had been sent to the Corps by the government in 1748, not only knew “Tatar,” his mother tongue, but also showed an “inclination for other subjects as well.” This is why the Senate decided to send him to the Corps, where “being under supervision he could further excel in his studies and also learn other civil sciences, so that later he could be

361 RGADA, f. 248, kniga 396, l. 519.
362 RGADA, f. 177, op. 1, d. 70, ll. 1-3.
363 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2327, l. 2
fit to serve at the College of Foreign Affairs.”364 After graduating Taganov was assigned to be a translator at the Astrakhan garrison, and in the 1780s he went on to become a prominent Russian administrator in the semi-conquered territory of Kabarda in the Northern Caucasus.

The notion that one’s ability to study is determined by “natural,” or physiological causes was, of course, widespread at that time. Following the common wisdom of his day Tatishchev, for example, divided a man’s life into periods according to physiological processes in his body, which in turn determined his mental abilities (see Chapter 4). He wrote that the early years of life were the best for learning foreign languages, while after the age of twenty one was no longer able to study effectively, since the slowing down of the flow of liquids (or “humors”) in his body limited a student’s capacity to absorb new information.365 The Corps’s authorities followed this rule, and in 1734 von Münnich instructed the director that there were some cadets who were worthy, yet due to their excessive age they were “not receptive to any subjects besides military drill and riding.” These cadets are described as being well behaved and diligent, yet the sentence is short: because of their “excessive” age they would not be able to learn and thus must leave the Corps. Among those thus condemned we even find the twenty-one year old Count Martyn Skavronskii, the nephew of the late Catherine I, Peter I’s second wife.366

364 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2197, l. 121-121 ob.


366 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1712, l.37.
The notion of inclination, however, was not clear-cut. In general, authorities believed that a bad student was capable of improvement, and the purpose of the Corps, as mentioned earlier, was to help such an improvement by shielding a youngster from harmful influences, by subjecting him to discipline and regulation, and by “encouraging” him. This notion of potential improvement is clear in the discussions of whether there was any “hope” that a particular cadet might change his conduct. In fact, the duty of both the teachers and the company officers was to indicate in their reports not only the student’s grades, but also whether there was such a “hope.” The authorities took pains to distinguish between those who had a chance to improve and those who did not. In March 1753, the High Commander Prince Iusupov wrote to the director von Zigheim pointing out that

It is completely unclear from the various reports and attestations I received from you concerning those cadets at the Corps who are unable to understand what is taught to them [непонятное] … whether there is any hope that they might comprehend any useful learning in the future. … [Therefore you should] submit immediately a comprehensive report on those mentioned earlier who still show no improvement, as well as on others who do not understand what is being taught.

At the end, a number of cadets were expelled from the Corps for the “lack of comprehension,” while ten others were warned that they should “apply themselves to their studies diligently and act respectably in everything.”367 Altogether, out of 59 cadets expelled from the Corps in the 1730s-1750s for various offences and transgressions, twenty were expelled for their lack of abilities (eight in the 1730s, two in the 1740s, and nine in the 1750s). Among others, cadets were being expelled with the following explanations: “к наукам ненадежен” (“no hope [for him to succeed] in studies”), “за негонность к наукам” (“unfit for studies”), “за неспособность к наукам”

367 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2599.
(“has no ability for studies”), “za neponiatie” (“lacks comprehension”). Membership in the new, reformed elite was thus a matter of an inborn ability, of “nature.”

* * *

Besides the absence of “ability,” students were often expelled from the Corps for committing serious crimes (or repeated minor offences). The authorities’ reaction to these crimes allows us further insights into the connection between behavior and “nature” in the minds of the Corps’s founders. As might be expected, young nobles often violated various rules and regulations – and were punished accordingly. The Corps’ papers for 1744 (which seems to be typical in other respects) show 220 instances (involving 171 cadets) of officers taking various disciplinary measures against cadets such as various forms of arrest and corporal punishment. The most common offences were innocent “laziness,” as well as talking in class or in church. The list also includes all kinds of transgressions found in boarding schools, from “smoking on the porch” and “playing cards,” to spending a night outside the Corps and “swearing in the classroom.” On a more childish note, Osip Kakhovskoi “wrapped himself up with bed sheets and tried to scare the sentinels.” At the same time we also find instances of more serious offences, such as two cadets “breaking each other’s heads with stones,” or bullying, which was apparently quite widespread among the cadets. Grigorii Chirikov, for example, “forced another cadet to stand extra hours on guard,” while Petr Melessino is noted for beating up Corporal Leiman.368

Yet, some crimes were noticeably more disturbing for the Corps’ authorities, and theft was, perhaps, the most serious of them all. According to Peter’s Military Regulation of 1716, it was punishable by death (for stealing from one’s own

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368 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1964.
“comrade”), or by running the gauntlet six times (if the value of stolen items was less than twenty rubles). On the one hand, these draconian provisions were never implemented at the Cadet Corps. On the other hand, it is clear that in the eyes of the Corps’ authorities, theft was something qualitatively different from other transgressions, in that it was something viewed as undermining the very mission of the institution.

Consider the case of Cadet Petr Vladislavlev, who was found guilty in 1749 of stealing from various individuals. His case led to further investigation, and as a result a dozen other cadets and their servants were implicated in stealing, buying stolen items, or knowing about these crimes and not reporting them. Some, like Sergeants Skripitsyn and Rossi, were demoted for a few months merely for buying “suspicious” items. They, for all practical purposes, were punished for negligence, for as NCOs they had to be aware of their comrades’ criminal activities and should have stopped them. As for the rest, however, their punishment was heavier. The Corps’s authorities argued that due to their theft, and also to other misbehavior, and lack of zeal for things useful, and also so that the other youth at the Corps, having observed this punishment, better refrain from all the kinds of mischief and behavior that are indecent and inappropriate for noblemen … they, as unworthy of living among other noblemen [iako nedostoinye shl’akhetnogo obschezhitiia], are liable to be stripped of ranks and expelled from the Corps.

This, of course, also implied “unmerciful” beating and exile into the navy as common sailors or to the “faraway regiments” as privates. Those who were less guilty were

369 PSZ #3006.

370 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2233, ll. 132-133.
transferred to the St. Petersburg garrison school, or to the Artillery school. The Senate upheld this last sentence.  

In this preamble we see an obvious attempt to define nobility as a lifestyle that requires a certain type of behavior, to instill into cadets a sense of noble honor. As mentioned earlier, this moral definition of the nobility was already mentioned in the founding charter, that demanded that the Corps’ authorities monitor the “mores, habits, and deeds” of the cadets, so that they “behave according to the demands of virtue, politeness, due humility, and honor, while lies, unfaithfulness, and other vices inappropriate to nobility were rooted out from them early on.” Cadets were expected to behave nobly, and that is why theft was seen to be especially appalling to the authorities. On one occasion, five cadets who had run away home from the Corps, rather than being expelled, were sent for six months to the St. Petersburg garrison school to stay there “together with the soldiers’ children,” receiving the same food and money allowance as they did. Here is an attempt not so much to punish as to make the offenders appreciate the difference between their status and that of the lower ranks of society. Altogether in the 1730s-1750s twenty four cadets were expelled for bad conduct (nine in the 1730s, nine in the 1740s, and six in the 1750s). Among them four were expelled specifically for theft, one for running away, one for drunkenness, and one for marrying without permission. As for others, they were expelled for “bad behavior,” “inappropriate behavior,” or, tellingly, for “behavior inappropriate for a nobleman.” A notable example is 19-year old Ivan Sytin whose uniform was found to have changed its color in 1749 because he had vomited on it

371 Ibid, ll. 146 ob-147.
372 PSZ #5881.
373 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1661, ll. 53-55 ob., 117-117 ob.
after drinking to excess. The Corps authorities pointed out that “the above mentioned drunkenness, inappropriate for noble youth, cannot be tolerated,” and argued for his expulsion.\textsuperscript{374}

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Thus, similarly to one’s ability to succeed academically, one’s ability to observe and follow the rules of noble life was also explained by his “natural” inclinations. In fact, an “inclination” for unacceptable conduct and lack of “inclination” for studies often – although, by no means always – went hand in hand.

In their report to the Senate concerning cadets implicated in the Vladislavlev case, the Corps officials pointed out that these cadets “evidently due to thinking about, and an inclination towards, bad behavior rather than useful learning” also turned out to be “negligent and lacking zeal [in their studies].” They were therefore were considered “unworthy of continuing their studies at the Corps among the ranks of honest nobles.”\textsuperscript{375} Referring to another cadet, Rusakov, authorities argued that his bad “inclinations” made him irredeemable: “there is no hope that he will refrain from such behavior in the future for after being punished many times he has not changed for the better …and he could not be restrained for he is hopelessly stuck in such behavior.”\textsuperscript{376}

This was a radical approach indeed. It would seem to open up the possibility that if a noble failed to behave in a way that was expected from an “honest noblemen,” it meant that he was not an “honest nobleman” by nature. In other words, nobility could be interpreted as determined not by the fact of being born in a certain family as such, but rather by “inclination.” This could not be established a priori, but rather had to be

\textsuperscript{374} RGADA, f. 248, kniga 3530, ll. 369-375. The Senate, though, decided that three months of arrest and a strict warning would be sufficient in this case.

\textsuperscript{375} RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2233, ll. 87-87 ob.

\textsuperscript{376} RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1665.
discerned through continuous observation and examination. Peter I, as we know, attempted to force all the nobles to study. Here we see the Corps’ authorities, for all practical purposes, implying that those who do not want to, or cannot study, are not nobles at all. In France, Lockean ideas were employed by the nobility to justify its status. In Russia, in the absence of the notion of beneficial family influences, they, in fact, undermined it.
Chapter 9

The Science of Encouragement:

Human Nature and Methods of Governing

Given the coherence of educational policies and practices pursued at the Cadet Corps, it is pertinent to ask whether and to what degree the basic assumptions about human “nature,” abilities and “inclinations” also informed other government policies pursued during Anna’s reign. Furthermore, if they did, how does this change our overall understanding of post-Petrine history? In this chapter, I address this issue by focusing on the policies pursued by Anna’s government in the fields of education and noble service, and especially on the reform of 1736-1737. On the one hand, these reforms established a coherent system of registering young nobles for service, which also regulated their education, something that had not been done by Peter. On the other hand, these reforms also limited obligatory noble service to 25 years, thus serving as a key milestone on the road to the “emancipation of the nobility.” This system (with notable corrections in the early 1740s) remained in force until 1762, thus setting up the framework within which the Russian nobility operated for nearly three decades. It was also within this framework that all the key actors of Catherine’s reign grew up and entered service.

These policies should also be viewed within the framework of broader cultural change in the 1730s in Russia that reflected, of course, a pan-European discovery of sensibility. In her study of the Russian poetry of that decade Elena Pogosian describes what she calls the "official culture of 'sensitivity'" [chuvstvitel'nosti] cultivated at Anna's court. Anna herself routinely displayed emotions during official events. Vasiliy
Trediakovskii, a leading poet, in letters to his high-ranking patrons wrote about being "enchanted" by these dignitaries, about being "desperate" because of his inability to see them, etc. In his dedication to Ernst Biron, Trediakovskii described the "true zeal in [his] heart" that moved him to glorify both the favorite and the empress: until now, the poet claimed, he "venerated the virtues" of Biron silently, yet now he could not "contain" himself from expressing these feelings publicly, etc. According to Pogosian, this culture was defined by the "obligatory emotional and sincere participation of a subject in the ritualized political life." Official poetry of the day (including the addresses presented to the empress by various individuals and institutions) emphasized the sincerity of civic feelings experienced by the authors: the poets routinely juxtaposed their own "true" and "sincere" adoration of the empress to the formulaic congratulations of "other" authors. In a New Year address (1736) the representatives of the Cadet Corps claimed that "our very nature opens our mouths to congratulate You and to wish You health from our sincere hearts." The cadet poets were sending "the muses" away: their assistance was not needed, since the muses were accustomed to flattery. The same feelings were also supposed to motivate nobles in their service. An address from the Cadet Corps, for example, emphasized the personal and emotional connection between the empress and her officers. The cadets claimed to be serving out of sincere "loyalty" and "zeal" further enhanced by imperial generosity towards them. Thus, in their focus on individual “inclinations” and the need to “encourage” true “zeal” in servitors the Corps’ officials were broadly in tune with the official culture of the reign.

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377 Pogosian, Vostorg russkoj ody, 23–84
The personality of Field-Marshal von Münich looms large in the history of the 1730s. Besides numerous other reforms of the Russian military, introduced by him in the 1730s, in his capacity as the President of the Military College he also directed the drafting of the central documents of the 1736-1737 reform of noble service. Von Münich did not produce any theoretical tracts, but one detect three key intellectual themes that seem to be significant for understanding his overall thinking. The first one is his familiarity with the works of Fénelon. In July 1712, while a young major in the Cassel infantry (serving with the army of Marlborough), von Münich was severely wounded in battle, taken prisoner of war by the French and kept, of all places, in Cambrai. It was during this period that the officer got personally acquainted with Archbishop Fénelon and became a great admirer of his ideas and writings. Subsequently they even exchanged a number of letters.378 As is evident from the memoirs of his son, these meetings made a sufficiently strong impression on the future Field-Marshal.379 As we saw in the previous chapter, the Adventures of Telemachus was one of the key texts at the Cadet Corps (although this was not the only channel through which Fenelons’ ideas came to Russia). The second important element of von Münich’s intellectual background was his strong Protestant piety. Out of 157 volumes in his library, seven were writings by Luther.380 Beginning in 1728, von Münich played a very active role in the affairs of the Lutheran congregation in St.Petersburg,381 and was, apparently, at least in some way connected

378 Ley, Le Maréchal de Münich, 9-14.
379 Ernst Minikh, "Zapiski," 321.
380 Luppov, Kniga v Rossii v poslepetrovskoe vremia, 197-199.
to the Pietist circles in both Halle and in Russia.\textsuperscript{382} Finally, with his strong interest in artillery and engineering, von Münich was an avid reader of Blondel, Saint-Remy, and above all, Vauban.\textsuperscript{383} All of these authors were extensively used at the Corps, with the Russian translation of Saint-Remy being published in 1732-1733.\textsuperscript{384} Vauban, of course, was not only an engineer, but was also – along with Fénelon– a leading theoretician of the new science of government that placed an emphasis on measuring, assessing, and quantifying subjects, and the need for “true” virtue and moral restoration. These two issues were closely interconnected, for the success of any moral reform rested on the ability of the sovereign to know and to properly assess the virtues and abilities of her subjects.\textsuperscript{385}

This science of government, it appears, informed the policies pursued by von Münich and his circle. Highly noteworthy in this light is a letter in French sent to von Münich on November 21, 1731, by Baron Pott von Luberas, the first director of the Cadet Corps. Congratulating von Münich on his latest promotion, the baron opined that the ability to discern and to reward abilities of his or her servants was the most important quality of a sovereign (“Si l’est plus grande qualité des souverains que de scavoir digniment distribuer les emplois de l’état.”). Further on, von Luberas spelled out his theory of governing. According to him, it is by justly rewarding the most loyal subjects that the monarch is able to encourage both them and, what is

\textsuperscript{382} Winter, Hale, 87-91.

\textsuperscript{383} Luppov, Kniga v Rossii v poslepetrovskoe vremia, 197-199; Ley, Le Maréchal de Münich, 5-10.

\textsuperscript{384} SK #6429. The translation was ordered by Peter I, but was only printed only in the 1730s.

important, every other *honnête homme*, to serve with utmost application. Empress Anna, argued the Baron,

Ne scanroît mieux faire clairez sa haute sagosse qu’en prenant pour son conseill interne ceux, qui d’entre ses fideles sujets elle trouve les plus zelés, les plus habilis, et les plus appliqués. C’est ainsi que voyant les affairs du premier resort, si judiciesement soignees que chaque honête home se ramasse s’aime, et s’efforce de bon coeur, de travailler pour les public, a’lenvie des autres.\(^{386}\)

These principles, as I have shown in previous chapters, were implemented by von Münnich and von Luberas at the Cadet Corps. However, this statement also sheds different light on other initiatives and policies pursued during Anna’s reign. Quite striking in this respect is a memorandum prepared by von Münnich for Empress Anna in 1737, in connection with the ongoing war with the Ottomans.\(^{387}\) This memorandum provides a list of all the general officers in the army commanded by von Münnich with short descriptions of their respective “characters.” First on the list, for example, is Prince von Hessen-Homburg, who had recently replaced von Münnich as *General-Feldtsekhmeister*. He is presented in the following way:

He is quite hotheaded [*goriach i vspyl’chiv*]; does not observe any hierarchy of ranks, or rules of obedience, his face is pale, in action he lacks firm resolution; he is often sick, and thus he is not fit for service in the field. But since he knows the Russian language and military service well, he could be appointed either vice-president of the Military College, or the president of the Artillery Chancellery.

The “character,” or “temperament,” and bodily characteristics (pale face and poor health) are combined here to determine his “fitness” for a particular type of service. Indeed, the language of “ability” and “inclination” as determined by one’s “nature” or “character,” is employed in this memorandum to the highest degree.

Lieutenant-General Leontiev, an old cavalryman, is described as being “healthy and

\(^{386}\) RGADA, f. 11, op. 1, d. 419, ll. 5-7.

\(^{387}\) “Zapiska, podannaia General-Fel’dmarshalom Grafom Minikom Gosudaryne Imperatritse Anne Ioannovne, 1737 godu Dekabria 22 dnia, o svoistvakh Generalov vo vverennoi iem armii,” *Severnyi arkhiv* 1, no. 3 (February 1822): 205-213.
well-built, but has neither ambition [chestoliubiia], nor desire to serve.” Thus he is “fit” [goditsa] for service at the Military College or at the Stables Department (“he is an enthusiast [okhotnik] and expert on horses as nobody else in the army”). General Rumiantsev “understands service, is talkative, follows orders,” yet “his inclinations [sklonnosti] are more towards Ministerstvo [diplomacy?] and towards civil service.” Major-General Arakcheev “serves willingly,” while Prince Repnin “serves with diligence and conducts himself well.” Brigadier Elizarov “has little inclination for service in the field, and he lacks agility [malo v nem zhivosti],” etc. In each of these descriptions von Münnich stresses the “inclinations” of individual officers – their willingness to perform a particular function; appointing them to positions that match these inclinations appears to be a wise policy and a recipe for success.388

Given this need for “knowing” one’s “inclinations,” a number of military reforms of the early 1730s acquire additional meaning as part of what appears to be von Münnich’s overall program of counting, measuring and regulating Russian officers and nobility in general. Already in the summer of 1731 he consolidated control over careers and promotions of all the officers (previously careers of officers of garrison and landmilitsia regiments were monitored by the Master of the Heraldry) at the Military College. He also required all officers to submit curriculum vitae each time they were promoted to the next officer rank, or transferred from one regiment to another, etc. Between 1730 and 1731 he also designed and created the office of

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388 Cf. the descriptions of cadets being transferred from the Corps to the army as NCOs and privates because they “give little hope for further learning, yet it is hopeful that they would have more diligence [rachenie] for military service.” A. Voikov “has more of an inclination for soldiery then for learning”; V. Radishchev “has demonstrated himself to be of good conduct, and has a good desire [okhota] for military service”; S. Solovtsov “has maintained himself well, and has not a small desire for soldiery”; F. Schareberg is “of exemplary conduct,” yet he is “hopeless for further learning.” In all of these cases the transfer is explained by a need to give the young nobles an assignment more appropriate for their abilities and inclinations. At the same time P. Shishkin, “although has not been noticed for any mischief, is hardly fit for anything because of lack of understanding of military service” – yet, he was to become a private in the army. RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1770, l. 27 passim.
Inspector General of the army. The Inspector-General and his deputies were expected
to visit military units all over the Empire and, among other things, inspect the physical
fitness of all the officers and men, and to record their origins, career history, size of
their land- and serf-holding, etc. 389

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Another key personality that, in many regards, defined the policies of Anna’s
reign was Heinrich Johann Friedrich (a.k.a. Andrei Ivanovich) Ostermann (1686-
1747), who eventually became known as Count Ostermann. 390 A son and grandson of
Lutheran pastors, Ostermann studied at Jena, but was forced to flee after killing a
fellow student in a drunken quarrel. Having joined Russian service as a secretary and
translator, Ostermann was noticed by Peter for his fluency in a number of European
languages (including Russian), and for his writing skills. By the early 1720s
Ostermann had become the second most important figure at the College of Foreign
Affairs. After Peter I’s death he managed to make himself indispensable to the new
rulers of Russia and, thanks to his legendary political skill, survived all the coups and
counter-coups of the period. In 1731 he became one of the three members of the
Imperial Cabinet, the highest governmental body designed by him personally. One of
the other two members was Ostermann’s nominal superior at the College, the seventy-
year old Chancellor Golovkin, the other being Prince Cherkasskii, a participant of the

389 Kalashnikov, 36-42. Note also von Münnich’s suggestion in 1729 to promote officers in the
artillery under his command not on the basis of seniority, but “according to their studies and skills.” In
1731 he insisted that officers be accepted for service in the artillery only after an “inspection (or
examination).” Khmyrov, “Fel’dsekhmeistrstvo,” 276, 292-293.

390 RBS, v. 12, 405-417; S.N. Shubinskii, Graf Andrei Ivanovich Osterman: Biograficheskii
ocherk (St. Petersburg, 1863). For a recent overview of Ostermann studies and an up-to-date
bibliography of existing studies, including those in German, see: Iokhannes Föl'ker Vagner, "Osterman -
nemets pri dvore rossiiskikh imperatorov. Kartina zhizni i poski sledov,” in Gosudarstvennyi
Katalog vystavki (Moscow, 2000), 19-39.
events of 1730 and one of wealthiest landlords in Russia, yet commonly regarded by contemporaries as a political nonentity (see Chapter 5). This effectively made Ostermann the chief minister of the reign.

Ostermann knew European governmental practices exceedingly well. During the second half of Peter’s reign he actively participated in drafting some of the most important pieces of Peter’s legislation, including the *General Regulation* and the Table of Ranks. In the process, he was actively involved in extensive study of European (to a large degree, Prussian) laws.391

No less importantly, since July 1720, Ostermann had officially been charge of the education of future emperor Peter II.392 The program of studies composed under his direction in 1727, and officially approved by the Supreme Privy Council, reflected many of the educational ideas and practices described in previous chapters. It provided an hour-by-hour schedule of the entire week, including specific times for lessons on languages, ancient and modern history, geography, some mathematical studies and dancing. The lessons on modern history were to be based on Pufendorf and were to include discussions of the reigning families in neighboring lands, or in other words, the “forms of government, their strengths and weaknesses.”393 Each day was to begin with a prayer and to include some reading from the New Testament.394

391 Troitskii, *Russkii absolutism*, 55-76. Among other things, in the early 1720s Ostermann also drafted the charter of the Academy of Sciences.

392 N.I. Pavlenko, *Petr II* (Moscow, 2006), 30-44.

393 Ibid, 174-176.

394 Some contemporaries, including both Russians and foreign envoys (French and Spanish), expressed strong doubts about Ostermann’s religiosity. Menshikov, however, shortly before his downfall accused Ostermann of trying to convert Peter II to Lutheranism. Ibid, 31, 39.
As for pedagogic theory, the document began with the statement that “the hours for studies and hours for entertainment ought always to follow each other.”

Overall, Ostermann was one of the most well-read persons in Russia, with only Feofan Prokopovich and Prince D.M. Golitsyn of the Supreme Privy Council, perhaps, equaling him. More specifically, however, his library (also one of the largest in Russia) included - besides Hobbs, Spinoza, Grotius, and others - such titles as *Instruction for Bringing Up Children*, *The Science of Behaving in Society*, *Natural Morals*, *Rules on How To Educate a King*, *On New Rules for Upbringing Children*, and *The Short Method for Teaching Geography*, which were directly relevant, of course, to his duties as the overseer of Peter II’s education. His library also included the works of Erasmus and Locke. In an earlier version of his program for Peter II’s education he explained, moralistically, that “History is the miracle of the world. One part of it serves for entertainment and satisfying our curiosity… The other serves as an example for emulating good and avoiding evil.” Ten years later, in 1740, he

395 The program of studies was complied and published under the direction of Ostermann, and was apparently produced by Georg Friedrich Bülfinger (Bilfinger), a professor at the Academy of Science, with strong ties to Halle. It was translated into Russian and published as *Raspolozhenie uchenia ego Imperatorkogo Velichestva Petra Vtorogo Imp. i Samod. Vsesross.* (St. Petersburg, 1728), see SK #575. According to J.L. Black, it was a “plea for a new kind of ruler… Implicit in this document is the modern assumption that effective rulers are not made in Haven, rather they must be taught the techniques of overlordship.” Note, however, that the order to print it “as soon as possible … without any delay” was issued on December 1731, after Peter II’s death; Ostermann’s role in supervising the preparation of this text is mentioned in the title. A history textbook prepared for Peter II was also published; its title was *Sokrashchenie drevneishei statskoi istorii, ot nachala veka d srednikh vekov, dlia opotreblenia Imperatora Petra II* (not listed in the *Svodnyi katalog*). N.I. Likhareva, “Iz istorii pedagogicheskoi mysli (Voprosy metodiki istorii v Rossii XVIII veka),” in K 25-letiiu ucheno-pedagogicheskoi deiatel’nosti I.M. Grevs. Sbnik statei (St.Peterburg, 1916), 446-450; Black, *Citizens*, 65, 186 (notes 53, 54); Winter, *Halle*, 180-187.

