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Bureaucratization in the Civilizing Process

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In his book *Involvement and Detachment* Norbert Elias is describing a hypothetical situation, in which self-constraint and self-regulation of individuals would be developed so highly that there would be no need, for their peaceful collective life in society, of agencies of external constraint backed up by the means of violence. People in that imagined community would have a thorough understanding that enjoyable life in society is possible only when people willingly submit themselves to the common rules. If people as a result of conflict or a lapse in their ability to control themselves would break any rule, they would without compelling force on the part of the society's agent pay whatever compensation there would be considered appropriate for the breach of the rules. They would behave according to understanding that if anyone would not abide by the rules willingly or be ready to compensate for the breach of any rule, no-one could be expected to do that either (Elias 1983: 76).

Elias notices that obviously the present level of development is far from the described picture. People would need a much greater capacity for self-control to dispense with the agencies of external restraint. At the present stage, however, peaceful co-existence of individuals for the long time is not possible without the state's monopoly on physical violence and its agencies licensed to threaten or use physical violence if necessary (*ibidem*).

The problem of civilizing of the monopolists of the means of violence

Elias makes a point that the position of the control may be misused by the controllers, as they may wish to use their position to increase their own power ratio (*ibidem*). With regard to this Elias writes: «The civilizing of these monopolists of physical violence within a state is an unsolved problem» (Elias 1983: 77). This is an abstract statement which can fully be applied to the modern public officials whose' activity may not be primarily related to the use of physical violence of the state, but rather the state's authority which is ultimately backed by the means of physical violence.

The problem of the civilizing of the monopolists of physical violence, in particular, the feudal lords and the kings, was dealt with, of course, in his books *The Court Society* and *The Civilizing Process*.

Particularly in *The Court Society* Elias shows the processes of the civilizing of the upper strata of France. He demonstrates that the pacification of the nobility and transformation of the patterns of its conduct was an outcome of the largely unintended, unplanned civilizing process. It was preceded by the elimination struggle among the French princes which resulted in centralization of the kingdom – the process described in the

second volume of *The Civilizing Process*. This was referred to by Elias as a first phase in the dynamics of the monopoly mechanism (Elias 1939: 276). The military significance of the nobility in the Early Modern Europe was diminishing, but their dependence on the king's favour was increasing. Nobility was gradually drawn to the court to serve personally the king in various capacities fulfilling the functions of often useless offices. As the basis of their power and independence was shattered, so the pattern of their conduct changed. Their function was mostly to counterweight the growing power of the cities and the bourgeoisie. Trapped in this figuration, king and aristocracy developed new forms of social interaction characterized by more permanent and stricter self-restraint, higher sensitivity, refinement of manners, aestheticism and foresight. On the one hand this apparently was a civilizing of the upper class – the controllers of the monopolized means of violence. On the other hand, the king theoretically remained the sole owner of the kingdom and could act as if it were his property. He was not constrained, especially after the Estates assembly ceased to be convoked, in his capacity as a lawmaker and the executive. As Elias writes, he was still not opposed by a consolidated society and in this situation he could completely identify himself with his office, his private life and his kingdom and could rule in the country as in his household (Elias 1969: 149). There is a peculiar characteristic of patrimonialism, pointed at by Reinhard Bendix. In order to keep the balance of power the central ruler has to be to some degree arbitrary and unpredictable. He should be able to raise certain families or groups and cast others into disgrace on the “subjective” grounds. When the power ratio of the central ruler is temperate, he is constrained by tradition. But when his power ratio is high, as in the era of absolutism, he can disregard tradition (Bendix 1964, 1978). This situation ultimately leads to the second phase of the monopoly mechanism. That is, the monopoly of violence passes from the hands of one person or a limited number of individuals to a greater number of people and finally becomes «a function of the interdependent human web as a whole» (Elias 1939: 276).

The monopoly mechanism describes important aspects of the civilizing of the power elites. Another, more specific, yet significant mechanism, to which Elias paid much less attention, was bureaucratization of polities in Western societies from the 16th century on. Bureaucratization of the states was also to a great extent an unintended process. There could be mentioned some examples. According to Michael Mann, substantial bureaucratization first took place in the military forces. With the introduction of the field armies, the significance of the state supply of the means of warfare increased. In addition, the complexity of the methods of waging wars increased and bureaucratization served as a method of coordination of various parts of the army: infantry, cavalry and artillery (Mann 1998: 445). These methods of coordination proved to be effective and were taken upon by the civil government.

There were other, earlier precursors to bureaucratization. The concept of office introduced in the Catholic Church was an object of imitation by the civil governments (Wolter 1988). Revival and development of the Roman law was another instrument of bureaucratization. Gradually it was introduced in the work of the state organs. At stage of the development of the state, characterized by the dual rule of the prince and the assembly of the Estates (*Ständestaat*), procedures of debates among the princes and the Estates were ordered and regulated by legal rules which left the civilizing effect on the power elites (Poggi 1978).