396 Luppov, *Kniga v Rossii v poslepetrovskoe vremia*, 180-195. Unfortunately, we know the content of the early eighteenth-century Russian libraries mostly due to the fact that their owners were at some point arrested and prosecuted. The clerks who compose the inventories of their confiscated properties did not care to provide exact titles. Instead, in case of books in foreign languages, they wrote down approximate transliterations or, as in this case, even more approximate translations of the titles into Russian. Thus in many cases it is impossible to recognize, which book are we talking about.

397 Quoted in Vagner, “Osterman,” 39. The original documents related to Peter II’s education are in: RGADA, f. 2, op. 1, d. 26; f. 11, op. 1, d. 398.
wrote that “nothing is as important for the state as good schools.” Apparentley, he also stood behind the reform and expansion of the so-called “garrison schools,” undertaken by Anna’s government in 1732.

Ostermann’s views on governance and rulership are explained in a memorandum he prepared in 1740 for Princess Anna, the mother of the infant emperor Ivan VI and, briefly, the regent. This memorandum exists in a full version and also in the form of short notes – probably, an outline or a draft. Here I quote the first few points in the outline – the rules that Ostermann recommended the Princess should follow:

[6] Not to forget to reward with ranks and offices those people who are worthy [dostoinykh] and meritorious [zaslugi okazavshikh]
[7] To listen to everything and to study everything [Vse slushat’ i vo vse vnikat’].

399 Ibid, 265; PSZ #6188. According to the decree, there were to be 4,000 pupils in all of these schools, 82 pupils at each of 20 regiments stationed in the Baltic provinces and 30 pupils at each of the 29 regiments in the other provinces. Officers from these regiments were acting as instructors, teaching arithmetic, artillery and engineering, and military exercises. Although plans for instruction of children under the auspices of military units were made in 1721, by the 1730s system seem to have been in disarray. Originally, the concept of “garrison schools” was invented in Prussia within the context of confessional tensions. The first school for the children of court servants and garrison soldiers of Calvinist faith, as separate from an elementary school for the local (Lutheran) populace in general, was established in Potsdam as early as 1662. By 1720s, however, Friedrich Wilhelm I was expanding these basic teaching arrangements into a universal system by ordering a garrison school to be founded wherever a regiment was posted. Dorwart, The Prussian Welfare State, 174-175.
401 “Zapiska,” 1.
These rules are elaborated in the longer version. According to Ostermann, the first three are relevant and sufficient for dealing with the masses, especially if “love for justice” is displayed periodically by issuing manifestoes. For dealing with the state servants, however, different rules were needed. First, the ruler needs to be able to discern their qualities, that is, to judge them by their deeds. Besides, servitors need to be encouraged by giving them opportunities to demonstrate their zeal. Thus, Ostermann suggests that the Senate and the Colleges submit weekly or monthly reports, which would be examined either by the regent personally, or by a specially appointed person. This attention, he believes, would “encourage” \[pobudit\] the governmental departments to be more “attentive.” In a similar vein, Ostermann argues that the nobles do not enter naval or civil service, because there were fewer opportunities for promotion there. Therefore, nobles serving in the navy and in the bureaucracy should be “encouraged” \[pridat’ revnovania\]. According to Peter I’s system, each governmental bureau was administered by a board. Ostermann, however, suggested putting each member of these boards in charge of separate sub-departments. According to his plan, boards members should have an area of personal responsibility, which would give each of them the opportunity to display their “diligence and zeal” \[prilezhanie i rachenie\], and thus would encourage him.\(^402\) Indeed, in the immediate aftermath of the 1730 crisis Ostermann advised empress Anna that it was “appropriate” to reward her most loyal supporters “regardless of seniority or other circumstances, so as to encourage \[ankurazhvironia\] others.”\(^403\)

\(^{402}\) “Predstavlenie,” 258, 267, 270. For Ostermann’s attempt to implement this reform by dividing up the Senate into specialized departments, see Petrukhintsev, \textit{Tsarstvovanie}, 75.

\(^{403}\) Quoted in Troitskii, \textit{Russkii absolutizm}, 125
The idea of limiting the term of obligatory noble service was mentioned in the proposals submitted in 1730, although it was by no means a universal concern; none of the proposals suggested completely abolishing obligatory service.\textsuperscript{404} Did these proposals influence decision-making in the 1730s? After the crisis was over, the idea was brought up again in the documents of Anna’s government in 1731, in the report prepared by the so-called Army Reform Commission (\textit{Voinskaia komissia}) – a panel of generals convened to work out proposals for reforming the army and reducing its expenditure. The commission, directed by von Münnich, was concerned, among other things, with the creation of a heavy cavalry, or cuirassiers, in Russia. To this end, the Commission proposed to give the nobles an opportunity to limit their service to 25 (or, in some circumstances, even to six) years by volunteering for service in the cuirassier regiments, by supplying these regiments with appropriate horses and recruits from their estates, and/or by paying a lump sum of 150 rubles.\textsuperscript{405}

Thus, it was von Münnich who was the first to suggest limiting the turn of obligatory service for the nobility. This suggestion was blocked, however, by the Senate, which argued that such a limit would contradict Petrine policies. Besides, the Senate believed that, given an opportunity to buy a reduction of mandatory service, all the nobles would use it, even those for whom it would mean financial ruin. As a result, the nobles would “live at their homes in all sorts of idleness and laziness, without any good studies and sociability [\textit{obkhozhdenia}].”\textsuperscript{406} This is a typical Petrine attitude. The same argument is repeated in the anonymous memo found in the papers.


\textsuperscript{405} The work of the Military Commission is discussed in detail in: Petrukhintsev, \textit{Tsarstvovanie}, 141-146. The shortage in Russia of sufficiently large horses to carry a heavily armed cuirassier was a problem that Anna’s government tried to tackle throughout the 1730s.

\textsuperscript{406} PSZ Vol.44, Part 1, 81-83; Petrukhintsev, \textit{Tsarstvovanie}, 141-146, 157-158.
of Artemii Volynskii, a minister of the Cabinet between 1738 and 1740 and a member of the younger generation of Peter’s lieutenants. Its author, writing, evidently, during the crisis of 1730, also opposed the rumored abolition of obligatory service for the nobility on the grounds that the nobles would all immediately abandon their posts (he expected that poor nobles would in such cases resort to brigandage, for lack of other means of subsistence). Note also that von Münnich’s was the second of its type: the first one, led by Field-Marshall Prince M.M. Golitsyn, formerly of the Supreme Privy Council, did not suggest any changes in the system of noble service. This time, von Münnich, a foreigner, failed to obtain “concessions” for the nobility because of the opposition from the Senate, staffed with Russian noblemen.

The next time the government turned its attention to this problem was in 1736. It appears that the immediate reason for this was the outbreak of war with the Ottoman Turks. Preparation for fighting led, naturally, to the mobilization of resources, both financial and human. It is in this context that on May 3, 1736, the Cabinet ordered the Military College and the Master of the Heraldry to “submit a report immediately: how many noble minors have presented themselves [for service] in regiments and [provincial] towns since 1732, and [how many] of them were enrolled as privates.”

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407 The memo bears Volynskii’s remarks, but the text itself is written in different handwriting. "Perepiska A.P. Volynskogo 1729-1730 gg.,“ in Rossia i zapad: gorizonty vzaimoponimania. Literaturnye istochniki XVIII veka (1726-1762). Vypusk 2 (Moscow, 2003), 742-743; Stroev, Bironovshchina, Part 2, 17.

408 For an overview see A.K. Baiov, Russkaia armiia v tsarstvovaniie imperatritsy Anny Ioannovny: Voina Rossii s Turtsiei v 1736-1739 gg. 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1906).

409 SIRIO, CXIV, 187. Overall, throughout the year the Cabinet repeatedly request “urgent” and “immediate” reports on the number of students at the Academic Gymnasium, and on the number of poor cadets at the Corps learning German and Latin (February 25) of the number and status of noble minors in Siberia (July 19); on the numbers and profiles of schoolchildren in towns without garrisons (and therefore, without garrison schools), and on the number and background of students at the Naval Academy (August 19); on the number of students at the Engineering School (August 24), etc. Ibid, 91, 333-334, 390, 402.
Throughout the following summer the Cabinet repeatedly occupied itself with finding suitable candidates to fill junior officer vacancies.\textsuperscript{410}

Another factor was, probably, the proposal submitted in that year to Ernst Biron, the favorite of the Empress. Its author suggested giving officers extended leaves to manage their estates and also to introduce a limited term of obligatory service, although he does not specify the length. The authorship of the proposal has not been established, but the original is written in German. Biron had it translated into Russian for the Empress, who, in turn, forwarded it to the Cabinet.\textsuperscript{411} Note, however, that in 1736 the composition of the Cabinet changed. A year earlier Pavel Iaguzhinskii was brought back from his semi-exile in Berlin and was made a member of the Cabinet. At that point, according to V.N. Stroev, Ostermann lost some of his influence and nearly ceased attending the Cabinet meetings. In April 1736, however, Iaguzhinskii died, and Ostermann assumed all the affairs of the Cabinet.\textsuperscript{412} It is reasonable to suggest, therefore, that the Cabinet turned his attention towards the issue of noble service not only because of the war, but also because Ostermann finally got an opportunity to put his ideas into practice. In the following months he repeatedly took a personal interest in the issue of noble service.\textsuperscript{413} As with the establishment of the Cadet Corps in 1731, the decision to limit noble service to 25 years was taken, therefore, not within the context of some unspecified political pressure from the nobility, but, rather, as a result of interplay of personal agendas.

\textsuperscript{410} Ibid, 346, 402.

\textsuperscript{411} Solov’ev, Kniga X, 456; Stroev, Bironovshchina, Part 2, 16, Appendix.

\textsuperscript{412} Stroev, Bironovshchina, Part 2, 26.

\textsuperscript{413} On July 23, von Tettau, director of the Cadet Corps, was ordered to present a report to Ostermann personally. On August 26, the Naval Academy was ordered to present to Ostermann a “detailed list” of its students. SIRIO, CXIV, 346, 408.
The reference to the year 1732 in the request for information, sent out by the Cabinet on May 3, 1736, is explained by the fact that early in 1732 a decree confirmed that all the nobles were to register for service with the Master of Heraldry.\footnote{PSZ #5928.} On March 8 of the same year, however, a manifesto declared that poor and landless nobles (malopomestnye and bespomestnye) were to be exempt from this rule, since the obligation to travel to the capital was excessively burdensome for them. Instead, they were allowed to fulfill their service obligation by directly enrolling in army regiments in their own localities.\footnote{PSZ #5976.} As a result, however, the government lost track of a large number of young nobles. Moreover, the overall system of registration of noble minors for service in the early 1730s seems to have become increasingly malfunctioning.\footnote{On this point see, for example, A. Romanovich-Slavatinskii, Dvorianstvo v Rossii ot nachala XVIII veka do otny krepotnogo prava (Kiev, 1912): 79-80. Even cursory study of the Heraldry’s papers for that period confirms this point: in July 1732 the senator had to request instructions on what to do with those young noble who actually presented themselves at the Heraldry – whether they should be examined at the Senate, or forwarded to the Cabinet. PSZ #6127. The low quality and inconsistency of registration records from this period has significant practical implication for my discussion in Part III of this dissertation.} Thus, the requested reports from the Military College and the Master of Heraldry were not forthcoming.

On May 6, 1736, the government reacted by issuing an imperial decree. This decree noted the lamentable tendency of young nobles and children of other categories of servitors (non-noble officers, soldiers, and servitors of “old ranks”) to avoid service, “and there is nothing good to be expected from that, for idleness is the root of all evil.” The document, basically, confirmed the obligation to register for service, giving December 31 of that year as the deadline and demanding that local officials submit monthly reports on the progress of registration. On August 29, the
Senate confirmed this decree, admitting that up to that point it had not had much effect. On December 31, 1736, however, there appeared a Manifesto that, together with subsequent decrees, established the new rules of noble service, which, with little alteration, remained in effect until the “emancipation of the nobility” in the 1760s. According to the decree, a noble father could choose one among his sons to stay at home to manage the estate, with a provision that he would learn reading, grammar, and some mathematics in order to be qualified for civil service. Other nobles still had to enter obligatory service, but were allowed to retire after 25 years.

A month later, however, this decree was supplemented with another one meant to “clarify” the manifesto of December 31, 1736. Such clarification was, apparently, urgently needed: in January 1737 the Master of the Heraldry repeatedly asked the Senate for instructions on what to do with the young nobles arriving to the capital, as they were required by the earlier decrees. At first, the Senate was clueless and asked for instructions from the Cabinet; a few days later the senators ordered their staff to prepare a memorandum on the existing laws on this topic. Finally, a senior staffer was send to the Cabinet with inquiries and reported back the following

[as instructed] he has asked … Prince Aleksei Mikhailovich Cherkasskii to issue a resolution regarding the Senate’s report on the noble minors. [Prince Cherkasskii] deigned to declare that there will, indeed, be a resolution on this matter, and he also ordered the staffer to ask Count Andrei Ivanovich Ostermann regarding the same issue. [The staffer went to see Ostermann] and declared that His Excellence [Count Ostermann] likewise ordered him to report to the Senate that there would, indeed, be a resolution regarding this issue.  

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417 PSZ #7039.

418 PSZ #7142.

419 Zhurnaly Pravitel’stvuushchego Senata za 1737 g. Part 1. (Moscow, 1910), 40, 46, 58, 66.
We know that the drafting of the decree establishing a system of examinations for young nobles was already under way in the Military College under the guidance of von Münnich. Judging from their remarks, the members of the Cabinet knew this, but did not believe it necessary to share any details with the Senate. At the end, the design of the new system of noble service with its extensive examination and schooling requirements was decided between von Münnich and Ostermann.

The decree of February 9, 1737, established a comprehensive system intended to compel the nobles to study, and in that way it was clearly following the principles of Petrine policy. The goals of the sovereign in issuing the decree were, apparently, to achieve “perfect benefit to the State” by making sure that not only “all the nobles were educated, and fit for military and civil service,” but also that they were “making diligent efforts towards this end.” According to the new regulation, when a young noble reached the age of seven, he was to register with the Master of Heraldry in St.Petersburg, or with their local governor. Then he was to come for a review at twelve. By that age he was supposed to master reading and writing. At that time he (or rather, his father) had to make a choice. If he had 100 male serfs or more, he could keep his son at home and promise that by the time of the next review he would learn arithmetic, geometry and, characteristically, the basic tenets of Orthodoxy. Those who owned less than 100 male serfs could only keep their sons at home if they could prove that the boys actually had already begun studying arithmetic and geometry. Otherwise these poorer nobles (or those whose fathers would not promise to organize home schooling for them) were to be enrolled in state schools.

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421 PSZ #7171.
The entire procedure was to be repeated when the young nobles reached the age of sixteen. This time, however, the review was to take place in the capital and the subjects to be studied were geometry, fortification, and history. However, the young nobles who stayed at home for studies but did not master the prescribed program were at this point to be drafted into the navy as common sailors, without the right of promotion. The fourth, and final, review was to take place at the age of twenty (for those, of course, who were not already serving as sailors by that time). At this point the young nobles were finally ready to enter service.

The system of noble service introduced in 1736-1737 reaffirmed, of course, many principles of Petrine policy towards the nobility. At the same time, one finds here a number of themes that it shares with other policies of Anna’s reign, and which set it apart from Petrine governmental practices. One of them is the focus on formal examinations, to which all the nobles of the realm were now subjected. The other is giving the nobles the opportunity to choose. As we saw, in 1731 the Military Commission hoped to attract volunteers to the cuirassier regiments. The same principle was applied at the Cadet Corps. Rather than pressing young nobles into it, as Peter would have undoubtedly done, the government called on volunteers. This was a sufficiently noticeable feature of the new institution to be specifically pointed out, for example, by Tatischev in his letter to J.D. Schumacher, the librarian of the Academy (“the recruited cadets are to be volunteers, [only those] who wished [to study]).”422 Further on, the principle that the choice of career was to be determined by the students themselves (or, by their “inclinations”) was widely followed (or at least proclaimed at the Corps). Finally, the decree of May 6, 1736, reaffirmed this principle as a basic rule, pointing out that the government created schools and paid “salaries” to the pupils

422 Tatischev, Zapiski, pis’ma, 147.
so that noble children could “study whatever science they have the inclination for.”

Further on, it instructed local officials to enroll noble teenagers into army and garrison regiments “according to their wishes,” while younger noble minors were to study “grammar and other sciences, whichever they themselves might desire.”

Likewise, the decree of February 9, 1737, stipulated that the choice of schools was to be based “on their inclination … whichever they appear to have ability for.” (One might, perhaps, also quote here the advice given by Ostermann in 1740 regarding a construction project that “one can achieve more, and [at a] faster [rate], and at lesser costs with workers who are voluntarily employed”).

Finally, one finds in the decree of February 9, 1737, the full package of ideas on “encouraging” nobles to display “diligence” through observation and just reward. The decree stipulated that it is to be strictly observed that those who made more progress in their studies and display a diligent effort, were also be the first to be promoted into the [officer] ranks, and thus be rewarded for their diligence in studies. The decrees are to be sent to their place of service with a detailed description [of their achievement at the Corps], so that others, having seen that, were urged towards similar diligence and zeal and refrained from soul-damaging running around and other indecencies.

Note also the need to refrain from idleness and “indecencies,” which are conceptualized as “soul-damaging.”

It would be fair to suggest, therefore, that the reform of noble service in 1736-1737 was really intended as a reform of the nobility, not as a concession to it: what looks like generous grant of freedom of choice was, in fact, a strategy for social engineering. The motto on the Corps’ banner is a case in point. The banner bore a picture of a double-headed eagle, of course. In one of the eagle’s claws can be seen

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423 PSZ #6949.

424 “Predstavlenie,” 268.
the symbols of military power, in the other are the symbols of learning (scrolls, books, geometric tools, etc.). The motto read “Ot oboikh shl’akhstvo,” which can be translated as Nobility Comes From Both [Sources], or, perhaps, as Both Are the Sources of Nobility. Whether it meant that the cadets were noble in two senses because of their mastery of military exercise and non-military sciences, or that non-military learning was no less noble and ennobling than the military, the motto was clearly meant to challenge some existing notions of the nobility.

Indeed, back in 1731 the Corps was regarded by von Münich as something of an experiment and a first step towards greater reform. In 1731 he believed it to be unwise to expand it further “because of the novelty of this affair,” until the Corps “comes into good order” and acquires some “experience as such an establishment.” At the same time, he suggested that a period of study at the Corps should eventually become the one and only way of obtaining a commission, “while others, who had not studied there, were not to be made officers” under any circumstances. Although his position on this issue seems to have relaxed, and this principle was not codified in the 1736-1737 laws, their purpose was the same: only educated nobles were to be accepted as members of the elite, while those who had no “inclination” for study were to be banned to the navy for life.

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It is hard to tell to what extent von Münich understood that his drive to fashion the “true” nobility of morals and manners was a challenge to the existing nobility of birth. In 1731, upon being appointed the head of the Military College, von

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425 This motto disappears under Catherine II. See A. V. Viskovatov, Istoricheskoe opisanie odezhdy i vooruzheniia russkikh voisk. 15 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1899-1901). Vols. II-III.

Münich issued an order explicitly prohibiting promotion of commoners to officers’ ranks under any circumstances. By the end of the decade, however, he was accused by his rivals of abusing his office by excessively promoting commoners to commissioned ranks. Inspector-General von Gokhmut complained in 1739, for example, that officers of non-noble birth had multiplied in von Münich’s army:

[They] have very unruly, wild, and coarse mores [nraig imeyut zelo buinyi, svirepyi i grubyi]. They indulge the soldiery in everything, except for matters of service regulations and drill, where they treat soldiers extremely harshly through exercise and punishment … which sometimes results in maiming and even death of young soldiers and recruits.

Non-noble officers also, allegedly, were especially prone to abuse the local populace, especially the womenfolk, and tolerate abuses committed by their soldiers. They drank excessively and disobeyed their superiors, except for von Münich himself. Von Münich, however, was unapologetic. He forcefully asserted his prerogative to promote whomever he considered worthy, and his intention to do so in the future (as commander-in-chief, he was given the necessary powers by the Empress). At the same time, he added:

Even though many of them [officers of non-noble birth] are coarse by birth [po porode], still I would rather prefer this coarseness to the timidity, laziness, ignorance of military regulations, and lack of military skill displayed by some nobles.427

What is evident here is the tension between different notions of nobility in von Münich’s thinking. He seems to be saying that the nobles are different from the commoners in their manners (the nobles are less “coarse”), and that this difference

427 Quoted in Kalashnikov, “Ofitserskii korpus,” 98-100. Cf. the report of Colonel Rumiantsev of the St.Petersburg Infantry, who informed his superiors in 1732 that he had under his command 23 NCOs of noble birth, each of whom had served for at least seven years. Yet none of them is to be promoted to officer’ rank “for their illiteracy, laziness, and coarseness of character [grubosti nrava].” Ibid, 204-205.
comes from “birth.” And yet, in the very next sentence he proceeds to castigate the nobles for their lack of martial spirit and “zeal” for service.

In this context it is worth briefly turning to the discussion of Peter III’s Manifesto of 1762, which famously gave the nobility the right not to serve at all. Various theories have been put forward to explain why exactly Peter III would ever issued such a document. One reason, traditionally disregarded by historians as empty window-dressing, was suggested in the Manifesto itself. For a comparison, I will fist quote at length the anonymous 1730 memo from Volynskii’s papers. The authors commented on the rumors regarding the alleged plans of the Supreme Privy Council to grant “freedom in service” to the nobility. He admitted:

To serve under coercion [v nevol’u] is hard; yet, if complete freedom is given, you know as well as I do, that our nation [narod] is not ambitious at all [ne chestol’ubiv], but rather lazy and not industrious. So, if there is no certain coercion [prinuzhdenia], even [the poorest nobles] would not want to earn honor and subsistence, but would rather prefer to stay at home.

In this case both the state and the nobility would be ruined, for “we” would be forced to promote former serfs to positions which are appropriate for us only (for the nobles). These serfs would take all “our” places, and the army will fall apart, for the soldiers would be so indulged by these non-noble officers as to make them “more evil than the strel’tsy.”

In 1762, however, the Manifesto on Noble Freedom began with a reference to Peter I who, “as not only Europe, but also most of the world knows,” labored hard to

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429 The strel’tsy were pre-Petrine semi-regular infantry, who rebelled on a number of occasions in the early years of Peter’s reign, the symbol of violent anarchy and ignorant superstition of the old (dis)oder. Note that narod, the nation, refers here to the nobility. “Perepiska A.P. Volynskogo,” 743.
“lift Russia to perfect mastery of military, civil, and political affairs.” To achieve these goals, however, Peter had to improve “the main Member of the state,” that is, the nobility. The emperor had “to get the nobility accustomed and to give it to understand the benefits enjoyed by [the nobilities of] the enlightened Powers.” This included inviting the nobility to join the military and civil service, and to study in Russia and abroad. The nobles resented and resisted this “invitation,” and so the sovereign had to use coercion and harsh laws. Now, however:

As We observe with great pleasure, and as every true son of the fatherland cannot but recognize, [these measures] resulted in innumerable benefits. Their coarseness is eradicated in those previously indifferent to the common good; ignorance is transformed into sound sense … To sum up, noble thoughts have resulted in unlimited loyalty and love toward Us, great diligence, and perfect zeal toward our service taking firm root in the hearts of all true Russian patriots. Therefore, we do not find it necessary to continue the coercion that has been hitherto needed.430

In other words, the mission of creating a “true nobility” was declared accomplished. At the same time, the decree did not declare that the nobles would no longer serve: on the contrary. Its authors firmly expected them to “honestly continue” service with even more “zeal” and “diligence.” It could be argued, perhaps, that this Manifesto was, as much as anything else, a response to the failure of Elizabeth’s government to ensure proper registration of the nobility for service (this failure is discussed in more detail in Part III). After repeatedly granting amnesty to the nobles in the 1740s and the 1750s, Elizabeth finally ordered the Senate to figure out what could be done to ensure compliance. The answer formulated by the Senate in 1761,

430 PSZ #11444.
however, amounted to a dismantling of the 1736-1737 system and allowed the nobles to skip studies with minimal punishment.431

Were Peter III’s advisers suggesting a different solution – a turn from coercion to motivation, as practiced in the 1730s? Following the line of reasoning introduced in the 1730s, the nobles, it was hoped, would be encouraged to serve by a display of Imperial largess towards them. The few lazy and insufficiently virtuous ones were to be punished by naming and shaming: all the loyal subjects were ordered to “despise and humiliate” them and not to tolerate them in “public gatherings.”432 Incidentally, all the nobles who had less than 1,000 m.s. were still expected to enroll their sons in the Cadet Corps, which was newly expanded to 600 students.433

431 RGADA, f. 20, op. 1, d. d. 212, ll. 1-4.

432 PSZ #11444, articles 7, 9.

433 As a Grand Duke and the heir to the throne, Peter was appointed in 1759 the high commander of the Cadet Corps. This was especially significant for him since Friedrich II, his role model, as a heir to the throne commanded the Berlin Cadet Corps. Documents show that he immediately became involved in its affairs: only two weeks after his appointment Grand Duke indignantly pointed out various violations of rules and regulations at the Corps, such as chronic underfunding to the overall amount of 250,000 rubles, or “enlistment of grenadier cadets in the musketeer companies,” etc. It is hard to tell from the documents how much of Peter’s activity and rhetoric was his own, and how much of it was inspired by Aleksei Melgunov and other Corps’ graduates in his retinue. Many of Peter’s initiatives, however, display the same interest in moral improvement, discipline, and strict meritocracy that was the trademark of von Münnich’s project. Already on March 8, Peter – “for better improvement of cadet behavior” – ordered the Corps’ authorities not to allow young nobles stay overnight in town. Cadets who had parents in the capital were to visit them for three hours maximum at a time, only in their free time, and only in daytime. Further, Peter instructed “that nobody should count on any protection or recommendations, and should only expect to be treated at the general examination according to his learning, worthiness, and good behavior.” Those cadets who “dare to seek recommendations from outside” were to be “punished severely.” Symbolically, Peter orders to have the Corps’ back garden cleared, trees planted in greenhouses, and a full-size marble statue of Mars together with 68 busts of ancient characters (including Cicero, both Catos, Cesar, Sulla, Scipio, Brutus, and others) to be placed there. Besides, the Grand Duke bought for the Corps a marble statue of Peter the Great which was put in a purpose-build bay of carved and gilded wood. Myl’nikov, *Iskuchenie chadom*, 46-50; RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d.3378, ll. 2, 11, 13, 29; d. 3120, ll.1, 3, 16. Another project initiated at that time was the compilation of a biographical dictionary of the Corps’ officers and graduates. *Imiannoi spisok vsem byvshim i nyne nakhodiashchimsa v Sukhoputnom Shliakhetnom Kadetskom korpsu Shtab-, Ober-ofitseram i kadetam. S pokazaniem kto iz onykh s kakimi udostoinstvami v kakie chiny vypushchchen i v kakikh chinakh nyne.* Chast’ 1 (St.Petersburg, 1761).
Upon overthrowing Peter III and acceding to the throne, Catherine II did not immediately confirm the manifesto, thereby causing some anxiety among the nobility. Instead she appointed a commission to review the document and the status of the nobility in general “in light of the changed situation of the state and education of the well-born youth.” In its report in 1763 this commission repeated the same assessment of the nobility’s progress found in the Manifesto, but perhaps, in even starker terms. It agreed that given the “poor upbringing of the nobility,” Peter I could not create a good army except through direct coercion, forcing those to serve who, not having in them deep-rooted ambition for knowledge and studies, and not realizing that service produces ambition, and ambition leads to service, did not understand their own glory and therefore avoided service, preferring their ancient tranquility and seclusion in their houses and estates to acquiring fame.

Now, however, “the nobility is so much moved by its love for honor [liubocheściem] that there is not the slightest suspicion… that it would revert back to its former lack of diligence for service.” The task was, therefore, to “invent such laws, under which noble freedom would be combined with zeal for military and civil service, coming from no other source than the ambition [chestoliubia; literally love of honor] ingrained through upbringing [vospitania], not restricting in any way the freedom of the nobility.” The rhetoric, that was supposed to explain a new way of mobilizing the nobility for state service, was being used to legitimize the need for granting “freedom” to the nobility.

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434 N. Kalachev, ed. Materialy dlia istorii russkogo dvor’anstva. Vol. II. (St.Petersburg, 1885), 38-40. The old Count A.P. Bestuzhev-Riumin, however, still worried that, given complete freedom, nobles might “lapse into the lack of diligence and their ancient laziness.” To prevent this, he suggested prohibiting nobles from buying new estates unless they serve for at least seven years. Ibid, 26.
Conclusion

On the most basic level, I argue in Part II that in the 1730s Anna’s government pursued policies that, taken together, could be interpreted as a program for moral reconstruction of the Russian elite. As I show, such key ministers of the reign as von Münnich and Ostermann were, apparently, well versed in the contemporary Western-European theories of virtue, nobility, and education. As a result, they not only made conscious and coherent efforts to create an “honest,” or “true,” nobility [istinnoe shl’akhstvo] out of the existing Russian elite, but also employed to this end a wide range of modern disciplinary techniques, largely unknown in Russia in the days of Peter I. This also meant that, according to von Münnich and Ostermann, one had to govern not by coercion (although there was plenty of coercion, too), but by “encouraging” people through discerning their abilities, by appointing them to those positions that fit their “inclination,” and by justly and publicly rewarding “diligence.”

I am calling, therefore, for a reconsideration of the relationship between the state and the nobility in the reign of Anna. As I show in the introduction to Part II, both the establishment of the Cadet Corps and the limitation of obligatory service for the nobility to 25 years (as well as some other measures) are viewed traditionally as an echo of the demands presented by the nobles in 1730. I argue, however, that these measures were a result of a new understanding of the “science of governing,” not any desire to accommodate the elite. The key to successful governance was now the ability to motivate the nobles, to “encourage” them to display the virtues and zeal for service, that were the trademark of any proper nobility and of any successful state.
This argument has two further implications. First, it complicates our traditional understanding of post-Petrine administrative institutions and political culture. The work of Peter I’s institutions required, it has been argued, “officials capable on the basis of formal, general, rational regulations within the framework of a highly organized bureaucratic hierarchy.” One wonders, though, whether this implied rationalization and bureaucratization of the early eighteenth-century administrative culture should be viewed as too much modernization on our part. It appears that Anna’s government, as far as it operated on the basis of any theoretical assumptions at all, followed a much less mechanistic set of principles that stressed individual virtue and need to govern through “encouragement,” and the manipulation of the noble’s “zeal” for service.

Secondly, putting the consistent efforts of Anna’s government to give the nobles some choice within the context of this “science of governing” allows us to move away from a simplistic picture of the nobility fighting for its freedom against the oppressive state – and slowly “awakening” from its Muscovite “lack of conscience” in the process. If one takes into consideration the “science of governing” presented here, the picture might be quite different. The goals of the government and the leading members of the elite were fully compatible with those of Peter I. In particular, the government was not at any point planning to relax the service obligations in any way. Its actions were driven, rather, by a different understanding of how to achieve the goals of making the nobility perform its assigned duty. In the process, however, the government did give the nobility some leeway. So, rather than talking about the elite suddenly and inexplicably switching from being obedient

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435 “Introduction to Plans for Political Reforms in Imperial Russia, 1730-1905,” in M. Raeff, Political Ideas and Institutions in Imperial Russia (Boulder, CO, 1994), 93.
Petrine servitors to being liberty-loving aristocrats, we are dealing here with gradual transmutations within the very same discourse.

Another conclusion concerns the role of ideas in the early eighteenth-century politics. The recent trend in historical works has been to emphasize the role of clan networks and kinship ties in early modern Russian history. I attempt to show, however, that ideas did matter. Perhaps, these networks and ties were, indeed, important in 1730, as Valeria A. Kivelson argues, or in other periods, as pointed out by David Ransel and Paul Bushkovitch. It is also true, of course, that fiscal considerations were terribly important in determining the policies of Anna’s reign, as N.N. Petrukhintsev has recently argued. Yet, I demonstrate in this chapter that at least some of the leading ministers of the 1730s appear to be driven in their actions by things as ephemeral as the notions of human nature and human behavior, and by a desire to create a “true” nobility.

This emphasis on ideas does not mean, of course, that von Münnich, Ostermann, and their colleagues and rivals, were ideologues and dreamers. On the contrary, it is within the context of very hard-nosed politicking and bureaucratic rivalries that this “science of governing” was utilized, articulated, and, perhaps, even formulated. This is evident in the catalogue of his generals’ characters compiled by von Münnich in 1737.436 The Field-Marshal might have taken the science of discerning abilities and inclinations very seriously. His descriptions, however, were clearly geared toward very practical ends. In the passage quoted earlier, for example, he was trying to rid himself of Hessen-Homburg. Overall, von Münnich was trying to get four of the senior generals of his army recalled. Von Münnich commended only

436 “Zapiska, podannaia General-Fel'dmarshalom Grafom Minikhom,” 205-213.
General Keith, a Scot who enjoyed the special trust of the Empress; two of his own clients, von Lowendahl and von Shtofel; and finally, Karl von Biron, the favorite’s brother, who is described as “zealous and doing his duty in service [revnosten i ispraven v sluzhbe], brave and calm in action.”

Even if one goes beyond the level of specific intrigue, I would suggest that the language of ability and inclinations gave von Münnich significant leverage over his rivals and subordinates, once the Field-Marshall appointe himself the supreme judge of human nature. At the Cadet Corps this science of human nature was used to assess and “sort out” teenagers. It was not sufficient that the cadets receive good grades: they also had to demonstrate “diligence” and “inclinations,” while their transgressions might or might not be deemed to reflect their unredeemable wickedness. Now these instruments were applied to the entire army. Von Münnich remarked, for example, of Brigadier Voieikov that he “understands service and conducts himself very well.” And yet, the overall judgment was reserved for now: “his character is not [yet] known” to the Field-Marshal. Still, such a blatant use by von Münnich of his favored concepts for political goals does not make them somehow invalid. I propose that it was possibility to employ theoretical notions as a weapon in the power struggle that created “demand” for them and allowed them to shape the political and cultural realities. It is possible to argue, perhaps, that “Westernization” itself became sustainable and successful as a project largely because the concepts and practices associated with it were utilized by individual actors for their practical goals.

Whether, and to what extent, these notions informed Russian concepts of nobility and the thinking of the majority of Russian nobles in later decades of the century, is an issue that requires a separate study. In chapter 8, and also in the

437 Ibid.
Epilogue, I present some evidence to indicate that this “science of governing” remained operational between the 1740s-1750s, both at the Corps and outside. In Part III of this dissertation, however, I examine the reactions of the Russian nobility to the program of social disciplining in the 1730s by looking at the decisions made by every young noble of the realm – the decision whether or not to study.
Part III

“So That My Young Years Be Not Wasted For Nothing”:

The Nobility and Education, 1730s-1750s

Cadet Nikolai Mel’nikhii did not want to study at all. Announcing the creation of the Corps, the government invited volunteers to enroll, but Mel’nitskii argued that he was not exactly a volunteer – at least, not an informed one. As he explained in 1732, he was enrolled by his relatives in Moscow, “without truly knowing the essence and the rules of this Corps, and studies it consisted of.” Now, however, he realized that the Corps “consisted of advanced and numerous studies [sostoit v vysokikh i mnogikh naukakh].” So, Mel’nitskii argued, he was not exactly fit to be a cadet. First, he was too old to study; second, he was “of a weak nature [prirody slaboi]” and had “a not-inconsiderable disease” causing him to “loose his memory”; and third, he was “hopeless for understanding the studies,” having learned to write “with great hardship, and even that imperfectly.”438

It is remarkable, indeed, how Mel’nitskii (or those who wrote on his behalf) manipulated here the official rhetoric of “nature,” referring to his “hopeless lack of ability” and to the notion of correlation between age and fitness for study, in order to achieve his own goals. It is even more remarkable that his goal was to get out of the Corps and be transferred into the army: he explicitly asked for that. Given the realities of the 1730s, it went without saying that he was to be transferred as a private: rather than mastering the “advanced and numerous studies,” this nobleman preferred to

438 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 650, l. 27.
serve as common soldier in the infantry. Mel’nitskii’s story, then, raises questions regarding the relationship between the state and the nobility in early eighteenth-century Russia. On the one hand, it appears to confirm the conclusion I drew in chapter 5 regarding the meaning of the demands and proposals presented during the crisis of 1730. I argued that by suggesting that “the nobles not be drafted, against their will [nevoleiu], as sailors and other demeaning [podlye] and low ranks,” and that “special cadet companies” be established, the Supreme Privy Council was, in fact, not offering concessions to placate the nobility, but proposed a program for reforming the elite. Indeed, the Mel’nitskii case suggests that service as a private in the army was not viewed by him as “demeaning” (service in the navy, admittedly, was another matter). The Supreme Privy Council was clearly not speaking on Mel’nitskii’s behalf.

On the other hand, Mel’nitskii’s case seems to fit suspiciously well the traditional picture of passive society/elite dominated, manipulated, and shaped by the state. No “traditional consultative relations” or “negotiation” between the elite and the monarchy is apparent here; nor is Mel’nitskii protected by any sort of kinship and/patronage network. The only option left for him is to attempt to avoid the disciplining impulses of the intrusive state by maneuvering his way out of the Corps and by relying on the weapons of the weak, foot-dragging and manipulation of the official discourse. Yet, as the following chapters make clear, at the end of the day some nobles did end up studying at the Corps, and did so voluntarily. In general, a desire to study might not necessarily appear to be something problematic. If one considers, however, that a few years earlier the nobles seem to have resisted Peter’s attempt to impose a Westernized education on them, and that – as the following chapters also show – they continued to do so in the 1730s, the decision of some nobles to join the Corps deserves further investigation. In a way, to ask about reason that
brought them to the Corps is to ask why and how the “Westernization” project became sustainable in Russia.

The “search for society” has traditionally been one of the central themes in the historiography of Russia, and it is still relevant today. This is especially true as far as the eighteenth century is concerned. Indeed, the entire period starting with the reign of Peter I up to the accession of Catherine II in 1762 remains in this regard a vast lacuna. In the 1760s, the elections of the deputies to the Legislative Commission and their subsequent debates became an important occasion for views of the nobility to be expressed and recorded in the cahiers of its delegates. As far as the earlier period is concerned, however, historians in their attempts to find manifestations of agency on the part of the elite in the post-Petrine period refer, basically, to the actions and demands of the nobility only during the crisis of 1730, that is, to half a dozen documents hastily written in circumstances of great political uncertainty, urgency, and agitation, plus a dozen or so descriptions of these events by foreign envoys. Historians have very few memoirs, and even fewer personal letters that could be used to reconstruct the views and attitudes of the nobility in the post-Petrine decades. The existence of society as somehow distinct in its reactions, aspirations, and interests from the state apparatus in early eighteenth-century Russia remains assumed, but not proven.

In this chapter, I address the issue by using data from the archive of the Corps and also from the governmental bureaus (first and foremost, the Heraldry) to study the attitudes of the nobility toward education and different types of careers, which I treat as a proxy for their attitudes toward the Petrine project in general and as a window

unto the relationship between the elite and the state in general. As I demonstrate in Part II, Anna’s government believed it advisable to give the nobles some leeway to choose their career path according to their “inclinations.” The hope was that this would help induce them to serve with more “zeal” and “diligence.” This assumption was codified in the decrees of 1736-1737, which remained in force throughout the 1740s and 1750s as well. Nobles indeed got an opportunity to choose between various schools and branches of service, thus creating a situation that allows me to observe their choices and preferences directly. In their applications to the Corps young nobles did not write why they decided to join it, and what the education meant for them socially and culturally. Still, by studying these choices within their social context (family background, various types of resources, including social networks), I am able to look for evidence of agency on their part vis-à-vis various requirements and rules imposed by the state. Their reactions to these opportunities tell us about social dynamics in post-Petrine Russia, opportunities for social mobility, and the limits of such mobility. More broadly, I address in this chapter the boundaries of autocracy, the constitution of the elite, and the social uses of education.

Primarily, however, I am interested in the ways in which the actions of single individuals are shaped by larger social processes and, in turn, shape these processes and move them forward – especially in a period of a large-scale cultural transformation. Thus, speaking about Westernization, I will not be looking into the question of whether the views and ideas of post-Petrine nobility were, indeed, evolving (not least because my sources do not allow me to say much about the subject). For my purposes, it is enough that the nobles willingly accepted (or rejected) certain norms of behavior, agreed (or declined) to participate in certain institutions that were central to the campaign of social disciplining introduced in the 1730s and,
more broadly, to the Petrine project. Specifically, I am interested in why some of them voluntarily agreed to receive that kind of secular, utilitarian, non-traditional (for Russia) education that Peter in previous decades spent so much effort forcing upon them. In this section I rely on Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of “cultural capital,” which I treat as an important factor shaping individual choices made by nobles. My understanding of change in society is shaped by works of Anthony Giddens, especially as reformulated by William H. Sewell, Jr. See Anthony Giddens, The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1984); William H., Sewell Jr., “A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation,” The American Review of Sociology 98, no. 1 (July 1992): 1-29. My undersanding of individual agency is informed by recent debates on the subject, especially Aya Rod, "The Third Man: or, Agency in History; or, Rationality in Reevolution," History and Theory 40, no. 4 (December 2001): 143-152, and the very helpful forum on the subject in that issue of History and Theory in general.

In this case my focus on the individual dictates the methodology. Rank-and-file nobles did not leave letters or diaries, and official records that serve as my sources are almost the opposite of being narrative. Therefore, my approach in Part III is based on treating their recorded actions as choices and on attempting to interpret these choices within their social context, as could be deduced from official documents. I do my best to let my subjects speak with their own voice whenever it could be heard through the formulaic dryness of petitions and records. That, however, does not happen as often as one would like. I am also aware of two other major pitfalls inherent in this approach. First, I realize that the elements of social context I attempt to tease out of my sources are no more than random glimpses of early eighteenth-century social reality. Second, I realize that in the absence of my subjects’ own voice I, in fact, ascribe certain meaning to their actions. I hope, however, that “through judicious

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use of inference and induction, one can profile the likely principles and operating assumptions of both collective entities and relatively inarticulate individuals. 441

In chapter 10, I address the question of how much room for choice the young nobles had in the post-Petrine period. I discuss how the policies and rules, analyzed in the previous chapter, worked in practice, and how the nobility reacted to opportunities presented by these policies and rules. Specifically, I show how the process of application/admission to the Corps was organized. The state expected to fill the ranks of the cadets with volunteers, rather than force nobles into the new school. So the key question here is whether that was how the selection for the Corps (and for other schools and branches of service) worked. If young nobles indeed had real opportunities to express their educational and career preferences and act these preferences out, that would be the most obvious possibility for them to exercise their agency vis-à-vis the norms promoted by the state.

In chapter 11, I discuss the social composition of the student body at the Corps. If admission to the Corps was voluntary, one might expect a certain self-selection process to take place, reflecting differences in attitudes toward education as a way of starting one’s career compared to alternative paths available to young nobles at the time. I look for these differences in career preferences by studying the family background of incoming cadets and also by comparing the family backgrounds of the incoming cadets to that of young nobles who chose other schools or other modes of starting their service.

In chapter 12, I turn to the other major area where one might expect to find evidence of agency on the part of the nobility. From the age of seven young nobles were expected to follow a prescribed program of home schooling that reflected the state’s priorities. The same priorities were embedded in the curriculum of the Corps. In this section I examine the educational records of cadets prior to entering the Corps in order to find out the degree to which they deviated from the prescribed program, and if they did deviate substantially, whether these deviations formed any consistent patterns. Similarly, I study their education records at the Corps itself to see if they exhibit any preferences toward particular subjects. Finally, in chapter 13 I attempt to explain the choices and preferences exercised by young nobles by exploring the role of various resources available to families (patronage networks, connections, and opportunities provided by service, etc.) in shaping their educational decisions and preferences. This analysis allows me to offer some suggestions regarding the scope of individual agency in post-Petrine Russia and the contribution of this agency to the sustainability of the “Westernization” project.
Filling the Ranks: Freedom of Choice in post-Petrine Russia

“This decree of ours is to be published and made known for all of the nobility, so that the volunteers (zhelaiushchie) would come to the Senate [to sign up for the Corps],” – read an imperial decree of July 29, 1731, announcing the foundation of the Corps. As I show in Part II, this call for “volunteers” was a radical departure from the Petrine habit of filling the schools, bureaus, and branches of service by arbitrarily drafting a required number of candidates: the government was actually looking for those willing to study at the new school. This change of policy was further reflected in the new rules of entering state service established at the end of 1730s that gave nobles a right to choose between alternative ways of studying (at home, in “garrison” schools, at the Cadet Corps and similar schools) and starting one’s service (in the guards, in the field army, or at the Corps). In this chapter I discuss how this policy was implemented in practice, how much room for choice it actually gave to the nobles, and how the nobles reacted to these opportunities.

On August 9, 1731 Count Iaguzhinskii, the Procurator-General of the Senate, ordered the Master of the Heraldry to supervise the enrollment of the “volunteers.” By mid-November, however, the new institution had attracted only twenty four students. The first to sign up, on August 16, was Aleksandr Novosiltsev, son of a Privy Councilor and senator. The next day he was joined by the Protasov brothers,

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442 PSZ #5811

443 RGADA f. 286, op. 1, d. 116.
Iakov and Ivan, whose father was a retired colonel; he had a considerable estate (450 male serfs), and resided in Moscow. Ivan Polev signed up three days later; his father, a major, was dead, and he had no serfs whatsoever. Two more young nobles also signed up on the same day. One was Andrei Pozniakov, son of the chief of the St. Petersburg police, the other – Mikhail Bakhmetev, whose father was a mere ensign in the navy yet belonged to an old and established noble family. Later Nikifor Maslov joined the Corps: his father, an ennobled commoner, became ober-prokuror of the Senate late that year. He was followed by Aleksandr Voeikov, son of an Actual State Councilor and former ober-prokuror of the Senate; and Evgraf Tatishchev, son of Vasilii Tatishchev. There was clearly no discrimination against less prominent nobles, such as Davyd Stupishin, son of a zhiltets (a pre-Petrine rank) who owned a mere twenty six m.s. Still, the volunteers who showed up in the first few months in order to enter the Corps generally represented the families of prominent upper-mid-level civil servants and/or well-established, but not particularly illustrious, noble clans. Tatishchev, as we know, actively supported and promoted formal education for the nobility as a matter of principle; the fathers of some of these first cadets, especially Novosiltsev and Maslov, had been close collaborators of Peter and might be suspected of sharing Tatishchev’s views. Overall, however, the number of volunteers was clearly unsatisfactory from the government’s point of view: the number of candidates that it had managed to attract was a far cry from the nearly two hundred students planned for the new school. The call for volunteers was not answered.

A few months later the overall direction of the Corps was assumed by von Münnich, and just few days after his appointment the authorities attempted to re-launch the enrollment campaign. A new proclamation, issued on December 4, urged volunteers to sign up “without any delay.” On a rhetorical level, this decree further
emphasized the reasons for the creation of the Corps and its importance for the well-being of the state. On a practical level, however, it also spelled out in more detail various characteristics that were supposed to make the Corps more attractive, including its location, accommodation in the Menshikov Palace, its curriculum, etc. Importantly, it also declared that successful graduates would receive officer commissions and NCO ranks without having first to serve as privates (the original decree did not state this explicitly). Intuitively one would think that it would make the Corps especially attractive to the lower nobility, who could not expect to receive promotion through connections, for example. Of a great practical importance was another provision, also aimed at the less wealthy nobility. Rather than having to travel to the capital in order to sign up for the Corps, young nobles were now allowed to enroll in both St. Petersburg and in Moscow, and also in the regional capitals of the Baltic provinces, in Riga and Reval.\(^{444}\)

In addition to these measures meant to facilitate the enrollment process, the Empress took steps to stress her special disposition toward the Corps. Among other things, in December 1731 prospective students were invited to sign up not at the Senate, but directly at the Court through the Aide-de-Camps (General-Ad’utant) of the empress. The other step was the decision to send to the Corps a number of imperial in-laws: Ivan and Martyn Skavronskii, Ivan and Andrei Gendrikov, and Andrei and Ivan Efimovskii (all of them relatives of Catherine I, Peter I’s second wife), as well as Vasilii Lopukhin (a nephew of the emperor’s first wife, Evdokia). Besides, in December 1731, the government also sent to the Corps a dozen young

\(^{444}\) PSZ #5894
nobles – pages of two recently deceased female members of the imperial family.445 These were emphatically not volunteers: these young nobles were already in service, and so the government simply transferred them as it saw fit. A number of these ex-pages were characteristically doubtful whether staying at the Corps would indeed be good for their careers. In a short while they began petitioning to be transferred elsewhere. Aleksei Pushchin complained that it was somewhat of an “offence” to be sent to the Corps instead of getting a commission in the army where he could “better observe all sorts of rules in general, and to prove [him]self in active service, and to learn military regulations.” Some of these young nobles wrote about being disadvantaged compared to their peers (“brothers,” in the words of another ex-page, Prince Fedor Lobanov) in the army, and claimed to be unfit for study due to their “old age” that weakened their “comprehension” (Prince Lobanov was only seventeen in 1731). The language of their complaints is strikingly similar to the official discourse on age, human “nature,” and ability discussed in Parts I and II.446 This is only one instance of the cadets using and manipulating official language in order to achieve their own goals.

Taken together, these measures produced the desired results: the number of applicants sharply increased – so much so that already in May 1732 von Münnich was in a position to ask for an expansion of the Corps from 200 to 360 cadets. By June the Corps had 282 cadets, 223 of them “Russian.”447 However, that was achieved at the price of quality. Overall, it took the authorities some time to sort the young nobles out

445 These were Tsaritsa Evdokia, recently released from the nunnery, where Peter confined her after their divorce, and Empress Anna’s own younger sister, Praksovia. Luzanov, Sukhoputniy shl’akhetskiy kadetskii korpus, 5.

446 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1632, ll. 70-71 ob, 87.

447 Luzanov, Sukhoputniy shl’akhetskiy kadetskii korpus, 31.
and to remove those deemed unfit for study. Authorities were evidently eager to get the Corps started, so up to a quarter of all cadets from the first intake were over twenty years old, and thus considered unfit for study by the standards of the day. The teachers did their best to rush these young men through some basic training and send them off to the army. Others, though accepted into the Corps, turned out to be quite simply unfit physically. The commanding officer of the 2nd Company reported in 1732 that three of his cadets should have not been at the Corps at all. Those included Ivan Glebovskii who “had lost his mind and talks nonsense (sovsem zaviraetsia),” and Ivan Chikhachev who “has sickness in his hands (rukami skorben) and cannot handle a gun.” Whereas these two young men were declared unfit physically, another, Aleksandr Kireevskii, was being dismissed because of his unsatisfactory morals: he has “escaped twice, committed certain thefts, and behaves inappropriately [ne po nadlezhashchemu] in his quarters.” Clearly, admission rules and procedures were neither clear, nor sufficiently rigid at this point: authorities just wanted to get the new school up and running and so needed to fill the ranks at pretty much any cost.

In later years, however, finding the number of acceptable applicants necessary to fill opening positions became less of a problem, especially since the Corps also needed fewer volunteers - it only had to fill the vacancies left open by graduating cadets. Overall, according to a register, compiled by Corps officials in the 1760s, it accepted 1773 students in the period from 1731 to 1763, that is, approximately 30 to 100 new cadets a year. One should note that the concept of a yearly “intake” is artificial: the Corps’s officials did not think in terms of yearly quotas for admission

448 Luzanov, Sukhoputnyi shl’akheinyi kadetskii korpus, 38.
449 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1632, l. 87
450 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 444.
applications were accepted and considered, and the students enrolled into the Corps on an ongoing basis. Some young nobles, however, were even accepted *sverkh shtata*, i.e. on top of the normal complement, at their own expense. It is not clear, however, how many nobles were so desperate to educate their children at the Corps as to be ready to cover their expenses (costs of living in the capital and buying a uniform): those “extra” students were not listed as a separate category on the Corps’ rolls, and eventually moved into the “normal” vacancies. We know, though, that those were not necessarily the richest nobles: among those willing to study at their own expense we find, for example, Ivan Chirikov, the son of a mere “collegiate secretary”451 who had no serfs whatsoever.452

Details of enrollment procedures varied over time, but in general young nobles seem to have had to follow roughly the same path in order to join the Corps. After the new system of registration for service was established in 1736-1737s, they all had to present themselves at the Heraldry. Their names and personal information were recorded, and these reports eventually found their way into the Corps’ yearly registers, which are the main source for this study. In these reports young nobles reported their name and age; their father’s name, rank, branch of service, and also whether he was retired or dead; the number of male serfs in their family’s possession, and also the districts where they had estates; their previous education, that is, whether they could read and write, knew arithmetic, and anything besides that, in most cases foreign languages or geometry. The registration procedures at the Heraldry changed slightly over time, and the records reflect the authorities’ attempts to collect more information, specifically, to make the young nobles report their ancestry and list their

451 A rank in civil service equivalent to “junior captain” in the military..
452 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2251, l.34.
relatives currently in service.\footnote{Unfortunately, these attempts were ultimately unsuccessful, and some of the yearly registers contain only bits and pieces of this information. In practice, reports filed by young nobles (and consequently, the entries in the yearly registers) were far from complete. Scholars note the overall breakdown of the system of registration of young nobles for service in the first half of the 1730s (see Kalashnikov, “Oﬁcerskii korpus,” 167; Romanovich-Slavatinskii, Dvor’anstvo v Rossi, 79-80), and indeed for 1731-1732 we do not have any personal data on the incoming cadets whatsoever: the register lists their names and age only. The only exception here is the list of the first twenty four cadets who signed up for the Corps in the fall of August-November 1731. Overall, we have fairly fragmentary information for the 1730s, and that is why my conclusions about 1730s are based on a pooled data from 1736-1737 and some scattered examples from the earlier years.} Officials at the Heraldry checked whether the minors were indeed were nobles or officers’ children (applicants had to bring a witness to certify their nobility), whether they were physically fit,\footnote{There does not seem to have been any rigorous medical examination: apparently all were declared fit who had no obvious physical defect, or did not claim to be unfit; in the latter case a medical professional might be summoned.} and whether they fulfilled the minimum educational requirements. The rest of the information could not be verified immediately; only in the case of serious doubts were inquiries made with the local authorities, or with the bureaus and the regiments where the fathers of the young men allegedly served.

The Noble Cadet Corps’s charter did not provide any criteria for accepting or rejecting the applicants. The decisions, in fact, were often made on the highest level: applications to the Corps had to be forwarded to the highest authorities for approval. At various points the decision-making body was the Senate, the Cabinet, or the empress herself. The Senate and the Cabinet not only made the calls, but even inspected young nobles in person: for example, in January 1734, a typical order to send two young nobles into the guards, three – into the army, and one more – into the artillery was personally signed by Anna after these youngsters were examined by the Cabinet.\footnote{RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 135, l. 28.} At the same time, neither the Heraldry, nor the Cabinet, nor the Senate had much information on the number of openings in the schools or regiments. In 1732, for
example, the Semenovskii Guards sent to the Heraldry an acerbic “memo” that the last group of young nobles arriving from the Heraldry had to be enrolled into the regiment outside of the normal complement and without pay, and thus the Heraldry was not to send any more recruits until specifically requested.\(^{456}\) In general, young nobles were sent to the guards, to the schools, or to the Military College that were to accommodate them: the Heraldry forwarded orders received from above, politely asking to be informed of the young nobles’ eventual appointments.\(^{457}\)

*   *   *

An opportunity for young nobles to express their preferred career choices while coming for a review at the Heraldry was an accepted practice throughout the 1730s, and these preferences were recorded together with the rest of the personal information. Surprisingly, the available data suggest that this was not an empty formality. In a sample of young nobles registered at the Heraldry in 1745 a vast majority of them were assigned to schools and branches of service according to their expressed preferences. More than two thirds of those young nobles who wanted to serve in the Guards ended up in these elite regiments, usually in those to which they specifically applied. In a similar manner, almost all the young nobles who wanted to study at garrison schools and the bulk of those who applied to the elite schools in the capitals were granted their wishes.\(^{458}\)

\(^{456}\) RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 183, l. 3.

\(^{457}\) RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 135, l. 47.

\(^{458}\) RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 305. The extremely unpopular Naval Academy was, however, a significant exception. It accounts, for example, for the majority (14 out of 20) of youngsters who wanted to be in the Engineering School or the Corps of Engineers (the documents do not always make a clear distinction between these two bodies), but ended up elsewhere. The Heraldry register for 1745 mentions thirty three young nobles who were sent to the Naval Academy, and only five of them were volunteers – the rest wanted to be in the Artillery School (2), Cadet Corps (2), Guards regiments (5), the field regiments (5), and the engineers (14). The Naval Academy was, apparently, the only branch of
So, admission to the Cadet Corps seems to have been organized predominantly on the voluntarily basis (there were some exceptions in 1732), and rejections were surprisingly few. On November 10, 1736, for example, the Corps’s director sent to the Heraldry a list of forty four young nobles who “over the course of the current year” came to the Corps and asked to be admitted. The director, however, insisted that nobody could be enrolled into the Corps without a personal decree (*imennoi ukaz*) from the Empress and so asked the Heraldry to refer the matter to the Cabinet and request it to be resolved. On December 3, the Cabinet (A.I. Ostermann and Prince Cherkasskii) made its decision: out of forty four volunteers, thirty were enrolled into the Corps. There does not seem to be a clear rule that might explain the selection; in any case, about two thirds of those left out eventually appear on the Corps’s rolls anyway, some already in the same year, but most - in 1737-38. The case of the Pustoshkin brothers, Ivan and Petr, presents, however, a useful illustration of the limits to this freedom to choose: the brothers were selected by Colonel Eropkin, an architect, to be his apprentices. The only reason for selecting them seems to have been the age of the brothers, and indeed, at eleven and nine years old, respectively, they were the youngest in the group. How Eropkin came to learn about the brothers and their age is not clear; still he pointed out that “due to their age they are not fit for any service, except for study,” while he, Eropkin, had lots of work and few apprentices. The Cabinet granted his request.459

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service, and definitely, the only school, which was provided with students in a good old Petrine fashion, by means of governmental decrees.

459 RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 183, ll. 405-408, 416. Eropkin was himself a member of an established noble family, who was arbitrary chosen to study architecture by Peter I. That, however, has not precluded him from becoming successful in this field and playing an important role in building St.Petersburg. In 1740 he was beheaded in connection with the Volynskii affair. See N.V. Kaliazina, E.A. Kaliazin, “Petr Eropkin,” in *Zodchie St.Peterburga. XVIII vek* (SPb, 1997), 156-190.
It seems relatively clear, therefore, that the nobles had considerable freedom to choose the Cadet Corps. The question is how free they were to choose the opposite option, that is, not to study at all. The system of service introduced in 1736-1737 required that all of them study, in one way or the other. As I mentioned earlier, in the 1740s-1750s the government of Elizabeth repeatedly amnestied the young nobles. Indeed, according to S.M. Troitskii, overall, from 1743 to 1750, 8753 young nobles came for a review at the Senate and the Heraldry. After the review, 801 of them were sentenced to various forms of punishment prescribed by law for skipping a review, or coming late for it. Out of them, 725 young nobles were condemned to serve as privates without right of promotion, 58 - to be sent to the navy as sailors “forever,” and 18 were to be exiled as settlers to Orenburg. At the end of the day, however, only 92 were punished, the rest were pardoned by the Empress on the recommendation of the Senate.460 In June 1745, for example, the Senate decreed that Stepan Salov be sent into the navy “forever.” Yet already in July it was decided to let him instead stay at home until age sixteen in order to study arithmetic and geometry. Another example is Nikolai Sharygin who came for his first review in June 1745. He was already sixteen years old, and although literate, he had not studied anything besides reading and writing, so he was in clear violation of the law on two accounts. Sharygin justified his failure to come for a review earlier and also to study prescribed subjects by two facts. First, his father died (although that happened only in 1743, so it could not really account for his failure to register for service earlier); second, already before his father’s death Sharygin was allegedly stricken by a “sickness of the legs and head” (nozhnoi i golovnoi bolezniu). Sharygin claimed that a relative of his, a certain Mikhailo Voznitsyn, registered him with the Penza provincial authorities and reported

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460 Troitskii, Russkii absol’utizm, 142.
his illness in 1743 (“and which month it was, I don’t remember.”) Sharygin insisted that as soon as he recovered, that is, in May 1745, he went to the Heraldry. Penza province, however, could not find records of Voznitsyn’s visit, nor could Sharygin produce any certificate or letter to that effect. In July the Senate (predictably, one would think) banished Sharygin to the navy forever; in September, however, the Senate reconsidered and sent Sharygin to study at the Naval Academy instead.461

Note, however, that Sharygin’s behavior could not be explained by poverty preventing him from traveling to capital: in fact, he came from a distinctly mid-level family: he had 150 male serfs in Arzamas and Penza districts; his grandfather was a stol’nik (a reasonably high pre-Petrine rank), his father – an infantry captain. I would argue that the failure to observe the law was as much a result of a choice made by the family, as of anything else. A review of the sources shows that those young nobles who eventually volunteered for schooling, as a rule, dutifully observed the law and reported for their first review at age seven. Those who asked to be sent v sluzhbu (into the army) most often came for their first review only in their teens, thus condemning themselves to starting the service as army privates. I would argue that not coming for a review or not studying was also a choice: nobles who were not interested in studies and promotions simply avoided review as long as they could, and then came to the Heraldry fully expecting to be sent as privates to the army and treating it not so much as a punishment, as an acceptable and, probably, preferable option.

The data in this chapter show that the government in general followed its declared policy of letting the nobles choose their own careers. There was no guaranteed freedom of choice, of course: the practical needs of the state or the whims

461 RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 305, ll. 314, 318-319.
of the monarch and her top ministers always took precedence. If such a decision was made, there was no room for negotiation. These occasions, however, were as rare as they were unpredictable. In general, the Heraldry, for example, appeared neutral in its attitude: there is no evidence that it took any institutional position on how the young nobles should be distributed among various branches of service. Similarly, even when there were formal rules, they were usually vague and seem to have never been applied rigorously. Once again, that was the case only when there was no pressure on the institution to fulfill a certain task – for example, to provide some schools or regiments with a certain number of recruits. As a result, young nobles in most cases had ample opportunities to exercise their career and educational preferences by making choices while under review in the Heraldry. The vast majority of nobles, however, were not interested in opportunities to get an education for free and earn a commission by the age of 20 by applying themselves to their studies.
Chapter 11

Living chestno, chisto i neubogo:

Wealth, Rank, Birth, and Career Preferences of the Russian Nobility

The idea that the post-Petrine Russian elite was not a homogeneous entity comes from the contemporaries themselves. The documents of the crisis of 1730 imply a number of distinctions, in particular, between the “prominent,” or aristocratic (znatnye) families and the rest, and also between the so-called generalitet\footnote{The generalitet included approximately 170 individuals who held general officer ranks and equivalent ranks in civil and other branches of service. These individuals occupied top positions in government agencies and in the provinces, and led armies and deliberated in the Senate; they included the wealthiest individuals in the realm and, Petrine reforms notwithstanding, came overwhelmingly from the old Duma families. The generalitet, it is important to note, was category that was used both by the state agencies and by contemporaries themselves, but was not a formally recognized legal or administrative entity. For a detailed study of generalitet of 1730, see Meehan-Waters, Aristocrats and Servitors; for a recent appraisal of her study, see Kurukin, Epokha, 183-185. Note also that generalitet as a social category does not seem to be used beyond the immediate post-Petrine years.} and shl’akhetsvo\footnote{The word shl’akhetsvo, derived from the Polish szcliahta, was first officially used as a term by Peter himself in 1712, and in the 1720s-1730s became a common way of referring to the nobility The term came to be used since before Peter there was no generic term for nobility: the Russian dvor’anstvo (singular dvor’anin) was technically one of the lower ranks of the pre-Petrine service class; thus, a boyar was not a dvor’anin. Note that throughout the 1730s-1740s shl’akhetsvo is used interchangeably with the Russian dvor’anstvo, and later the borrowed term was completely replaced by the Russian one. Pavlov-Silvanskii, Dvor’anstvo v Rossii, 224-225.}. These groups are mentioned as constituencies, which were to present the proposals and to approve the final arrangements, and it was the issue of their fair and equitable representation in this final arrangement which, apparently, produced the most disagreement and discontent during the crisis. The “proposal of 364,” for example, called for the highest officers of state to be elected by “the generalitet and shl’akhetsvo.” At the same time, the shl’akhetsvo itself, it appears, was not uniform in the contemporaries’ eyes either. The “proposal of 13” calls for “making a distinction between the old and the new shl’akhetsvo,” while Senator I.A. Musin-
Pushkin suggested that the members of the future governing body be selected from “among those with a pedigree (famil’nykh), among the generalitet, and among the prominent (znatnoe) shl’akhetstvo.”

Historians traditionally insist that it was the need to satisfy the aspirations voiced by this shl’akhetstvo in 1730 that motivated Anna’s decision to establish the Corps as well as to limit the term of obligatory service to twenty five years. A study of the signatories of the “proposal of 364” by I.V. Kurukin shows that they indeed were “the mainstay of the Russian state … officers and civil officials who occupied mid-level positions in the army and in the state apparatus.” Over half of them held ranks from captain to colonel, and almost half had somewhere between 100 and 500 serfs. At the same time, none of these categories was ever officially recognized by the state, and besides the documents of the crisis itself, there is not much evidence as to the very existence of these groups. Were there, indeed, any meaningful divisions within the elite – any groups that might be distinguished from each other by their attitudes, self-perceptions, common interests, and shared pattern of behavior? Do their signatures reflect anything besides the fact that were present in Moscow – or, perhaps, that they were of high enough rank so that the key participants of the crisis cared to invite them to rubber-stamp the projects?

In this chapter I focus on one particular element of the attitudes of the elite. I examine the family backgrounds of incoming cadets in an attempt to identify any consistent patterns in educational and career preferences of Russian nobles. Specifically, I focus on three key elements of elite status in early-modern Russia –

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464 Kurukin, Epokha, 180-181; Serov, Administratsia, 58.
465 For example, Anisimov, Rossiia bez Petra, 293; Kamenskii, Ot Petra, 246-248.
466 Kurukin, Epokha, 185-186.
wealth, rank, and birth (aristocratic lineage). In other words my goal here is to establish whether the young nobles interested in opportunities provided by the Corps formed a distinct group within the elite, and if they did, to place this group on the social map of early-modern Russia. Since, as I showed in the previous chapter, the nobles joined the Corps more or less voluntarily, my question here is who among the Russian elite was, so to say, “voting with their feet” for Westernization.

*   *   *

Wealth was a key characteristic of an eighteenth-century Russian nobleman for a number of reasons. In pre-Petrine Russia servitors received land and serfs from the state depending on their position in the service hierarchy; wealth was largely a function of rank. In the post-Petrine period one’s legal standing as a noble gave one the right (in the second half of the eighteenth century, an exclusive right) to own land and serfs, and thus possession of assets of a certain type in many ways shaped his identity. Also, one’s wealth supposedly had an impact on access to a “Western” education and way of life, once again, increasingly important for a noble identity in the eighteenth century. Wealth, measured as the number of male serfs (“male souls”) was an important indicator of one’s status from the official point of view as well, so the entering cadets, among other things, were normally asked about their family wealth.467

The categories of wealth that are traditionally used by historians are suggested by contemporary documents. The officially accepted poverty line for nobles seems to

have stood in the early eighteenth century at around twenty m.s. For example, nobles with less than 20 m.s. were exempted from the requirements to travel to the capital for a final review at the Heraldry, and from paying a certain fee upon retirement, while in 1740 it was decreed to enroll them into the less prestigious regiments of the line, rather than into the Guards. When the Senate in 1737 drafted regulations for assigning young nobles aspiring for a civil careers as apprentices, or \emph{tunkery}, to various governmental bureaus, it proposed that only the youth with no less than 25 m.s., be assigned to the central agencies, since they were able to maintain themselves “honorably, cleanly, and not miserably” (\textit{chestno, chisto, i neubogo}).\footnote{468 PSZ # 6488, 6949, 8081, 7201. According to the Manifesto of 1762, retiring nobles with less than twenty m.s. were to officially certify that they would not later apply for pension on account of their poverty.} In other words, the government not only attempted to identify the poverty level (and therefore, the stratum of the nobility eligible for lenient treatment) – it also suggested a linkage between one’s lifestyle (as defined through wealth) and standing within the elite. In a way, here it reversed the Petrine logic. Whereas Peter demanded, for example, that all nobles with certain wealth build houses in St.Petersburg and send their sons to the Naval Academy or to the guards, now the government suggested that only nobles able to live nobly would be eligible for certain positions.

Another significant watershed appears to have stood at 100 m.s. A decree issued in 1737 provided that the most prestigious apprenticeships at the Senate would be reserved only for the young nobles with more than 100 m.s. who could afford an appropriate lifestyle.\footnote{469 PSZ #7171. Note also that Anna’s government called for enrolling in the Guards those nobles who “have sufficient means \textit{[dostatok]} to support themselves while in the Guards.” Officers of the Guards were now required to arrive for guard duty at the palace on their own well-bred horses. Quoted in Kurukin, \textit{Epokha}, 41.} Similarly, the 1736 Manifesto that set the rules for registering young nobles for service implied that the fathers who owned 100 m.s. were wealthy
enough to teach their children arithmetic, geometry, and foreign languages.\textsuperscript{470} The
next gradation of wealth could be deduced from a letter to Peter I from the Military
College, which suggested the possession of 100 households (around 400-500 m.s.), as
a definition of “prominent” (\textit{znatnoe}) nobility.\textsuperscript{471} Finally, the Military Commission of
Field-Marshall von M"unnich suggested in 1731 that the owners of 1,000 m.s. were so
rich that they should pay a double fee for an exemption from service.\textsuperscript{472}

\textsuperscript{470} PSZ #7171, 7201. This understanding of a divide between the wealthy and the poorer
nobles had a long history. Already in the seventeenth century servitors had to have more than 24 serf
households (approximately 80 to 100 m.s.) to serve in the “hundreds,” or traditional noble cavalry
militia, whereas the \textit{detti boiarcke} with less than 24 households were drafted as foot soldiers into the
“New Type regiments,” that is, into the standing army. I.E. Vodarskii, \textit{Naseleienie Rossii v kontse XVII-
nachale XVIII veka: Chislennost’, soslovno-klassovy sostav, razmeshchenie} (Moscow, 1977), 62.

\textsuperscript{471} PSZ #4588, n.9. This definition, as we already noted, was not accepted by Peter.

\textsuperscript{472} Romanovich-Slavatinskii, \textit{Dvor’anstvo v Rossii}, 194-195. This gradation (20 – 100 – 500 –
1000 m.s.) is used in the majority of works. See, for example, N.M. Shepukova, "Ob izmenenii
razmerov dushevvladenia pomeshekiv Evropeiskoi Rossii v pervoi chetverti XVIII - pervoi polovine
XIX v.,” in \textit{Ezhegodnik po agrarnoi istorii Vostochnoi Evropy}. 1963 (Vilnius, 1964); Kahan, “The
Costs of Westernization”; Mironov, \textit{Sotsial’naia istoriia}. Vol.I, 89. Faizova uses a more extensive list
of categories, but that does not make any much sense: the difference between an estate, say, of 40 and 70
m.s. was too small to have any meaningful impact on one’s way of life. Of course, the official data
might be misleading: profitability of estates differed depending on their location, quality of land, and
quality of management. In his unpublished dissertation Gleb Kalashnikov cites fascinating examples
of correspondence between two officers and their bailiffs in 1728-1731. Vasili Obukhov, of the
Nizhegorodskii Infantry, owned mere 27 m.s., yet he received from his estates hundreds rubles
annually and kept eight horses and seven serf menservants. Dmitrii Kalugin, of the Novotrotskii
Dragoons, owner of 96 m.s., received from his estates in the Moscow region only 20-30 rubles per
year. Kalugin complained to his bailiff that due to the latter’s negligence he could not afford to buy
footwear for his manservant, or even meat. See Kalashnikov, “Ofitserskii korpus,” 113-114. Neither
were one’s serfs his only source of income. Already in the second half of the seventeenth century the
income from one’s estate was often substantially complemented with a salary, a pension, or with illegal
profits derived from abusing one’s official. Another source of income was, of course, marketing of
various goods produced on the estates, notably alcohol, which guaranteed good returns on minimal
investment and was much easier to store and transport than grain and other agricultural products. See
Kahan, “The Costs of Westernization,” 55-60. Unfortunately, there exist no studies of the actual
budgets of the eighteenth-century noble families that would take into account all these potential sources
of income. Note, for example that the father of Ivan Chirikov had no serfs whatsoever, yet he was
willing to keep his son at the Corps at his own expense. At the same time, the Lvov brothers, Fedor and
Petr, though nominally the owners of 160 m.s. complained of their inability to afford living in the
capital on their own and to buy a uniform. The Khovanskii princes, heirs to a fortune of thousands of
serfs, explained their failure to report to the Corps in time by the lack of funds due to the “great debts”
left by their father. See RGVIA f. 314, op. 1, d. 2251, l. 34; d. 2197, II. 9, 106. Moreover, the Russian
nobles stubbornly adhered to the traditional practice of multiple inheritance, which meant that quite a
substantial fortune might have been reduced to total non-significance only one generation later. One
should also remember that the nobles reported not the actual number of the serfs working on their
estate, but rather the number recorded during the last census, which might have took place ten years
ago. That makes the data on the petty nobles especially ambiguous: a noble who nominally owned
twenty m.s. might well have had 40 serfs working his land – or close to zero. With all these reservation,
The distribution of landlords according to the number of serfs in their possession in early eighteenth-century Russia is shown in Table 3.1. The data put the efforts made by the post-Petrine government to create a “true nobility” and its concern with the ability of young iunker’s to maintain an appropriate lifestyle into broader perspective: in fact, over half of all Russian nobles were well below the government-recognized poverty line. Only about 40 percent of all nobles were in a position to maintain themselves “honorable” enough to be apprentices at the central government bureaus, and less than twenty percent (actually, less than ten percent in 1727) could afford the lifestyle that was considered appropriate for a iunker at the Senate.

Table 3.1

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Male Serfs</th>
<th>Number and Percentage of Landlords</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1727</td>
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<td></td>
<td>%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of landlords, thousands</td>
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<tr>
<td>- 20</td>
<td>60.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-100</td>
<td>30.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>101-500</td>
<td>7.7</td>
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<td>501-1000</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<td>1000 +</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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Kalashnikov still finds in his work that only the officers with 150 – 200 m.s. tended to own multiple horses and to have serf’ menservants. Kalashnikov, “Ofitserskii korpus,” 114.

Against this backdrop the most striking feature of the Corps’s student body is that incoming cadets as a group were significantly wealthier than the Russian nobility in general. However, really wealthy cadets (with over 1,000 m.s.) were not numerous: there were no more than a few of them in a normal yearly intake. For example, in 1750 among the new students there were two Khovanskii princes (4,800 m.s.), Prince Ivan Golitsyn (4,000 m.s.), Baron Pavel Shafirov (1,580 m.s.), two Zinoviev brothers (1,300 m.s.) and Aleksei Kozhin (1,150 m.s.).\textsuperscript{474} In the intake of 1752 there was only one cadet with over 1000 m.s., Vasilii Kolychev (1,500 m.s.). In 1737 the intake included Ivan Golokhvastov (1,400 m.s.), the Titov brothers (1,800 m.s.), and Prince Aleksandr Dolgorukov (2,500 m.s.) Yet these magnates were clearly an exception. The majority of cadets were coming, in fact, from the “upper-middle” nobility – from among those who were not super-rich, yet able, according to the governmental definition, somehow to maintain an “honorable” and “clean” lifestyle. In the three decades under study half, and sometimes over 60 percent, of the students came from families with over 100 m.s. For example, the father of Appolon and Lev Pronchishchev, an army major, owned 260 m.s. in Bolkhov and Elets districts, while Sergei Mansurov inherited from his father, an assessor at the College of the Mines, 400 m.s. in Tula, Livny, and Moscow districts.\textsuperscript{475} These strata of the nobility were highly overrepresented in the student body. In fact, there were quite a few years when half of all the new students had between 100 and 500 m.s. The nobles with 21 to 100 m.s. comprised the second most numerous group: they normally supplied about one third of the incoming cadets. Among them we find such young nobles as Prince

\textsuperscript{474} RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2259.

\textsuperscript{475} RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 178; RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1987.
Aleksei Putiatin, son of an army major and the heir to a modest estate of 95 m.s., or Andrei Neledinskii, whose father, a lieutenant, owned 75 m.s.\textsuperscript{476}

At the same time, the presence of the poorest nobility was limited, but not marginal: it accounted, roughly speaking, for 10 to 20 percent of the intake. In 1750 four incoming cadets had no serfs at all, although one of them had some land. In addition, Osip Chelishchev had twenty m.s., and two Georgian émigré princes, Egor Andronnikov and Stepan Eristov, had five “households” (about 15-20 m.s.) each. In 1752 there were three incoming cadets who had no serfs whatsoever, and three more cadets had seven, seventeen, and twenty m.s. respectively. Yet, given the absolute dominance of this group among the Russian nobility in general, the numbers make it clear that the poorest stratum was terribly underrepresented at the Corps.

The Corps’s student body thus appears to be highly homogenous in terms of wealth; this homogeneity is noticeable from the very beginning and holds throughout the entire period under study. Changes in percentage distribution of cadets according to the number of serfs in their possession do not form any clear pattern over the years, while significant fluctuations from one year to another (ten percentage points and more) are quite natural given the small size of the sample.

The data clearly show that the Corps was an elite unit that drew mostly the sons of well-to-do nobility: they were not rich in absolute terms, or if compared to the magnates, yet they still belonged to the top strata of the elite. It is useful to compare the Corps’ student body to the Guards – the elite regiments, which were formed by Peter the Great\textsuperscript{477} and took active part in palace revolutions of the eighteenth century. Peter specifically required that young nobles start their service as privates in the

\textsuperscript{476} RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 178.

\textsuperscript{477} The Horse Guards, however, were formed by Empress Anna in 1731.
Guards and received commissions in the regiments of the line only after such an apprenticeship, so the guardsmen as a group offer a natural sample for comparison. (The distribution of guardsmen according to their wealth is shown in Table 3.4). It appears that these numbers once again emphasize the predominance of the “upper-middle” nobility in the Cadet Corps: the share of the poorest nobles (twenty m.s. and less) among the private guardsmen could be well above 50 percent whereas at the Corps it has never risen above 23 percent and usually stayed below 20 percent.

Table 3.2

The Noble Cadet Corps and the Noblemen of the Guards, 1740s-1760s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Distribution of Nobles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadet Corps, lowest to highest, select years from 1745 to 1763⁴⁷⁹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semenovskii Guards, total (officers/privates), 1743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semenovskii Guards, total (officers/privates), 1761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preobrazhenskii Guards, officers/privates, 1761-1762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse Guards, total (officers/privates), 1757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁴⁷⁸ Iu.N. Smirnov, "Osobennosti sotsial’nogo sostava i komplektovaniia russkoi gvardii v pervoi polovine XVIII veka," in Klasy i sosloviia Rossii v period absol’utizma (Kuibyshev, 1989), 103-105; RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 305; RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, dd. 2130, 2197, 2251, 2259, 2283, 2223, 2621, 2729, 2845, 2976, 3199.

⁴⁷⁹ For years 1745, 1747-52, 1754, 1755, 1757, 1758, 1763.
Rank, or chin, was another all-important element of the early eighteenth-century noble identity. In 1722 Peter introduced what is traditionally considered one of the most important among his reforms – the so-called Table of Ranks. This Table replaced the Muscovite service titles with a regularized system of ranks encompassing all the positions in all the branches of service and organizing them in a straightforward hierarchical way by putting each position and rank in one of the 14 categories (classes); a commoner reaching a position that belonged to the 14th (lowest) class in the military, or of the 8th class in the civil service was automatically ennobled. 480

Analysis of the ranks of fathers who sent their sons to the Cadet Corps gives results very similar to those described in the previous section. In terms of their fathers’ ranks, the Corps’s student body predominantly represented mid-level elite, well-established nobles, while the highest- and the lowest-ranking families occupy relatively marginal positions. The sons of civil and military officers with the ranks above colonel accounted for up 12 percent of the yearly intake, but in absolute numbers they were never represented by more than 6 cadets; sometimes their number dropped down to 0. In 1747, for example, the generalitet was represented (in the overall intake of 35) by four Epishkov brothers, sons of a deceased brigadier-general. In 1757, there was only one son of a relatively high-ranking officer, Ivan Bakhmet’ev, whose father was a brigadier-general and the komendant of St.Petersburg. On the other hand, the lowest-ranking nobles (who were by far the most numerous category among the nobility in general) were never able to supply more than 17 percent of all the entering cadets, and sometimes they accounted for as little as 2-3 percent of the

480 For the Table of Ranks itself, see PSZ #3890. For a detailed analysis, see Troitskii, Russkii absolutizm, 47-154.
intake. In 1747 there were only two such cadets in the entire intake: Vasilii Razladin, son of an army NCO, and Dmitrii Potemkin, whose father served in the Smolensk gentry militia. In 1757 there were 6 sons of NCOs among the new cadets. The father of two cadets, the Davydov brothers, was a retired gardemarin (cadet officer) in the navy, while the father of two Lavrov brothers had never served at all.

The majority of cadets, however, came from the families of commissioned officers (and their equivalent in the civil service), with the field officers usually, but not always, managing to send slightly more cadets to the Corps. Quite often these two categories combined accounted for 80 percent, or even 90 percent of the entering cohort. For example, Vasilii Redrikov’s father was a retired army captain. Vasilii Chebyshev was a son of an army lieutenant-colonel; Aleksandr Trubnikov – of a naval captain. To sum up, the Corps predominantly attracted the sons of the middle strata of the ruling elite – those who led regiment, battalions, and companies; served as the senior staffers in the governmental agencies (below the president and vice-president of the Colleges); or were appointed as voevody (district administrators).

* * *

The third key element of elite status had to do with birth. In her study Brenda Meehan-Waters demonstrates the existence of continuity between the pre-Petrine and post-Petrine elite. Although there were a few highly visible commoners (and/or foreigners) among the closest lieutenants of Peter and his successors, descendants of the old Duma families still overwhelmingly dominated the generalitet. Nevertheless, by mid-eighteenth century conservative authors, notably Prince

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481 RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 178.

482 See Meehan-Waters, Aristocrats and Servitors.
Shcherbatov, increasingly complained about the increasing numbers of “newcomers” among the elite. It remains to be seen, however, whether this resentment was a result of “remembering,” so to say – i.e. of the nobility asserting their traditional identity – or of construction of the “ancient Russian aristocracy.” I would suggest that there was, at the very least, an element of both.

In 1730 Prince D.M. Golitsyn of the Supreme Privy Council suggested creating a separate legal category of the old aristocratic families (famil’nyie, or staryie familii), as opposed to the nobility at large; similar themes appeared in some other documents of the crisis.483 It is tempting, of course, to interpret them as sign of an aristocratic opposition to the autocracy. Yet, only three years after the crisis none other than von Münnich himself attempted to use at the Corps a standard questionnaire to record the family background and ancestry of incoming cadets. Among other things, they were asked (Question #4) to answer whether they could “demonstrate on … paternal and maternal sides sixteen noble families” introducing in Russian practice the standard Western European definition of nobility as “four quarters” of noble blood. The standard answer was, however: “Sixteen noble families [besides my immediate relatives] I am unable to show due to my young age.” Question #5 was about the coat of arms. The standard answer was similar to the previous one: “I cannot report anything about my coat of arms at this point, unless I get some clarification on that from my father.”484 As in the case of education, the demands presented by the elite in 1730 seem to have reflected not so much the feelings and aspirations actually shared by the nobility, as the desire of the leading

483 Kamenskii, Ot Petra, 217.

484 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, dd. 1678, 8011. As mentioned earlier, in the early 1730s von Münnich insisted that only nobles could receive commissions.
members of the elite to construct a “proper” nobility on a Western European model – the desire that also motivated Anna’s government.

The use of the questionnaire seems to have been abandoned at the Corps almost immediately after its introduction. Yet, a few months after Anna’s death, on February 11, 1741 (i.e. already after the overthrow of Biron’s regency, when the government was directed by an unstable duumvirate of von Münnich and Ostermann), the Heraldry received an order to prepare a “thorough register of all the [prominent] families” in the realm. It was also to prepare a list of all the files in the archive of the Razr’ad (pre-Petrine department in charge of keeping genealogical records, assigning nobles to service positions, distributing land grants etc.). The Heraldry clerks were to calculate how many of the Razr’ad files were catalogued, and how many were not, to work towards compiling a complete catalogue, and to keep the archival records “in good order.”

By the end of the year the clerks produced a list of genealogical records arranged by such categories as “Boiars,” “Okol’nichie,” “Princely families,” “Duma noblemen,” “Genealogies with coats of arms.” The Heraldry authorities, moreover, wanted not simply a list of genealogical records, but a catalogue describing the content of each document, and producing such catalogue turned out to be easier said than done. During the previous three decades the records in question were, apparently, considered nearly useless: they were kept in poor conditions and rarely, if ever,

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485 RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 241a, l. 56.

486 RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 241a, ll. 57ob – 58. It is noteworthy that the categories of nobility employed by the Heraldry archivists referred to such recently imported attributes of nobility as “coats of arms” introduced by Peter, but otherwise divisions and degrees of nobility were based on pre-Petrine service ranks. When the Heraldry officials received this report, however, they got also really interested in such documents mentioned in it as the “service registers [knigi razbornye] of nobles and deti boiarskie, the lists of immigrant [noble] foreigners, and the Poles, and the Crimean Tartars, and the records of their baptisms and salaries … and the land and salary registers for nobles and deti boiarskie,” etc., in other words, in the entire range of pre-Petrine service records.
consulted. As the clerks explained, “According to the [1711] decree of … Peter I abolishing the Razr’ad, all the Razr’ad documents were taken to the lower chambers of the former Razr’ad office where they stayed until 1714. That year all these documents were taken to the old government warehouse [staryi kazennyi dvor] and stored there in big cases.” Only in 1737, after the big fire of Moscow, were the documents taken to the Senate archive in one of the Kremlin buildings. As a result, many files were damaged: archival clerks reported, for example, that the genealogy (skazka) of boiar Aleksei Semenovich Shein “written by his own hand, has rotted down,” while that of Semion Pleshcheev “lacks the beginning,” etc. Most importantly, the Heraldry clerks had no idea how complete these records were: “it is unknown, who had submitted [their genealogical records], and who had not.” Compiling the register of existing genealogies proved to be exceedingly hard: apparently, there was only one very old clerk who still remembered how to work with these documents.

Meanwhile, the government changed, the infant emperor and his mother the Princess-Regent were overthrown and exiled, as were von Münnich and Ostermann. Nevertheless, the interest in genealogical records did not subside – archival workers repeatedly received orders to finish the register “urgently,” “as soon as possible,” “without delays,” etc. Finally, in 1744 they were ordered to submit monthly reports on their progress. This urgency was driven, apparently, by sudden demand among the prominent noble families for their genealogical records. On April 19, 1743 the Master of Heraldry instructed the archival clerks to send to St.Petersburg genealogical records for the Vorontsovs and the Iushkovs; this request was based on a decree from the Empress Elizabeth herself. In June there came a request for the Zheliabuzhskii’s genealogy, later that year for that of the Novosiltsevs and the Naumovs, in January, 487 Ibid, l. 57.
1744 – for that of the Choglokovs. Subsequently similar requests came for the genealogical materials related to the Khitrovos, the Apraksins, the Nashchokins, and others.488

As the Master of Heraldry explained in April 1746, “members of [prominent] families request information from their genealogical records submitted to the Razr’ad, and some even [request] copies.” The records that for decades had been kept in total neglect in cases at a warehouse were now to be stored under seal and copied only in presence of the senior clerk.489 When P.M. Bestuzhev-Riumin and G.P. Chernyshev were created counts in 1742, the Heraldry requested from the archive copies of their genealogical records submitted to the Razr’ad in 1686. Apparently, from that moment on archival research regarding the origins of the ennobled or elevated family became standard practice. Significantly, Bestuzhev and Chernyshev also submitted copies of ancient acts mentioning their ancestors dating 1489 and 1554, respectively. Both of these documents were later proven by historians to be forgeries.490

It is significant, perhaps, against this backdrop, that in 1763 among the forty nine Russian (as opposed to the Baltic or Ukraninan) applicants, nine could recall the rank of their great-grandfathers: and seven of them were claiming to be descendants of stol’niki; two more mentioned a stol’nik as their grandfather.491 In 1762 out of a sample of seventy incoming Russian cadets, thirty six were able to specify their great-grandfathers’ ranks. Allegedly, ten of them were descendants of stol’niki, four – of colonels, and four more – of striapchie and stremiannye (lower court ranks).

488 Ibid, ll. 65, 74, 78, 82, 85, 143, 161.
489 Ibid, ll. 132-133.
490 Khorunzhenko, Dvorianskie diplomy, 152-153.
491 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 3198.
Furthermore, four more claimed *stol’niki* and two – *striapchie* as their grandfathers.\(^{492}\) In other words, by the early 1760s at least 1/3 of the incoming cadets were claiming to be descendants of the upper-middle strata of pre-Petrine elite.

* * *

The data presented in this chapter suggests that already in the 1730s there was a deep cleavage between the upper stratum of the elite and the masses of the nobility regarding their interest in, and involvement with, education. It is indeed striking how different as a group the young nobles aspiring to join the Corps were from those wishing to study elsewhere, and especially, to join the guards, or the army. The median number of serfs owned by young nobles in the 1745 sample who asked to be sent to garrison schools was a pitiful 5.5 m.s.; the median number of serfs owned by those who wanted to join the Guards was 10 m.s. Even the Engineering School could attract only poor nobles: the median number of serfs owned by those who wanted to study there was only 15, although among them, unlike among the aspiring guardsmen and garrison school students, there were two young men whose families owned over 100 m.s. The concentration of scions of reasonably high-ranking and well-born families among the cadets also appears to be quite significant.

There were exceptions, of course, and we see a number of landless and serfless nobles actively seeking admission into the Corps. Yet, the data suggest that already in the 1730s there was a strong correlation between the wealth and status of a noble family and the career (and educational) preferences of its sons. The data in this chapter show that the vast majority of the nobility was manifestly not interested in educational opportunities offered by Anna’s government, and passively resisted

\(^{492}\) RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 3162. Here the references to the pre-Petrine past were intertwined with new imperial mythology: Pavel Izvol’skii found it necessary to emphasize that his grandfather was a *strem’ annoi* to Peter himself.
attempts to discipline it into a “true nobility.” At the same time, in the immediate post-Petrine period there existed a numerically small, but qualitatively significant group of nobles that willingly “bought into” this project. It is possible to argue, perhaps, that the relative success and institutional sustainability of the Cadet Corps, as compared the Petrine attempts to educate the nobility, is explained by this willing cooperation of the top strata of the elite.
Chapter 12

“I Wish To Study Foreign Languages, Dancing, and Fencing”:

Educational Preferences of the Russian Nobility

In the 1730s, as a part of broader campaign to create a “true nobility,” the government attempted to impose on the nobility a specific educational program. This program was spelled out in much more detail and applied much more systematically then it was ever done under Peter; it was imposed on the entire nobility, not only on the students at the Noble Cadet Corps. The decree of February 9, 1737 (discussed in detail in chapter 9) established the mandatory sequence of studies prescribed for all the young nobles. According to this decree, all noble minors had to “truly and completely” know how to read and write by age of twelve. In the next four years those nobles who wished to keep their sons at home had to undertake to educate them according to a specified curriculum. That curriculum included “besides the foreign languages, which they could study if they so desire, and also, self-evidently and most necessarily, the laws and rules of our Orthodox faith [zakony i artikuly nashey very], also Arithmetic and Geometry.” Foreign languages were thus declared optional, while the state, in line with Petrine emphasis on “technical” education, required and promoted the study of mathematic (to be learned “fundamentally” [s osnovaniem]). Those who managed to master this program by the age of sixteen could delay entering the active service by four more years and to stay home studying geography, fortification, and history. Those who failed to learn arithmetic and geometry “fundamentally” by sixteen were to be sent to the navy as sailors “forever.”

493 PSZ #7171.
The question is the degree to which the nobility choose to follow this curriculum (or was able to do so). In this chapter I attempt to discern patterns of educational preferences that might have existed among the post-Petrine nobility and to determine whether these patterns conformed to the officially prescribed educational program, or deviated from it. Specifically, I will focus on two groups of subjects - the study of foreign languages and acquisition of social graces, such as dancing, fencing, etc. - that occupied an important place in the Corps’s curriculum, but were not included in the sequence of studies mandated for the nobility.

Overall, the cultural level of an average early eighteenth-century Russian noble is hard to assess. We still know little about education and, broadly, speaking, the cultural life of the rank-and-file Russian nobles of the period due, among other things, to a lack of sources on schooling received at home and at the garrison schools. Whether the nobles had any choice at all – it terms of educational opportunities available for them – is not immediately obvious. Certainly, many of them explained their failure to conform to the state-imposed educational requirements by the absence of teachers and schools. Fedor Baikov noted apologetically in 1737 that all he could learn at a garrison school in Velikie Luki was arithmetic, “and there was nobody there to teach other subjects.”494 The memoirs, if they describe any educational arrangements at all, likewise present a sorry picture of ignorant, drunken, boorish teachers and their lazy, unruly, and equally boorish pupils. At the same time, although it seems clear that in the immediate post-Petrine decades the Russian nobility was quite uneducated by the standards of the most advanced European countries, yet it was not quite as illiterate as it has been portrayed both by historians and by some eighteenth-century critics. In his study of the cahiers of Catherine’s Legislative

494 RGVIA f. 314, op. 1, d. 1811, l.2.
Commission of 1767, Robert E. Jones found that 16 percent of their signatories were illiterate, and in some districts their share was as high as 50 percent. However, recent studies that use larger samples show that, on average, illiteracy might have been less common. Overall, in the early 1760s roughly 8 percent of Russian nobles retiring from the military service were illiterate, while nearly half (47.2 percent) could read, write, and knew arithmetic, and the rest (i.e. over 40 percent) had some formal schooling.

Arcadius Kahan in his influential article on the “costs of Westernization” drew attention to the fact that given the distribution of wealth among the eighteenth-century Russian elite, only a few nobles could ever become “Westernized,” that is, be able to afford the level and quality of consumption that defined the way of life of the Western European nobility. Among other things, Kahan argued that private “Westernized” education was beyond the means of all but, perhaps, the leading few hundreds of the noble families. According to his estimates, “the direct costs of tuition for gentry education in the latter decades of the eighteenth century amounted to about 100 rubles per male pupil, or, including room and board, to about 150 rubles per year.” Michael Confino suggested an even more terrifying price of 300 rubles per year for a private tutor at the end of the eighteenth century, which, as he demonstrates, would


496 Faizova, *Manifest*, 53. Gleb Kalashnikov comes to roughly similar conclusion for the 1720s-1740s. According to him, 71 percent of the officers were literate, 13 had some “limited literacy,” and 9 percent were illiterate or could sign only their names. Note that Kalashnikov’s figures include also commoners (which presumably pushes the share of the illiterate up) and foreigners (which presumably pulls it down). Kalashnikov, “Ofitserskii korpus,” 129.

have made education accessible only for a tiny minority of noble families (those with
more than 540 male serfs, according to his calculations). 498

That is probably too high a threshold for Westernization. V.S. Khvostov
indeed recollects that having retired after the end of the Seven Years’ War (1756-
1763), his father returned to his estates and found his children’s education
unsatisfactory. So, he proceeded to “mail order” from St.Petersburg “a German
teacher for 300 rubles per year, which was not easy given our poverty.” Note,
however, that he nevertheless could afford it, although he owned a mere 100 m. s. 499
In the late 1720s Vasili Tatischev indeed paid 100 rubles a year for the education of
his son – but Tatischev the younger was sent to be schooled in Riga, and that sum
covered also room, board, and necessary dress. 500 Apparently, there were also much
cheaper ways to get an education. Ivan Annenkov, a wealthy and quite Westernized
(he Gil Blas and similar books in his library and exchanged letters French and
German with his son) nobleman from Kursk, a remote frontier district at that time,
mentions in his diary at least four foreign tutors (“Petr Deforzha, a Frenchman,” “Iagan
Gerts, a foreigner,” “a foreigner Ivan Ivan’s son Tsvinker, residing at the bishop’s
house,” and “a Frenchman named Andrei Stepan’s son Gotre”). The quality of this
education might have been questionable, yet it was available even in the Kursk
backwater: these pedagogues undertook to teach small groups of noble children for 2
to 4 rubles per month per person. 501 No doubt, overall Kahan’s point is well-taken:

498 Michael Confino, “Histoire et psychologie: A propos de la noblesse russe au XVIIIe
499 V.S. Khvostov, “Zapiski,” Russkii Arkhiv 1, no. 3 (1870).
500 Tatishchev, Zapiski, pis’ma, 143.
SSSR. Vol.V. Dokumenty po istorii XVIII veka (Moscow, 1957), 713, 742. For evidence of, apparently,
education was a rare commodity in the mid-eighteenth century. Yet, perhaps, it was not as rare and inaccessible, as the nobles themselves would want the authorities to believe.

How exactly the nobles used these opportunities, and what they learned, when they learned anything at all, is even less clear, though. For that reason the data on their prior education provided at the Heraldry by the future cadets and the young nobles in general is very welcome indeed. Unfortunately, the records from the 1730s are extremely fragmentary, and the entries for individual cadets often contain no information besides their name and age. Even at the end of the decade many cadets failed to specify their level of education at all. Not all of them bothered to write down even the formulaic *pisat’ i chitat’ obuchen* (“learned reading and writing”), although the law clearly required them to be literate. By the end of the 1740s the records improved significantly, and in the last decade under study we have a nearly complete set of records, with all the incoming cadets dutifully reporting their previous educational achievements.

These records, though, are based on reports submitted by the nobles at the Heraldry, so the data are self-reported, and the question of their reliability must be raised. Conveniently, in 1750 the Corps had actually decided to verify these reports by examining its incoming cadets (Table 3.3). Surprisingly, we find very little exaggeration: in the vast majority of cases the applicants actually knew the subjects they previously said they did, although, perhaps, not as well. In fact, a significant number of applicants underreported their educational achievements: the examiners

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*quite sustainable private schools run by German teachers already during the reign of Peter I in Kazan’ – a large, but also quite remote city – see Shcheglov, “Dve sankt-peterburgskie shkoly.”*

*502 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2259.*
found out that 19 cadets demonstrated some expertise in German and 12 – in French, but only 10 and 6 young nobles, respectively, reported proficiency in these languages in their applications. And only 3 young nobles were caught in an attempt to blatantly mislead the authorities, i.e. to report some knowledge of a subject of which, it turned out, they actually knew “nothing.”

Another difficulty has to do with interpreting the measures of knowledge found in the records. In their papers young nobles simply listed the subjects they had previously studied, so we cannot be sure what was actually meant by “learned German” in a given case. The examiners in 1750 likewise reported the results in purely descriptive terms, so the meaning of “mediocre French” or “good German” is exceedingly vague.

Table 3.3

Previously Studied Subjects Reported by Incoming Cadets and the Results of Examination at the Corps, 1750 (no. of cases = 58)⁵⁰³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading and Writing</th>
<th>Arithmetic</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Geometry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53:</td>
<td>26:</td>
<td>19:</td>
<td>12:</td>
<td>3:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 – “good”</td>
<td>4 – “good”</td>
<td>2 – “mediocre”</td>
<td>2 – “good”</td>
<td>1 – “good”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – “mediocre”</td>
<td>5 – “mediocre”</td>
<td>15 – “some”</td>
<td>9 – “some”</td>
<td>1 - “mediocre”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – “some”</td>
<td>17 – “some”</td>
<td>2 - “poor”</td>
<td>1 – “mediocre”</td>
<td>1 – “very basic”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – “nothing”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁵⁰³ RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2234, 2259.
Thus, given the nature of the sources, an attempt to do a more sophisticated quantitative analysis of the educational records would be inappropriate. Yet it certainly makes sense to present an educational profile of incoming cadets and to trace their changes over time. First of all, in spite of the legal requirements, most young nobles in the 1730s never moved beyond basic literacy (Table 3.4). Surprisingly, relatively few cadets report their mastery of arithmetic: overall, no more than 1/3 of the cadets mention it in their applications. To some extent this is probably due to underreporting: clearly, some students simply choose not to mention arithmetic in their papers. It is hard to believe, for example, that the Pavlov brothers, who transferred to the Corps in 1736 from the Gymnasium of the Academy of Sciences, did not know basic math. The same applies to Prince Pavel Tsitsianov, who prior to entering the Corps studied, among other things, physics and “mathematical geography,” yet does not mention arithmetic in his application. At the very least, this willingness to “forget” to mention a subject expressly required by law is indicative of the quality of enforcement of that law.

### Table 3.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Cadets with Record of Prior Education (Size of Intake)</th>
<th>Arithmetic</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Other Subjects (Number of Cases)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1736</td>
<td>48 (71)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Geometry 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Latin 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1737</td>
<td>30 (78)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Geometry 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1738</td>
<td>31 (110)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Geometry 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1739</td>
<td>13 (37)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>English 1 Artillery and Geometry 2, Turkish 1, History and “Morals” 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

504 RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 178; RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1835.
No less striking is how few cadets reported previous knowledge of geometry. It might reflect, of course, the limited educational opportunities available to the majority of nobles, and also the underreporting, described earlier. But even these two factors cannot explain the fact that in 1736-1739 we find only one (!) cadet per year boasting the mastery of geometry. After all, the very same young nobles somehow found ways to learn foreign languages and did mention them in their records. Yet geometry, despite its supposed usefulness in state service, was not among their priorities. It is significant that geometry and arithmetic were technical subjects prescribed and promoted by the Petrine state. These were considered to be the key disciplines for naval officers and artillerists, and they formed the core of the curriculum at schools set up by Peter. It also was the first “advanced” subject that the nobles were expected to master according to the decree of 1737. True, the entering cadets were not required to know arithmetic and geometry by law: they choose to enter a school, not to stay at home, and this norm did not apply to them. Still, the very limited spread of geometry might also suggest that the state failed to impose its educational preferences on the nobility. Arithmetic and geometry simply do not seem to have commanded much prestige among the young nobles: wealthy and highly educated youngsters either failed to mention geometry and arithmetic among their educational achievements, or did not bother to study these subjects. None of the nobles who mentioned geometry in 1736-1738 - for example, Fedot Nazimov, son of an ensign in the garrison troops, or Prince Aleksand Koltsov-Masalskii, also son of an ensign – seem to belong to the top strata of the elite.505 The only cadet in the 1739 intake who mentioned geometry, Mikhail Shcherbachev, did not have any choice but

505 RGADA f. 286, op. 1, d. 178; RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d 1729, 1759.
to learn it: he transferred to the Corps from the Moscow artillery school.\textsuperscript{506} This disregard of geometry is emphasized by the fact that the study of foreign languages, first and foremost German, seems to have been far more common, even though it was not required by law. In 1736, one in four incoming cadets knew German, in 1737-1739 – one in three. That is a significant number, especially if we take underreporting into account: these numbers indicate that study of foreign languages was becoming ordinary for young members of the elite. It already was the norm for the children of the top-ranking officials, such as Vasilii Chebyshev, son of the head of the Postmen bureau (\textit{Iamskaia kantseliaria}), or Pavel Olsufiev, son of \textit{Oberhofmeister} at the Court.

In the following decades the situation remained essentially the same. Overall, the level of education among young nobles had risen by the 1750s, at least, according to self-reported data, while their educational preferences became even more pronounced (see Table 3.5, also Tables 3.6 and 3.7). In 1750 barely half of incoming cadets knew arithmetic, and only 9 among them turned out to have “good,” or even “mediocre” knowledge of it. A third of the young nobles, however, had some knowledge of German, and a quarter - of French. Furthermore, three cadets had studied some Latin, and one - “drawing.” Geometry was, effectively, marginal: only two young nobles were able to demonstrate acceptable level of proficiency in the subject (and none whatsoever managed to learn even the basic of history, or geography).

\textsuperscript{506} RGVIA f. 314, op.1, d. 1835.
Table 3.5
Subjects Studied by Nobles Prior to Coming to the Corps, 1750s\textsuperscript{507}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Educational Records (Number of Entering Cadets)</th>
<th>Arithmetic</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Other Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1757</td>
<td>85 (89)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Geometry 5, “Drawing” 2, Geography 1, Geometry 6, Latin 6, Geography 1, Greek 2, Geometry 1, Latin 2, Italian &amp; “Drawing” 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1758</td>
<td>45 (47)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1763</td>
<td>47 (53)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data indicate, it seems, the existence of persistent educational preferences among the nobility. This point is further confirmed by the data reflecting the educational choices made by young nobles while at the Corps. As mentioned in Part II, the curriculum there was built around a number of parallel sequences of subjects – but otherwise the cadets had quite a lot of leeway in choosing their subjects. The tables below shows that the optional (according to the decree of 1737) foreign languages were at least as popular as geometry. True, German was the native language for many of cadets, so the great popularity of French is especially indicative. The most popular subjects at the Corps were, however, dancing and fencing, not mentioned in the decree of 1737 at all, while the officially prescribed advanced subjects (history and geography) were taken by very few students.

\textsuperscript{507} RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, dd. 2845, 2976, 3198.
Table 3.5

Number of Cadets Taking Various Subjects at the Corps in 1737

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Number of students enrolled</th>
<th>Number of separate classes in this subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morning hours</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortification and geometry</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geometry</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artillery</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy and jurisprudence</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin for German students</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin for Russian students</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian language</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German language</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian writing</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German writing</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseback riding</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afternoon hours (not every day)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics and fortification</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geometry</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Materialy dlia istorii imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 446-450.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“State history” and philosophy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Universal history” and geography</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French language</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian “style”</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German “style”</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Fundamentals” of German “style” and orthography</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German writing</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian writing</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing and Advanced Horseback riding</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.7
Number of Cadets Taking Various Subjects at the Corps in 1738

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Number of students enrolled</th>
<th>Number of separate classes in this subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German (writing, “style” and orthography)</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian (writing, grammar, reading, “explication”)</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortification and geometry (“German geometry” and “Russian geometry”)</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artillery</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal history</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy and jurisprudence</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing and Advanced Horseback riding</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History and jurisprudence (advanced, with Professor Grech)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The key question here is how these educational preferences were shaped. Kalashnikov finds that 15 percent of all the military officers in the 1740s began their career at the Cadet Corps, and the wealthier officers were more likely to have had their education shaped in these ways.

509 RGADA, f. 248 (Senate), kniga 396, ll.543-551.
studied there. Faizova likewise concludes that the wealthier a noble, the more chances he had to be educated in general and, in particular, to have what she calls “higher education,” i.e. to be a graduate of the Noble Cadet Corps, Artillery and Engineering School, or Naval Cadet Corps. Overall, according to Faizova, the share of the illiterate was the highest among the nobles who had between 1 and 10 m.s., while it was only 1 percent among those who had between 70 and 100 m.s. Among the noble who had over 100 m.s., illiteracy was nonexistent, while the share of those who had formal schooling in this group was as high as 68-75 percent. Faizova finds that the wealthier nobles (over 100 m.s.) got “higher education” (studied at the Cadet Corps or similar schools) twice as often as those with 21 – 100 m.s. and 15 times as often as those with 1-20 m.s.511

Table 3.8

Wealth and Education of Retired Noblemen, 1762-1777512

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No serfs</th>
<th>1-10 m.s.</th>
<th>11-20 m.s.</th>
<th>21-69 m.s.</th>
<th>70 – 100 m.s.</th>
<th>101-500 m.s.</th>
<th>501-1000 m.s.</th>
<th>Over 1000 m.s.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I would argue, however, that it would be wrong to interpret these numbers as simply reflecting the fact that education was not available to the poorer nobles because of their limited means. As I demonstrate in the previous chapters, wealth was not a prerequisite for entering the Cadet Corps, and its absence was not necessarily an


511 Faizova, Manifest, 53.

512 The share of nobles with advanced formal education (Cadet Corps and similar schools) in a given wealth bracket. Faizova, Manifest, 53.
insurmountable obstacle. True, traveling to the capitals was expensive. But hundreds of young nobles made it to the Heraldry, yet still preferred to enroll in the guards or in the army, not in the schools. So it seems, we are dealing here not so much with educational opportunities, as with educational preferences of the nobility. As I show in the next chapter, individual choices were often situational, yet, at the end of the day, they formed patterns, which in time have a tendency to turn into norms. See, for example, the huge popularity of languages and such subjects as dancing or fencing (although the choice of subjects at the Corps was significantly constrained by the structure of the curriculum). It is not surprising, therefore, that for Petr Bukhvostov, applying to the Corps in 1741, viewed its curriculum in a somewhat one-sided manner. “In the past year [1]740, in January, I was enrolled, according to my wishes, into the Engineering Corps as a student and learned arithmetic up to substraction,” – Bukhvostov wrote. – “Yet, currently no languages and other sciences are taught there, except those related to engineering. I am, however, a noble from the Novgorod district, and I am fourteen years old, and I wish to study foreign languages, fencing, dancing, and other sciences specified in the Charter of the [Cadet] Corps.”

The Petrine vision of an educated noble as a qualified technician useful to his Fatherland was expanded by the Corps’s founders into a broader ideal of a “true nobility” that included, besides technical knowledge, also social graces, and disciplining of the body. The law also established a clear sequence of studies, prescribed for nobles. Yet the vast majority chose to disregard this program completely and never went beyond basic literacy, opting instead for going into the army as privates. Those nobles who were allowed by law to stay (and study) at home almost never did so, signing up instead for the Corps, while those who could not

513 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1905, ll. 110-110 ob.
actually afford home education, avoided going to school as long as they could. There was a sharp divide between the two groups in that those nobles who had some advanced knowledge invariably opted for the Corps or some other school, while among young nobles who preferred army service one virtually never meets any youngsters who report knowledge of geometry, foreign language, or any other advanced subject. Yet, those young nobles who chose (or were able) to study beyond basic literacy appear to have done it on their own terms. Rather than following the curriculum prescribed by the state, they followed different educational trajectories.
Chapter 14

Networks of Change: Individual Strategies

And the Westernization of the Elite

The data presented in the previous sections show that the “Westernization” of the Russian nobility was not a uniform process; some families chose to buy into it, while others did not. What drove these choices? What is remarkable about the choices described in the previous chapters is that the top strata of the elite actively supported Westernization by enrolling their sons into the Cadet Corps and other schools, while the lower nobility equally actively avoided these institutions, preferring careers in the army that were less alien to their traditional models of life and service. One way to understand educational and career choices and preferences exercised by nobles is to consider them within a wider context of social capital (in this case, position within various types of networks and hierarchies) and cultural capital (in this case, specific types of skills, knowledge, and cultural experiences and exposures) accumulated in their families.

* * *

The Petrine revolution extracted a heavy toll on the subjects of the Empire, and the nobility was no exception. By the end of Peter’s reign the elite, as is well-documented by historians, was exhausted by hardships associated with the mandated life-long service in a standing army permanently at war, and by the arbitrariness and ruthless enforcement of Petrine policies in general. Biographies of the cadets reflect this exhaustion. Significantly, a very large share of young nobles, including the
incoming students of the Cadet Corps, had fathers who were either dead, or already retired, that is, already very old or crippled. One result was that that they were not around to supervise the education of their sons and to pull strings to launch them on their careers. The starting positions of retirees’ sons were, probably, also significantly weakened. Cadets do mention the death of their fathers as the reason for going into the Corps, and indeed in 1737 out of 47 incoming cadets on whose fathers the data are available, 15 were orphans and 14 were sons of retirees. With the passage of time, a certain relaxation of rules of retirement under Anna made the life of nobles easier, and the situation improved. Still, in 1748, out of 98 incoming cadets 17 were the sons of retirees, although only 3 had already lost their fathers. In 1751, the numbers were 15 and 2, respectively (out of 58 incoming cadets).514

One consequence of the Petrine revolution was the sudden disruption of traditional patterns of promotion, enrichment, and, in general, transfer of family status from one generation to another. The data show a great deal of continuity between pre- and post-Petrine elite, yet on the individual level the transition appears anything but smooth and effortless. This is emphasized by the fact that the correlation between wealth and rank among the fathers of entering cadets was relatively low. In pre-Petrine Russia the size of one’s land- and serf-holding more or less corresponded to one’s service status, as the state awarded estates to those promoted to higher ranks. Under Peter, however, this practice was discontinued, and indeed, the data on the cadets’ families shows that the most high-ranking among them were not necessarily the wealthiest ones, and the wealthiest did not necessarily hold the highest ranks. Specifically, we find among the cadets a significant number of those whose fathers belonged to the old noble families, but did not do all that well under Peter. Thus,

514 RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 178; RGVIA, f. 314, op.1, dd. 2197, 2382.
Aleksei and Nikolai Liapunov, who joined the Corps in 1736, came from a highly prominent non-titled provincial noble family with claims to a princely lineage. Their father owned 600 m.s., yet he was a mere NCO in the guards. Similarly, Ivan Neielov and Ivan Shenshin, sons of privates in the guards arriving at the Corps the same year as the Liapunov brothers, inherited from their fathers 230 m.s. and 500 m.s., respectively. Both the Neielovs and the Shenshins were ancient provincial noble clans. Moreover, one finds among the incoming cadets a number of young nobles whose fathers never gained any rank at all under the Petrine system and were listed with their pre-Petrine ranks. In 1736 alone one finds no less than 8 such youngsters: the fathers of Aleksei and Lev Shatilov (126 m.s.), Iakov and Tikhon Kvashnin-Samarin (82 m.s.), Fillip and Iakov Ereemeev (36 m.s.), Vasily Boltin (350 m.s.), and Nikolai Gnevashev (147 m.s.) all “served as nobleman” (*v drorianakh*), i.e., in the gentry militia. Some of them belonged to established provincial clans and while not rich, possessed estates that put them in the top strata of the Russian elite. Yet they found themselves outside of the new service hierarchy and faced very real prospects of losing their elite status, especially as their landholdings were to be split among the numerous heirs.

Indeed, looking at the Corps’s rolls it is hard to find families that were secure in their elite status. Overall, by the end of the year 1732 there were no less than twenty-five princes of Riurik and Gedeminas lines at the Corps, including four Volkonskiis, four Golitsyns, and two Dolgorukovs, as well as two Cherksasskiis. Yet none of them really belonged to the very top strata of magnates and dignitaries. The Cherksasskii brothers, for example, were not directly related to Prince Alekse Cherksasskii of the Cabinet. Rather, the two cadets were the sons of General Prince

515 RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 178.
Aleksandr Bekovich-Cherkasskii, who was killed, together with his entire detachment, during the fateful expedition to the Central Asia in 1717. Four Khovanskii brothers, who were in theory the owners of 4800 m.s., complained in 1755 that they had to stay in Moscow “since after the passing of our father, Prince Vasilii Petrovich Khovanskii, we, the aforementioned, together with our brothers have great debts which we cannot pay any time soon, and therefore, due to the lack of means, we were not able to leave [for the Cadet Corps].” Perhaps significantly, one does not find at the Corps any members of such clans as the Naryshkins, or the Empress’s own cousins, the Saltykovs.

There were other scenarios that imply the link between the desire of a young noble to study at the Corps and the insecure position of his family. These scenarios were not necessarily a product of an overall social and cultural shifts. It is significant, perhaps, that both Ivan Davydov and his cousin, Aleksei Melgunov, were sent to the Corps in 1737, exactly the same year in which their uncle and father, respectively, Petr Melgunov was dismissed from his job at the Kamer-kollegia in connection with a politically motivated case of Prince D.M. Golitsyn. Ivan Pozniakov asked to be

516 A.N. Popov, Snoshenia russkikh s Khivoiu i Bukharoyu pri Petre Velikom (St. Petersburg, 1853).

517 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2197, l. 106.

518 Empress Anna's father, Peter I’s half-brother and co-ruler Tsar Ivan was married to a Saltykov, and the Empress recognized them as her immediate family; Peter I’s mother was a Naryshkin. Characteristically, the Skavronskiis, the Gendrikovs, and the Efimovskiis, enrolled by Anna into the Corps in 1731-1732, although formally royal in-laws, were in fact of very low origin and did not have firm connections among St.Petersburg and Moscow aristocracy. Upon the death of their aunt, Catherine I, their only link with the royal family was Tsarevna Elizabeth (future Elizabeth I), who was not only of questionable legitimacy (born before her parents’ marriage), but also somewhat of Empress Anna’s rival for the throne. The young parvenus’ position at the court was, therefore, more than precarious in the 1730s, and enrolling them into the Corps might have meant an attempt to get them out of the Empress’ sight as well as to remove them from the influence of their family. Vasilii Lopukhin, another royal in-law at the Corps, was a nephew of Peter’s first, disgraced wife, Evdokia Lopukhin.

519 RGADA, f. 286, op.1, d. 178; RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, dd. 1729, 1753. Prince D.M. Golitsyn of the Supreme Privy Council was, accused, among other things, of improperly promoting his relative,
admitted into the Corps since his parents were under arrest and “falsely accused.” Ivan claimed to have had no other relatives and to be “under no supervision.”

The Corps also attracted cadets with a “non-traditional,” i.e., non-noble background, whose families achieved significant upward mobility under Peter and now wanted to solidify their membership in the elite. The father of Petr Molchinn, for example, had been an elected member of a merchant-run self-governance body that was set up by Peter, but subsequently disbanded (the so-called Glavnyi magistrat). Having become members of the elite thanks to their achievements in unconventional fields, they wanted to launch their sons on “normal” noble careers as officers. The same is probably true of the court servants of noble origin who sent their sons to the Corps. Among them we find Ivan Levanov (son of the Empresses’ valet, or kamerdiner), Ivan Golokhvastov (son of gof-iunker), Ivan Isakov (son of a stremiannoi konyukh), Aleksei Koloshin (son of a kelermeister), and others. Although nobles by birth, these court servants normally did not have any serfs. Yet they were better able to appreciate the importance of acquiring the necessary social skills and eager to use their access to court patronage to place their sons at the Corps. Often these boys were admitted to the Corps outside of the normal procedure, by a special decree.

Characteristically, Domenico Trezzini, the famous Petrine architect, also sent his son to the Corps, as did a number of prominent medical doctors. Cadet Osip

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520 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2523, l. 42.

521 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, dd. 2130, 2845; RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 178.
Trezzini was representative of that category of foreigners in Russian service whose status was still somewhat undefined, although their ranks made them members of the nobility. Some of them were recent arrivals, others came from the families that immigrated to Russia back in the seventeenth century and were well Russified (as highlighted by their use of the patronymic – see “Petr Petrovich Meller,” for example). Although often qualified as “foreigners,” they were clearly separate from the Baltic nobles with their corporate institutions, and unlike the Baltic nobles, they opted for integration into the Russian elite. In 1755, for example, we find five such cadets: Zakhar von Litskin (son of a deceased major-general), Sebastian Tsimmerman (son of the Corps’ riding teacher), Karl Vare (son of deceased regimental doctor), Ludolf August de Briegere (son of a deceased lieutenant-colonel), and Christian von Likhnovskii (son of a captain). Many of them were originally of doubtful nobility, none of them had any land – and only one of them (von Litskin) knew his father’s native language (German). All of them, however, knew arithmetic, and Vare also knew history and geography. Such cadets as Karl Peter DeBodan (son of major-general in artillery and former teacher at the Corps), Gotlib von Zaltsa (son of Stas-kontora vice-president), Fedor Emme (son of Actual State Councilor, vice-president of the College of Justice and chief judicial officer of the Guards), Ignaty Teils (son of a “chief doctor”) appear to be members of a quintessential Imperial elite, having no homeland except for the Empire’s chancelleries, and no wealth except for their ranks, expertise, and connections.

* * *

Thus, the choices made by young nobles entering the Corps can be seen as elements of a strategy to overcome vulnerabilities by using the resources at their

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522 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2729.
disposal. Even small things counted, such as, for example, having a brother or a relative at a particular school. Major Mikhail Danilov notes in his memoirs that he was enrolled in the Artillery School in Moscow by his elder brother; when transferred to St.Petersburg, his brother arranged to take Mikhail along.\textsuperscript{523} For incoming cadets it was also quite common to have a brother, a cousin, or some other relative at the Corps: quite often entire clans, it seems, sent their young generation to study at the same school in the same year.\textsuperscript{524} For example, Ivan Pisarev coming to the Corps in 1733 (son of a major in the dragoons, 120 m.s.) was related to the Efimovskii brothers. Petr Krenitsyn coming to the Corps in 1734 (son of a kamerir, a financial clerk at a governmental bureau, equivalent of lieutenant) was a cousin of two other cadets, Fedosei Baikov and Rodion Gor’ainov, etc.\textsuperscript{525}

It was helpful, of course, if the father resided or served in St.Petersburg, as was the case with Rodion Gor’ainov or Ivan Koptev. That, obviously, gave additional opportunities to the sons of various officials serving in the government bureaus. The father of Ivan Chirikov was a relatively humble secretary, and had no serfs. Yet he was willing to send his son to the Corps at his own expense: young Chirikov lived in the capital anyway, so enrolling him into the Corps would have incurred only limited additional cost.\textsuperscript{526} At the very least, if a family resided in one of the capitals, it solved

\textsuperscript{523} Danilov, "Zapiski," 309-310.

\textsuperscript{524} Note the terribly localized character of the Russian nobility. For example, in 1750 only 10 out of 39 incoming cadets had estates that were located in more than one district, none had estates that span two or three districts, and only one cadet’s father had villages in four districts. The same is true for other years as well: in 1736/37, 30 cadets out of 51 on whom the data is available, had their estates in one or few adjacent districts; in 1745 it was the case with 33 out of 37, in 1755 – 23 out of 33. Whether this local character of the nobility contributed to emergence of some regional identities it a difficult question that goes beyond the scope of this dissertation. RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, dd. 2197, 3198.

\textsuperscript{525} RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, dd. 1678, 1712.

\textsuperscript{526} RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2251, 1.34.
the problem of having to travel for a review at the Heraldry, which was also expensive.527

If a father resided or served elsewhere, it seems to have been quite difficult for him to accompany his son to St.Petersburg. Meanwhile, bureaucratic procedures took time: normally, at least a few months elapsed between one’s registration at the Heraldry and his final acceptance into the Corps. So it was really important for a provincial family to have a senior relative, or a patron, in the capital, one who could supervise the boy, help him find his way in the chancelleries, guide him through the process of entering the Corps, and quite simply, provide him with lodging. It was especially helpful, of course, if that relative or patron was a person of some stature: not necessarily a dignitary, but at least a man of a respectable rank and some connections. For example, the father of Petr and Mikhail Iazykov, Major Fedor Iazykov of the Tambov Dragoons, was stationed on the fortified line in the southern steppe. The Iazykovs’ estates were also located far from the capital - in the Murom district to the east of Moscow, and in the Arzamas and Alatyr districts on the middle Volga, still a frontier. Their male relatives were either retired or stationed with various regiments all over the Empire. Luckily, the boys could be entrusted to a family friend, a colonel who was an official with the palace stables.528

527 It is, unfortunately, impossible to tell to what degree distance from the capital was a factor in nobles’ choice of a career. In their applications the young nobles reported the districts and provinces where their fathers had estates, not where they actually resided. The state, as I have mentioned, recognized that an obligation to travel to the capital might be excessively burdensome for poorer nobles. However, judging by the data, reported by the cadets, it seems that in spite of the year-to-year variations, the cadets were coming to the Corps from all the regions of the European Russia, the central provinces around Moscow usually supplying a slightly larger share of applicants. In 1750, for example, out of thirty nine cadets twelve had estates from the central region around Moscow, ten – in the North-West (Novgorod and adjacent districts), five - in the “middle North,” nine – in the Black Earth Region. RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2259. Cf. Raeff, The Origins, 45-47.

528 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1712.
That was the case not only with the aspiring cadets, but pretty much all younger nobles entering the service. A certain Petr Neledinskii, for example, had two brothers, one of whom, Iakov, was a captain in the \textit{landmilititsia} in the Ukraine and another, Osip, a private in a so-called “Senate Company” in St.Petersburg: young Petr went to serve in the Senate Company. Likewise, it appears that the majority of youngsters aspiring to be guardsmen had some relatives or friends in their future regiments. Later years these friends or relatives, among other things, testified to the noble birth of the young servicemen.\footnote{RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 305, ll. 272-272 ob, 406 ob.} This example also emphasizes that it would be wrong to suggest that poorer nobles did not enroll into the Corps because they could not afford to travel to the capitals: for in these cases young nobles \textit{were} already in the capital, yet they demonstrated no interest in the Corps as a possible career, opting instead for regiments where they had friend or relatives, even if they were mere NCOs or privates.

The best option, though, was to have a patron. When the subject of patrons and patronage in the eighteenth-century Russia comes up one normally thinks about the great magnates, court favorites who procured for their followers great estates and high ranks.\footnote{On patronage in the eighteenth-century Russia see: Geoffrey Hosking, "Patronage and the Russian State," \textit{Slavonic and East European Review} 78, no. 2 (April 2000): 301-320; David L. Ransell, "Character and Style of Patron-Client Relations in Russia," in \textit{Klientelsysteme im Europa der Fruehen Neuzeit}, edited by Antoni Maczak and Elizabeth Mueller-Leuckner (Munich, 1988): 214-224. See also Kivelson, “Kinship Politics/Autocratic Politics.”} Yet, in fact, the practice of patronage was widespread among the lower and middle nobility as well. It was not unusual for poorer nobles at that period to send their children to the houses of wealthier relatives, even quite distant ones, where they would be educated together with the patrons’ own children. Among the first 24 cadets who signed up between August 9 and November 19, 1731, no less than five boys, all
of them orphans, lived at the houses of patrons. Ivan Karaulov (son of lieutenant-colonel, 158 m.s.) lived at the house of Ivan Annenkov, member of the board of the Stables Office (Konushennyi prikaz). Ivan von Meisner (son of a major, no serfs) resided at the house of Lieutenant-General Prince Ivan Bariatinskii.

* * *

Patronage and connections were important not only because they provided physical access to various types of careers: they were also instrumental in shaping decisions to attend a school by giving access to teachers and to an environment, in which learning and social skills were appreciated for their own worth and also as a stepping stone to a career. A great magnate might allow his client to live in his house and to study together with his sons. A mid-level officer might be an advisor, a role model, a teacher. Ivan Polev, for example, had lost his father, a major, and had no serfs, yet Ivan boasted of knowing German. That, most likely, is explicable by the fact that he lived at the house of Prince I.Iu. Trubestskoi. The late father of Nikolai Choglokov was a lieutenant-colonel and left his son only 70 m.s. Yet his son was literate and knew German: he lived at the house of General Gezenius’ widow. Karl-Ulrich Sternshants (son of general-major) lived at the house of Privy Councilor Aleksei Makarov, Peter’s trusted secretary, in 1731 – president of Kamer-kollegia; besides German, young Sternshants knew also some French. Both Nikolai Choglokov and Karl-Ulrich Sternshants joined the Corps in the same year with the sons of their benefactors - with Petr Gazenius and Petr Makarov.531 Coming to the Corps a few years later, Ivan Davydov knew both French and German, thanks to the fact that he

531 RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 116.
lived at the house of his uncle, Colonel Petr Melgunov, a high-ranking civil official, a prokuror at the Kamer-kollegiia, a fiscal authority, and studied with his children.\textsuperscript{532}

Patronage and other social networks were especially important since, as the records of young nobles show, there were very few opportunities to buy education in the period under review. The magnates had a chance to teach their children at home, and that probably explains the fact that so few of them went to the Corps. Yet, as a rule, even the wealthiest among the incoming cadets did not complete the state-prescribed course of home study. In fact, the few cadets who came to the Corps in the 1730s-1740s with some knowledge of really advanced subjects, like fortification, history, or geography, usually acquired it at the Gymnasium of the Academy of Sciences or at other state schools. Such was the case with the Pavlov brothers, who came to the Corps from the Gymnasium in 1736, or with Mikhail Shcherbachev, who learned “geometry and parts of artillery” at the Moscow Artillery School before transferring to the Corps in 1739. In later years the newly founded Moscow University played the same role for Mikhail Burtsov (1758, 100 m.s.), Ivan Kolychev (1760, 200 m.s.), Aleksandr Iakushkin and Petr Khvoshchinskii (1763, 150 and 200 m.s.).\textsuperscript{533} All of them were relatively well-to-do, yet their superior education was obtained at state schools, not at home.

Educational opportunities and educational preferences were thus shaped to a large extent by one’s service and social connections: these provided both the means to acquire education, and the incentives to do so by enabling fathers to appreciate the importance of skills in question. It is hardly by chance that the two Shishkin brothers

\textsuperscript{532} RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 178; RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, dd. 1729, 1753.

\textsuperscript{533} RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 178; RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, dd. 1835, 2976, 3082, 3198.
applying to the Engineering School in 1745 stayed at the house of I.A. Bibikov, a Lieutenant-Colonel of the Engineers. Fedor Smolianinov also went to the Engineering School in 1745. At the Heraldry he reported that his father, though a supervisor of the fisheries in Astrakhan, was a retired major. The fact that he was the son of a mid-ranking military officer gave Fedor access to army engineers at the local garrison. So he was able to learn “arithmetic with appropriate parts of geometry, and also enough of fortification,” and to present a certificate to that effect “personally signed by engineering officers of field and company grade.” Similarly, Sergey Nakovalnin was able to present at the Heraldry a letter certifying his expertise in geometry and signed by two army engineers, a lieutenant-colonel and a second lieutenant, because his father was a colonel and a commanding officer of the Nezhin garrison in the Ukraine. Upon examination at the Corps Nakovalnin’s expertise in geometry was found to have been exaggerated, to put it mildly, by his father’s obliging colleagues. The sons of Russian officers posted in the Baltic provinces tended to pick up some German. In 1732 three incoming cadets whose father’s regiments were stationed in Estland (Molchanov, Shatilov, Travin) all knew some German. In 1749 it was the case with Petr Chelishchev (his father was posted in Narva). One might notice that the educational and intellectual outlook of a leading eighteenth-century memoirist, Andrei Bolotov, was absolutely crucially shaped by his

534 RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 305, ll. 22.

535 Yet he went on to graduate successfully, to become a teacher at the Corps, to translate a geometry textbook and to edit the first collected works of Archbishop Feofan Prokopovich. RGADA, f. 286, op. 1, d. 305, ll.324. Gavriil Derzhavin describes in his memoirs how in the early 1750s his father had a land surveyor under his command, from whom the future poet “got an interest for the engineering science.”


537 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, dd. 1631, 2251.
stay first, as a boy, with his father’s regiment in Estland, and later, as a young officer, in occupied Konigsberg.\textsuperscript{538}

Knowledge of foreign languages, however, was not limited only to the wealthiest nobles. On the contrary, one finds a large group of cadets who seem to have “inherited” the ability to speak foreign languages. These were the children of civil servants or technical specialists for whom knowledge of foreign language was directly related to their professional duties. As a consequence, they were better able to appreciate the importance of that particular skill, and either taught their children themselves or had access to somebody who could teach them. For example, Aleksei Sukmanov’s father was a secretary at the Recruiting (Rekrutskoi) chancellery (100 m.s.), Petr Bakunin’s – at the College of Foreign Affairs (no serfs), Mikhail Tikhomirov’s – assistant shipwright (15 m.s.), Iakov Nasonov’s – a captain assigned to the department in charge of building and maintenance of the Imperial palaces (30 m.s.). A similar case is Ivan Levanov (5 serf menservants, no land). His father, though a nobleman, was a valet at the Imperial palace: while this hardly gave him a claim to technical expertise, access to the Court gave important opportunities both for appreciating the importance of languages and for learning them.

The sons of the low- and middle-ranking civil servants at the government bureaus were especially likely to possess some advanced learning. Their fathers were better able to appreciate its importance due to their own experience in the service. Timofei Klishin, a clerk at the College of Foreign Affairs, actually paid from his own pocket to teach his son not only French and German, but also Latin (though not

geometry). Characteristically, Petr and Ivan Surmin, sons of a mid-ranking (titularnyi sovetnik, equivalent of a captain) and poor (40 m.s.) civil servant already studied some German, French, and Latin by the age of eleven. Nikolai Titov, who entered the Corps the same year, was son of a wealthy, but low-ranking military officer. Although he was already fifteen, he mastered nothing more than basic literacy. Similarly, Aleksey Kozhin, son of a NCO with 1150 m.s. was barely literate, while Ivan Rogachev was studying arithmetic, German, and French. Rogachev’s father had no serfs, yet he was a secretary at the Senate.540

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Not surprisingly, at the end, educational choices and preferences of a noble family took form within the framework of its social connections, both immediate, like the father’s position and pervious experiences, and more distant, like its network of relatives and patrons.

Here is how Ivan Kuz’min described the circumstances that brought him to the Cadet Corps:

In the year 1733, following the advice of Lieutenant-Colonel von Shtenhof, who supported my father out of gratitude for saving his life during the Swedish war, my father decided it would be good to launch me on my studies, and thus, being thirteen year old, I left my family and went to St.Petersburg with the said Lieutenant-Colonel von Stenhof. In the capital Kuz’min’s benefactor bought him “dress and all other necessities” and guided him through the enrollment procedures. It probably helped that in the late 1720s von Stenhof had served directly under Field Marshal von

539 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2197, ll. 191-192.
540 RGVIA f. 314, op. 1, d. 2197; d. 1632, ll. 134, 196.
Münnich at the construction of the Ladoga Canal. Until Kuz’min was accepted, he lived at the house of von Stenhof, who meanwhile taught his charge “some German.” In 1734 Kuz’min’s father was killed in action in Poland, so von Stenhof, in Kuz’min’s words, “looked after me and trained me in fortification, gave me books to read, and afterward examined me.”

Alternatively, the choices could be shaped by small, nearly imperceptible factors. Ivan Kharlamov was fifteen years old in 1733, and he was already enlisted in the Ingermanlandskei Infantry Regiment as a private where his brother and namesake, Ivan Kharlamov, was a corporal. Yet he applied to be transferred to the Corps. During the wars of Peter I, their father, Andrei Kharlamov, served in the gentry militia squadrons (vybornye roty) under the old Field Marshal Boris Sheremetev, and was later retired to the civil service; he had estates in the Novgorod, Pskov, and Vologda districts, although the young Ivan did not even remember exactly how many serfs their father had. One of the boy’s uncles was in the navy, another served in the capital (as an ensign in the St.Petersburg Garrison Regiment). Importantly, Ivan’s cousin, Egor Golovtsyn, was already a cadet in the Corps. Even more importantly, Ivan’s elder brother Grigory, to whose supervision he was entrusted the capital, was an NCO in the Corps of Engineers. Taken together, these circumstances could probably account both for his decision to go into the Corps, and for the fact that he knew a “little arithmetic,” in addition to grammar.

The final case-study is focused on Nikolai Radishchev who was slightly over fourteen years old when he came to St.Petersburg in 1733 to seek a place at the

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541 Quoted in Kalashnikov, “Ofitserskii korpus,” 176-177.

542 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1678.
recently established Noble Cadet Corps. Things went smoothly for him. Until a place at the Corps was obtained, Nikolai stayed in the capital with his well-to-do relative, a retired Captain Grigorii Abliazov, who had a house on the Vasilievskii Island, 4th Line. Abliazov helped his young charge to find his way around the capital’s bureaus and offices. Nikolai signed up for the Corps at the office of Field-Marshal von Münnich, and his candidacy was duly confirmed by the Senate. Finally, the Heraldry Department forwarded his papers to the Corps, where he joined his only sibling, Mikhail, as well as their cousins Petr Shepelev and Vasilii Radishchev.543

Nikolai Radishchev did not leave any records indicating why and how the decision was made to send him (and his brother) to the Noble Cadet Corps. Based on what Nikolai Radishchev reported to officials at the Heraldry, one could conclude that he came from a family highly typical of that stratum of the nobility that supplied the Corps with the students. His was a family of very good standing, though not quite aristocratic: both of his grandfathers, Vasilii Radishchev and Grigorii Iakushkin, had the rank of stol’nik, that is, belonged to the upper-middle stratum of the old elite. About his great-grandfather Nikolai could not report anything besides his name, Konstantin; such a low level of genealogical awareness, however, was fairly typical for the cadets joining the Corps in the 1730s (although that would change in later decades). Nikolai’s father, Avdei Radishchev, ended his service as a prokuror in Smolensk and had 270 m.s. in the Maloiaroslavl and Viazma districts in Moscow province. Nikolai did not have any uncles, although he mentioned that one of his father’s cousins, Afanasii Radishchev, was a retired colonel and a customs supervisor.

543 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1678. Family history of the Radishchevs has been a subject of detailed studies because of the interest, both before and after the 1917 revolution, in the personality of A.N. Radishchev, the late eighteenth century radical author. Unless otherwise noted, the following discussion is based on an exceedingly meticulous work by P.G. Liubomirov, “Rod Radishcheva.” In A.N.Radishchev. Materialy i issledovaniia (Moscow, 1935), 301-331.
in the Ukraine, and another, Gleb Radishchev, a governor in Klin in Moscow province. In short, here is an old and established family that survived the Petrine revolution quite well, but it probably could be said to have lost some social standing. On a relative scale, the office of Smolensk prokuror in the new Russia was way below the rank of stolnik in the pre-Petrine world.

The details not mentioned by young Nikolai Radishchev at the Heraldry give the family story an additional twist. The family was not quite that old: Nikolai’s great-grandfather Konstantin in the late seventeenth century was, in fact, the first Radishchev to serve in Moscow (‘on the Moscow list’). Afanasii and Gleb Radishchev, the cousins of Nikolai’s father, were not his only kinsmen: his relatives in general were fairly well entrenched in mid-level administrative positions. Abram Radishchev was a major in Smolensk garrison in 1726, Tit Radishchev was a kommissar in Riga province in 1716, and in 1728 Terentii Radishchev was appointed governor (voevoda) of a tiny Borovsk in the Moscow province.

Yet Nikolai evoked the names of only two of his relatives, and both of them cut quite interesting figures. One of them, Gleb Radishchev, entered the service before the Petrine reforms as a zhilets; he travelled to Europe with the Great Embassy of 1697 and was known to have even brought back a foreign valet. At the end of the Northern War he was a regimental quartermaster, and in the early 1730s he transferred to the civil service. In 1730, during the accession crisis, he was one of the signatories of the so-called “proposal of 364.”

Another uncle, Afanasy Radishchev was even more noteworthy. He started his service as a private (although his grandchildren later claimed that he had the honor of being one of Peter the Great’s valets) in the very beginning of the century, and moved
up the ranks, switching back and forth between the infantry and the dragoons, fighting in the Baltic provinces, Poland, Germany, Ukraine, and on the Caspian. In 1716 he was under criminal investigation for pillaging. In 1726 he, a lieutenant-colonel, joined the Cavalier Guards, and in this capacity witnessed the crisis of 1730, also signing one of the petitions. After the crisis, Afanasii was ordered to retire from the military and was sent to the Ukraine as a member of the High Court there. His sons, Nikolai’s second cousins, studied “Latin, French, German, and Polish, and knew some theology and history”; Aleksandr Radishchev, the famous late eighteenth-century radical author, was his grandson.

In this context the decision to send young Nikolai Radishchev and his brother Mikhail to the Cadet Corps makes a lot of sense. Their father was wealthy enough to give his boys some basic home education, but nothing fancy. At the same time, each of them could hope to inherit only about a hundred male serfs. Nikolai’s father and his cousins were well-positioned provincial bureaucrats, but they were not prominent enough to guarantee good starting positions for the next generation of the family. Two of Nikolai’s closest relatives had some degree of exposure to the West, and Afanasii Radishchev appreciated the value of education enough to use to the fullest the opportunities for educating his sons that were available in the Ukraine. These opportunities, however, became accessible for him thanks to his service assignment only. Also, both of these uncles were evidently conscious enough of their place in society to take an active position in the 1730 crisis. Finally, sending the sons to the Cadets Corps was becoming an accepted pattern in the Radishchevs’ clan, and there was a relative in the capital who could somewhat facilitate the process of enrollment.

It is clear, therefore, that there is no single formula to explain how the various factors interplayed in shaping family choices. Indeed, it would have been excessively
reductionist to assume that such a formula is possible, and a certain feature of family background – a certain rank, a certain number of serfs, certain education received by the father – could ever “determine” one’s choice. On the contrary, the decisions were made by individual families in individual circumstances. These decisions were, it appears, not ideologically driven – i.e. they did not necessarily require any specific “worldview” or mentality, much less “class consciousness.” Nor should they be interpreted as an explicit or implicit statement regarding the abstract value of Western education and/or Petrine project: the nobles remained adamantly mute on the subject. What I am trying to demonstrate here is that Westernization project was driven, in fact, by nobles who were not necessarily terribly Westernized themselves; who lived within very traditional networks of clan and service connections; and who acted out of very pragmatic concerns and in response to very mundane incentives. Yet, taken together, their collective choices carried the Petrine project forward and turned the “Western” education that Peter so desperately tried to force upon them into valuable cultural capital.
Conclusion

The data in these chapters demonstrate that the post-Petrine nobles, surprisingly, had significant control over their lives and careers. They were not free, in the sense that they could not completely disregard the service and educational rules set by the government. At the same time, for reasons discussed in Part II, the government in the 1730s really did abandon the Petrine policy of forced Westernization, and focused its efforts on those who were willing to participate in the project. Moreover, thanks to the imprecise and uncertain nature of these rules and regulations, and to their weak enforcement, the nobles might have been able to use various strategies to navigate the routine of these rules. In many cases these rules were not so much bent by the nobles as disregarded by “the state” itself, because enforcing them literally would have been highly impractical. Taken together these factors gave the post-Petrine nobles ample space to exercise their career and educational preferences. That, however, does not mean that “the state” was weak, or that there was room for “negotiation.” Rather, the government for the most part did not care, for when it did (for example, when there was a particular need, like supplying the Naval Academy with the necessary number of students), it was perfectly capable of cruel and arbitrary decisiveness. Facing these unpredictable outbursts of government activism, the nobles were especially and emphatically unfree.

The nobles did use the opportunities and made meaningful choices. For the vast majority of them, it turns out, “Western” education remained alien even in the 1740s-1750s. Not only were they not interested in educational opportunities as a vehicle of upward mobility, but on the contrary, nobles made efforts to avoid it. The
government did not set any limits to the admission of poorer nobles; in practice these nobles themselves believed that the Corps was not intended for them. “I do not have a wish to study at that Corps, for I do not have any peasants registered in my name” – Ivan Grekov wrote in 1732 in an, admittedly uniquely bland petition, asking to be transferred instead to the Novoladozhskii Infantry Regiment.544

In a period of big cultural shift, such as the one Russia was going through in the early eighteenth century, institutionalized opportunities to acquire the new cultural norms were few, while the very nature of these norms (and also the benefits they could potentially bring) was uncertain. Of course, it also means that for those who happened to possess the necessary skills, prescribed by the new cultural paradigm, the premium could be especially large. On a practical level that means that the nobles were acting within the framework of constraints and opportunities shaped by resources available to a particular family. The question was whether the family was able to appreciate the importance of study for the son’s future career, which in itself was an important resource; whether it had access to educated nobles and to examples of Westernized everyday life; whether the father was able to choose the subjects of study and the teachers competently, or, perhaps, to teach himself; whether it was aware of educational opportunities existing in the Empire and be able to navigate bureaucratic channels so as to utilize these opportunities. To put it differently, I argue that the educational and career choices and preferences exercised by the nobles are best understood if considered within a wider context of social capital (in this case, various types of networks) and cultural capital (in this case, specific types of skills, knowledge, and cultural experiences and exposures) accumulated in their families.

544 RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 1650, l. 33.
A number of recent works emphasize the importance of informal networks, be they clan and kinship, patronage, or blat in early modern (as well as modern and post-Soviet) Russian politics and political culture. Most of these authors, however, conceptualize these networks in terms of power structure – as an alternative to the Weberian vision of the abstract bureaucratic state, they present a picture of the state based on personalized relationships and informal power hierarchies. These relationships and hierarchies are viewed as elements of the “old,” traditional political culture. In most cases, the argument is also driven by the desire to prove that the state was not as totalitarian as the historians of the older school would have us believe. I, however, propose to approach these networks from a different angle. Rather than focusing on the power relations, I attempt to present these networks as the sum total of resources and opportunities subtly guiding individual choices. In a way, then, I view them as a constructive force and as a mechanism of change. I would argue that these choices, shaped by individual resources and opportunities, drove the “Westernization” of Russia in the mid-eighteenth century, and constituted the process through which the elite reconfigured and reinvented itself and the country.
Epilogue:

Politics of Education in the Reign of Elizabeth

This dissertation focuses on the campaign to create a “true nobility” through education, initiated by the government of Empress Anna in the 1730s. In the relevant chapters, I argue that the establishment of the Cadet Corps was a result of determined efforts by Field-Marshall von Münnich, a leading minister of Anna’s reign, and as such should be analyzed within the broader context of views on governing and human nature shared by him and some of the other top dignitaries, Count Ostermann in particular. In 1741, however, Anna’s successor, the infant emperor Ivan VI and the government of his mother, Princess Regent Anna, were overthrown. Tsarevna Elizabeth became the empress, and both von Münnich and Ostermann found themselves dispatched to Siberia for assisting the alleged “usurpation” of the throne by Ivan VI. What was the fate, then, of von Münnich’s disciplinarian project after his downfall? As an epilogue, I briefly outline in this concluding chapter the trajectory of educational policy-making in the 1740s-1750s. The goal of this chapter is identify the factors that determined this trajectory, once the two influential ministers, who shaped it during Anna’s reign, were removed from the picture.

Broadly speaking, despite the misfortune that befell its founder, the Cadet Corps continued to function along the same lines. Actually, von Münnich resigned all his offices on March 3, 1741, well before the coup that brought Elizabeth to the throne. Three weeks later Prince Anton-Ulrich Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel-Bevern, the father of the infant emperor, assumed the position of the Corps’ high commander.
After the coup of November 25, 1741, he in turn was replaced by Prince von Hessen-Homburg, von Münnich’s old rival. Friedrich von Tettau, director of the Corps, also lost his position a week after the coup. Otherwise, however, no officers or professors seem to have been purged. In fact, from January 1742 to December 1756 the Corps was run by the acting director, Lieutenant-Colonel von Zigheim, one of von Münnich’s appointees.545

Both Prince von Hessen-Homburg (high commander from December 1741 to March 1745) and his replacement, Prince V.N. Repnin (high commander from August 1745 to August 1748; the father of Prince N.V. Repnin, of the “Panin party”) did not make much impact on the Corps.546 Despite his rivalry with von Münnich, von Hessen-Homburg in particular seems to have shared the same basic approach to education. He initiated a program for training a group of young nobles at the Corps for civil service, emphasizing the need to select them on the basis of their “inclination” for such a career. At the same time, he is described by V.N. Stroev, the author of the early twentieth-century institutional history of the Artillery school, as especially prone to ruthlessly practice the “sorting out” of cadets and dispatching the academically unsuccessful to the army.547 Finally, from February 1750 to February 1759 the office of high commander of the Corps was occupied by Prince B.G. Iusupov. On the one hand, Iusupov was a graduate of the Toulon garde de marine school, and thus completely “bought into” the educational ideas and practices introduced in the 1730s. On the other, he was another advocate of strengthening the

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545 Luzanov, Sukhoputnyi shliakhetskii korpus, 80-81.
546 Ibid, 76.
547 Stroev, Zherve, Istoricheskii ocherk, 24.
nobility as a way of strengthening the state, penning a project to this effect sometime during that decade.\textsuperscript{548}

Overall, Empress Elizabeth appears not to have taken much interest in the affairs of the Corps. She was very much aware of its existence, of course, and plays written and performed by its graduates became a usual feature of court life. At the same time, Elizabeth displayed no interest whatsoever in reforming, improving, or adjusting either the design of the Corps, or its management. While in the 1730s one or more imperial decrees regarding the Corps were issued almost every year, Elizabeth did not issue any at all throughout the two decades of her reign. When appointing Prince Iusupov the high commander of the Corps, the only instruction she could give him was “Act in everything according to the existing arrangements.” And yet, despite her indifference towards the Corps, the model was multiplying during her reign: in the 1750s the Naval Academy and the artillery and engineering schools were reorganized as a Naval Cadet Corps and Artillery Cadets Corps, respectively.

It makes sense, therefore, to focus briefly on these two cases. The first to be reorganized into a Cadet Corps was the Naval Academy.\textsuperscript{549} The old Academy was focused on practical training in navigation. In the 1750s, however, the newly-established Naval Cadet Corps, according to its charter, was to have, besides the teachers of navigation, mathematics, etc., two instructors to teach “geography, genealogy, … rhetoric, politics … morals, heraldry, and other noble sciences [i prochikh shliakhetskikh nauk].” On top of that, there were to be teachers of drawing, fencing, and dancing. Previously, as mentioned in earlier chapters, the Naval

\textsuperscript{548} RBS, 24, 349-350. Before going to Toulon, Iusupov also studied in a school in Reval; in the alte 1730s he, as a senator, was put in charge of educating the noble apprentices at the central governmental bureaus. Troitskii, \textit{Russkii absol’utizm}, 274, 284.

\textsuperscript{549} PSZ #10062.
Academy had to share its premises (which were unsatisfactory in any case) with other naval departments. Now, finally, it got its own separate, sufficiently spacious compound (ironically, it was the mansion built originally by Ostermann, sold by him to von Münich, and confiscated from the latter in 1741). The new Corps also had an in-house church and a hospital.550

Absent a more detailed study, it is hard to establish with certainty whether the naval officers appreciated the disciplinary implications of the model they were following. Thus, the materials in the existing institutional history of the Naval Academy give us grounds to suspect that housing the Naval Corps in a single compound, for example, was conceptualized by them more as a matter of improving the accommodations, and not necessarily as a way of creating a disciplinary environment. The proposal, presented by the navy to the Senate, referred to the desirability of housing all the students and teachers in a single building. Yet, when such a building was actually obtained, many officers and even some of the cadets continued to be housed elsewhere.

What we know, however, is that the reform itself was a result of persistent lobbying by the naval authorities, who resented the preferential treatment given their army colleagues. This lobbying began already in the late 1730s. In December 1740 a proposal for constructing a new building for the Naval Academy presented by the Admiralty College was rejected by the Senate, which ordered it to prepare a new design. (The Admiralty was now headed by Ostermann himself, who in his 1740 memo to Princess Regent Anna mentioned that he had earlier begun composing a project for a “new arrangement” of the Naval Academy.) A new plan was presented in

550 Veselago, Ocherk istorii, 84-94, 115 passim; Rozhdestvenskii, Ocherki, 34-35.
October 1741, but the Senate again decided to “postpone this construction until further consideration.” Most importantly, however, by the early 1750s the navy adopted in its lobbying efforts the language of “encouragement.” According to the Admiralty, the naval students were “left without encouragement [bezkurazhny ostaiutsia] when they observe their peers at the Cadet Corps, who are employed in much easier studies, and yet are maintained to their complete satisfaction.” Likewise, the abolition of gardemariny as an intermediary service category between the graduation from the Corps and active service was explained by the fear of “discouraging” young sailors by postponing their commissioning. The significance of this case is twofold. First, the Corps as a model and the rhetoric of “encouragement” are employed here within the context of bureaucratic lobbying (lobbying is done via reference to them). Second, it is this lobbying that contributed to advancement and entrenchment of the model and the rhetoric, while the sovereign was largely neutral in the matter.

The story of the establishment of the Artillery Cadet Corps is different in that it had a powerful and committed patron pushing the project forward. They are broadly similar, however, in that the idea became a vehicle for political lobbying, but by using it for lobbying the politics helped to perpetuate and reproduce the idea. Creation of this institution was driven largely by the political concerns of its author, Count P.I. Shuvalov (1710-1762). A member of Elizabeth’s entourage from her youth and a

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551 Veselago, Ocherk istorii, 83-85, 92-93, 116-117; Ostermann, “Predstavlenie,” 269.

552 RBS, 23, 496-497. On Shuvalov and his projects see, most recently, S.V. Andriainen, “Izobretenie vseobshchego dobra”: ideologicheskie osnovaniia deiatel’nosti grafa P.I. Shuvalova (1710-1762)." In Istoricheskie poniatia i politicheskie idei v Rossii XVI-XX veka. Sbornik 5 (St. Petersburg, 2006), 70-107; idem, “P.I. Shuvalov i ego proekty gosudarstvennykh preobrazovanii v 1744-1761 gg” Candidate of Science Diss.: St.Pereburgskii institut istorii RAN, 2007. For an overview of pertinent works, see Kamenskii, Ot Petra, 263 passim. See, also articles by S.O. Shmidt “Proekt P.I. Shuvalova 1754 g. ‘O raznykh gosudarstvennykh pol’zy sposobakh’.” Istoricheskiy arkhiv, no. 6 (1962); “Proekt P.I. Shuvalova o sozdaniia v Rossii vyssheoi voennoi shkoly (1755 g.)” In Voprosy voennoi
cousin of I.I. Shuvalov, her last favorite, P.I. Shuvalov became in the 1750s the leading minister of the realm and authored numerous projects on diverse subjects, mostly having to do with economic improvement (on banking, on tariff, on forestry, on runaway serfs, on “preserving the population,” etc.) . Shuvalov did not receive particularly notable education; or rather, we do not know much about his education and reading.

We do know, however, that he, not unexpectedly, believed the nobility to be the “main member of the state,” and that strengthening its positions and improving the morals and education of the nobility was a key step towards improvement of Russia in general. According to him, nobles “besides having necessary talents, [ought to] prove their worth by living decent and moderate lives.” At the same time, he was concerned with finding a way to motivate the nobles to display proper eagerness to serve. According to Shuvalov, nobles had to possess “zeal for service [revnost’ k službe].” Elsewhere, he was expressing apprehension that the availability of loans from the newly created bank for nobles did not “distract them, or at least decrease their zeal for service, due to them by nature, and did not limit their desire to acquire glory for themselves through meritorious service.” The ideas that governing was to be done by stimulating “zeal” in those governed applied not only to the nobility, but to the army and the state in general. According to his 1753 project for a “school of

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military science,” among the 160 questions to be studied and researched were the following:

[151] Which qualities should a general possess?

[152] By what means can a general make himself beloved by the army? [privesti seb’ a u armii v l’ubov’]

[155] Which virtues should an officer be endowed with, without which he could be useful neither to the Fatherland, nor to the monarch, but could cause only harm?

[157] How should an officer maintain his character? [Kak ofitser svoi kharakter nabl’udat’ dolzhen?]

[158] How ought an officer live? [Kak ofitseru zhit’ nadlezhit?]

[159] What principles [printsipii] should an officer possess if he wants to become an important person?555

Overall, his credo is summarized in another educational project in the following way:

I search for means of preventing [all potential harm to the common good] without causing the extermination of human life, that is, by removing the opportunities [for doing such harm], thus preserving the lives even of those who became accustomed to such [objectionable] behavior <…>. To my mind, the evil, if it is rooted in a large number of people, could not be uprooted completely through any coercive measure.556

He, therefore, calls for going to the root causes of evil (whatever they might be) and removing them, instead of trying to fight the outward manifestation of evil through coercion.

Shuvalov’s educational projects, however, appeared in the 1750s in a very specific context. Originally, he was a courtier without any military experience or

555 Rozhdestvenskii, Ocherki, Appendix, 43. The first 150 questions had to do with specifically military matters, like the ways of marching, attacking, defending, crossing rivers, etc.

556 Quoted in Shmidt, “Proekt P.I. Shuvalova 1754 g.”
credentials whatsoever. He built his career in Elizabeth’s entourage, which he joined back in the late 1720s as a very young man. With her accession to the throne, he was given high military rank, of course, without ever performing any active service. Finally, in 1751 he was promoted to a full general and got his first military command, an entire division. Eager to establish his authority as a military man, Shuvalov proceeded to point out a deplorable lack of uniformity in the drilling of his regiments, and to invent a new method to overcome this deficiency. (He brought in one soldier from every company, drilled them personally as a single unit, and then sent them back as instructors).\(^{557}\) Justifiably or not, his drilling campaign was recognized as a success, and in 1753-1758 he presented three proposals to reform the Cadet Corps by adding to it a “school of military sciences” – an additional class for senior (already commissioned) students who would study military “theory.” In those years Shuvalov presented a number of projects on various issues, so these particular ones are a part of this broader pattern of activity, which contemporaries recognized as his peculiarity. Yet, it is also important to note that Shuvalov, as he himself explains in one of the projects, “got an opportunity, due to a gracious appointment by <…> Her Majesty to the army, to enter military affairs.”\(^{558}\) His appointment and apparent success with a newly invented method of drilling emboldened him to attempt a bureaucratic encroachment onto new turf. Predictably, when appointed the head of artillery in 1756, Shuvalov turned his attention toward this area. Already in April of 1758 he presented a project for reforming the schools along the lines of the Cadet Corps.\(^{559}\)

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\(^{557}\) RBS, 23, 498-499.

\(^{558}\) Quoted in Shmidt, “Proekt I.P. Shuvalova o sozdaniu,” 67.

\(^{559}\) Rozhdestvenskii, Ocherki, 30.
By this point Shuvalov, working on his project, could already borrow directly from existing practices and models. During his work he consulted, for example, what appears to be German-language materials on the Berlin Cadet Corps from the 1730s. He could also use other sources: Shuvalov’s long discussion of the importance of history as a source of moral example appears to be lifted more or less directly from a work by Mikhail Lomonosov, a German-educated academician patronized by Shuvalov’s cousin.

As a result, Shuvalov’s project contained the entire arsenal of disciplinary measures: the cadets were to be “kept under severe restraints” [soderzhat’... ves’ ma strogo], and there was to be a public examination, so that if “among graduating cadets there are some who, due to their special sharpness and diligence, give further hopes for significant enlightenment through studies,” they were to study longer. Those cadets, however, who “would spend their time in laziness, displaying not the slightest desire [okhoty] for studies,” were to be put under arrest, whipped, made to wear a dunce cup, and “if nothing helps,” dispatched as privates into the army. Even before the reform was approved, Shuvalov introduced at the Artillery and Engineering schools registers for recording transgressions and punishments. Monthly and weekly reports on the students’ progress and diligence were to be supplied to him personally, and only the “well-behaved” among them were to be allowed to go to town. While outside of their schools they were to observe decorum, to salute officers, and – characteristically – not to attend the popular entertainment designed for the lower classes [narodnoe gulianie]. This last innovation is especially significant in light of the other measure introduced by Shuvalov. He established a special hospital for the

560 RGADA, f. 20, op. 1, d. 198, ll. 31-39.
561 Stroev, Zherve, Istoricheskii ocherk, 29; RGADA, f. 20, op. 1, d. 198, ll. 70-71.
artillery and engineering students so that they not “acquire habits inappropriate to well-born people” from “socializing with soldiers” at the ordinary hospital where they were previously treated.562

Here one sees a subtle evolution, though. Shuvalov surely dispatched the lazy and the dim-witted ones into the army – but at the same time, he used the word “well-born” [blagorodnye], which would seem to indicate that the nobility was based, after all, on birth. Indeed, one get the impression that his focus is not so much on creating the nobles, as on making sure that the nobles acquire appropriate skills and learning. There is no room here for the slight ambiguity on the connection between birth and virtue, found in the governmental practices of the 1730s. One’s education was supposed to fit one’s assigned social role, not to determine it. Characteristically, all three Cadet Corpses also acquired in the late 1750s-early 1760s special schools for commoners set up to train future NCO’s, craftsmen, technicians, etc. for their respective branches of service563

I would skip here the history of intensive debates on education and nobility in the late 1750s and 1760s within the Elizabethan Codification Commission and Catherine’s Legislative Commission, not to mention rapidly multiplying magazines, as well as the thorough reform of the Noble Cadet Corps along Rousseavian lines implemented by Catherine II and I.I. Betskoi in the 1760s. Betskoi was, in many ways, unique in his radical Rousseanism, insisting that the “moral education [vospitanie] is the root of all good and all evil” and working to create a “new breed of

562 Ibid, 36-38. Note also Shuvalov’s reference to the need to educate cadets in the “rules of Christian morality.” Rozhdestvenskii, Ocherk, 33.

563 Rozhdestvenskii, Ocherki, 32
fathers and mothers.” 564 It is important to note, however, that Rousseau advocated raising children up individually, within the context of a family. So, when the states took it upon themselves to carry out the mission of creating a new breed of citizens, they had to invent the methods of institutionalized “Rousseavian” schooling themselves. In Russia, it appears, most of the disciplinary measures employed in the 1760s by Betskoi were already perfected by his predecessors. Institutionally, his innovation really was to apply them to children as young as five years old, and to carry these methods to their logical conclusion (for example, prohibiting the students from venturing into the outside world whatsoever).

When Betskoi fell from grace, some of his most radical reforms were reversed, and Petr Melissino, a Cadet Corps graduate, was appointed to set the Artillery Cadet Corps straight. His detailed instructions and regulations followed those of von Münnich in great detail. Among the more creative disciplinary measures introduced at the Artillery Cadet Corps in the late 1780s was a special sign designed to visibly mark the best cadets, that is, a gilded medal worn on a special chain. At any given moment no more than twenty cadets were to wear such medals, and a special brochure was published describing the privileges due to those awarded such a medal. These privileges included dining at a separate table, free access in their free time to the offices of the director and senior officers, and a right to go to town without asking for a permission to do so. As to the medal itself, on the one side there was the Imperial monogram “EII” in laurel and palm branches, while the motto on the reverse side read: “For diligence and good behavior.”565

564 For a general overview, see Black, Citizens, 70-103.

565 Stroev, Zherve, Istoricheskiy ocherk, 86. At the Land Cadet Corps they used a system of large buttons made of cloth of different colors; as with the real medals, there were three “degrees” of this sign.
We see, finally, how the moral education project is completely and unequivocally blended here with the methods of disciplining that we recognize as purely military. This blending, of course, was a result of the evolution not only of educational methods. The military, too, was enhancing its disciplinary techniques throughout the eighteenth century, as we have seen in the case of P.I. Shuvalov. In many ways, the little medal awarded at the Artillery Corps in the late 1780s was a direct precursor of the extreme militarization of Russian life attempted during the short reign of Paul I militarization that was conceptualized by the hapless Emperor as a way of disciplining society. Paul I saw his disciplinary campaign as a return to true Petrine principles and a rejection of everything associated with his mother’s supposedly morally lax reign. On this latter point historians and contemporaries tend to agree with him. It might be suggested, however, that in many ways Paul’s program was directly building on that of his mother. His hasty and seemingly random way of introducing disciplinary measures was clearly inimical to Catherine’s approach, but his basic impulses were not necessarily so.

Even more so, however, the blending of the moral and the military embodied in a little medal granted for “Diligence and good behavior” gives us a foretaste of the next century. One of the first to receive for his diligence the medal with Catherine’s monogram on it was Cadet Arakcheev, the scion of a poverty-stricken Novgorod noble family. According to legend, the boy was so captivated by the red-and-black uniforms of the artillery cadets, the sons of a neighboring landlord, that he persuaded his father to enroll him in the Artillery Cadet Corps. Due to the red tape and indifference of bureaucrats the enrollment process took much longer than expected, and the family means were so limited that Arakcheev’s father had actually
to beg in the streets of St.Petersburg. A few decades later General Arakcheev would become the most powerful minister of the last, gloomy years of Alexander I’s reign, widely regarded as a hated symbol of reaction, petty oppression, and inhumane attempts to impose military discipline on the entire society.

566 Ibid, 91.
CONCLUSION

This dissertation seeks to contribute to our understanding of post-Petrine Russia in a number of ways. First, I challenge the conventional picture of the nobility gradually wrestling its “freedoms” from the state. At least as far as the 1730s are concerned, this assumption is not backed up by evidence. On the contrary, I argue that in their actions the leading ministers of Anna’s government were motivated by the notions of human nature and governing that were substantially different from those of Peter. These notions led them to focus on social disciplining and on the creation of a “true nobility” defined by its possession of true virtue. Furthermore, I reconsider through the prism of these notions such specific policy measures implemented in the 1730s as the creation of the Cadet Corps and, briefly, the reform of noble service in 1736-1737. I argue that far from being a concession to the nobility, as most of the existing historiography maintains, these were meant to discipline the elite and to transform it into a “true nobility.” Finally, I attempt to view this paradigm shift within its political and social context. Rather than juxtaposing “ideal” and pragmatic factors, I argue that ideas were formulated and advanced within an essentially political context: specific actors – both ministers and ordinary nobles – formulated, accepted, and promoted them as a way of furthering their practical goals. In the following paragraphs I outline these three points in more detail.

First, I attempt in this dissertation to reconstruct the theory of governing implicit in a number of policies pursued by Anna’s ministers. There is no denying, of course, the reality of fiscal and other constrains and their importance for determining
the policies of the 1730s. Nor should we, however, remain oblivious to the notions of the human nature and of the mechanics of governing shared by such key dignitaries as von Münnich and Ostermann. This is all the more important since, as I argue, these notions represent a radical departure from those of Peter. The key to my argument here is the distinction between two stages in absolutist thinking – one prevalent in the seventeenth century and the one that replaced it beginning somewhere around the years 1700-1710. To put it in the simplest way possible, the former was based on the essentially mechanistic view of the state and of human nature. Such monarchs as Peter or Louis XIV were perfectly satisfied with regulating the actions of their subjects, and with securing their outward “rational” conformity with rules and norms. Already by the last decades of the seventeenth century, however, this approach to regulating society was increasingly found to be lacking by Western European theorists, who placed emphasis on the need to achieve, in our modern parlance, internalization of prescribed values by those being governed. These writers (and, increasingly, rulers) called for a search for “true” virtues, for “true” religiosity and morality, for “true” civilization. At the end, the subjects were supposed to want to obey, to want to be moral, and to want to serve.

These sensibilities lead to a number of conclusions as far as the role of the government and the art of governing are concerned. It meant the discovery of the mind as an object of governing and disciplining. Therefore, it was not enough simply to issue regulations, as Peter would have done, in the hope that rational subjects would rationally follow them. Now techniques were employed and perfected that were supposed to enable such disciplining (constant monitoring, creation of an artificially Westernized environment, removal of harmful influences, regular assessments, etc.). It also meant that the government had to “encourage” subjects to
display more “zeal” by assessing them in a public and transparent way, recognizing their achievements, and justly rewarding the worthy ones. It also meant that the differences in “inclinations” and génie were to be acknowledged, identified, and taken into account when making appointments, as a way of “encouraging” subjects by giving them an opportunity to show their best; but this also meant recognizing certain limitations imposed on the state’s ability to discipline by the differences in human “nature.” While Peter’s policies are not the focus of this dissertation, I argue in chapter 3 that these concerns were alien to him. By introducing the distinction between the two stages of absolutist thinking I question whether Peter was able to conceptualize the “transformation” of society and creation of “new men” at all. In many ways, it is this lack of conceptual differentiating between body and mind as objects of disciplining that shaped his policies.

Second, I argue that the policies of Anna’s government towards the nobility should be understood in light of these concepts of governing and human nature, and not as result of any pressure from the nobility. In chapters 5 and 9, I focus on the decision-making process that led to the creation of the Noble Cadet Corps in 1731 and the reform of noble service in 1736-1737 (which, among other things, limited the term of obligatory service for the nobility to 25 years). I found no evidence that the demands put forward by the nobles in 1730 were in any way taken into consideration by the government. At the same time, these measures – both the rhetoric of the relevant decrees and the operational language of officials actually implementing them – fit rather well the conceptual framework outlined above. Far from being a concession to the nobility, these measures represented quite conscious steps towards the construction of instinnoe shl’akhetsvo out of the existing elite.
This goal reflected a vague consensus among the leading representatives of the elite, all of whom, naturally, believed the maintenance of the proper nobility in Russia to be an issue of paramount, indeed, “constitutional” importance. As I show in chapter 4, in the 1710s-1720s many of Peter’s lieutenants were increasingly acquainted with contemporary notions of education, human nature, and morality, as reflected in the writing of such diverse authors as Christian Wolff, John Locke, and Abbé Fénelon. The strong presence in Russia of the Halle Pietists was an especially important channel for importation of these ideas into Russia. As a result, by 1730 the creation of a proper nobility imbued with proper values was viewed as quite necessary by both the Supreme Privy Council and its opponents, such as V.N. Tatishchev. What was different, however, in the thinking of Field-Marshal von Münnich, the founder of the Cadet Corps, is the emphasis on the consistent and quite ruthless use of disciplinary practices and, at the same time, the focus on the need to discern and take into account individual “inclination” and “abilities.” I maintain that it was these sensibilities, and not the pressure from the nobility, that motivated von Münnich and Ostermann to supply the Cadet Corps with students on a voluntary basis and to give them the opportunity to choose their branch of service – at the same time as the students were subjected to constant monitoring and regular public examinations. The 1737 system of noble service, which combined such “liberal” elements as opportunities for choosing a career and way of schooling with a rigid sequence of examinations, fits the same pattern. At the end, this approach allows me to move away from imposing the ahistorical dichotomy between “emancipatory” and “conservative” on the eighteenth-century thinking and to attempt to treat it on its own terms.

Finally, this dissertation addresses the reaction of the nobility to the educational policies of Anna’s government. On the one hand, the vast majority of
nobles were not interested in the educational opportunities at the Noble Cadet Corps; this further confirms the point that the establishment of this institution could not be viewed as a “concession” to the nobility in any meaningful sense. On the other hand, there existed a numerically small, but important (in terms of its wealth and ranks) stratum of the nobility that was ready to willingly enroll in the new school. These nobles were not necessarily moved by any theoretical notions regarding the value of this new, institutionalized Western education. Rather, as I show in Part III, their choices were subtly shaped by a variety of factors, including insecurity of their family in terms of their service status and wealth; exposure to the West; family and service connections; access to educational resources (for example, to colleagues willing to teach their sons), etc. Theirs were meaningful individual choices, nevertheless; at the same time, taken together, these individual choices were beginning to form patterns of behavior “appropriate” for the nobility. It is this process that made Petrine projects sustainable, allowing the government to announce in 1762 that the need to employ coercion, in order to force nobles to study and serve, disappeared: the nobility internalized the prescribed values and was now willing to serve out of its “love for honor.”
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