Absolutist France was not among the countries which substantially bureaucratized their administrations in Early Modern period. According to Thomas Ertman, France's state's infrastructural power can be better described as patrimonial. Ertman's analysis offers explanation why in some polities infrastructural power in Early Modern Europe developed in a form which can be described as patrimonial, while in other European polities infrastructural power developed along bureaucratic lines. The case of France the emergence of this particular type of the infrastructural power is explained by the early onset of the sustained military competition with other polities, in particular, England. This resulted in the strength of local lords and magnates who

were able, in bargaining with the central ruler over the terms of the military service, to appropriate the means of administration and for a longer time retain significant power. Effective bureaucratization in Early Modern times took place in another part of Europe: Prussia, Denmark and Sweden were the first countries which introduced bureaucracy as the key feature of the buildup of the infrastructural power. Timing, that is, historically later rise of a consolidated state, effective subordination of the local lords and representative assemblies, greater monetization of economy and supply of educated personnel at that time (late 16th and 17th centuries) are the key explanations behind the more successful bureaucratization in these polities. Swedish political scientist H. Gustaffson considers that Denmark and Sweden in the 18th century possessed the most bureaucratized and professional public administrations in Europe.

Elias' reflections in the *Involvement and Detachment* offer an insightful language in which one can characterize the civilizing effects of bureaucratization on societies in general and the controllers of the monopolized means of violence in particular. He introduces the terms 'involvement' and 'detachment' to denote the different ways people regulate themselves: individuals in the control of their thoughts, feelings and drives can be more involved or more detached (Elias 1983: xxxii).

Greater involvement in the current situation means a greater emotionality and weaker self-control, a weaker ability to think clearly and act adequately. Greater detachment presupposes an ability to see the situation in impersonal terms; the consciousness is less coloured by wishes and fears and less affected by the immediate concerns here and now (Elias 1983: xxxvi). As a result, the individual is able to steer himself in a way which is more adequate for the particular circumstances and with a greater benefit for himself.

The ability to control the individual self is linked to the ability to control the natural or social environment. Seen in the evolutionary terms, humans progress in the direction of greater detachment, higher ability to control the physical and social environments and their own selves. Elias describes the earlier stages of human development, when humans had not learnt to master the processes of nature. The nature was seen with a greater involvement: natural processes were seen in terms of persons, or "spirits". The characteristic question in that situation is: «What does that mean for me or for us?» and the answers usually involve a great deal of fantasy which constructs the reality in terms of animated beings and purposeful actors. It has taken a long time for the humans to learn to detach themselves from the processes of nature to such degree as to start to think of nature in terms of the regulations and mechanisms peculiar to it without an immediate reference to their selves. The important precondition for such progress was the greater security which was won in the hard battle with the natural forces. The imposition of the discipline of a greater detachment meant loss in satisfaction which the self derives from seeing the world in the personal terms. The world filled by purposeless forces which follow impersonal laws does not seem so appealing and gratifying. But the humans' gain is much greater, for the ability to think more clearly about nature allowed to control effectively the natural forces with the great benefit and radical improvements of the conditions of life. The greater detachment from the natural environment was made possible by «distancing from the situation of the moment» and introduction of the intermediary activity, which presupposed «remembering a past and anticipating possible future situation» (Elias 1983: xxxvi).

Elias considers that human ability to control the processes of nature has developed much further than the ability to control social processes. Social groups represent danger to each other which causes insecurity and determines greater affectivity and involvement; this makes it more difficult to rise to a higher level of detachment. Elias formulated a «principle of increasing facilitation»: «the lower the social standards of control in manipulating and of detachment and adequacy in thinking about them, the more difficult is it to raise these standards» (Elias 1983: 34).



According to Elias, a more detached consciousness operates with evaluations of processes – physical or social – which are value-free and are autonomous from the exigencies of the situation. For example, natural sciences operate almost exclusively with intra-scientific valuations, and have achieved a high level of autonomy and detachment. Achievement of a greater degree of detachment, Elias stresses, presupposes existence of certain social conditions. Considering the case of scientists he notes that they are «protected by firmly established professional standards and other institutional safeguards against the intrusion of heteronomous evaluations» (Elias 1983: 6). Elias formulates the following principle: «The greater the involvement the greater the tendency towards heteronomous valuations: the greater the detachment the greater the tendency towards autonomous valuations» (Elias 1983: 35).

Bureaucracy as the means of civilizing of politics

Description of the ethos of bureaucratic office found in Max Weber's works can be seen in terms of a detached consciousness and behaviour. Some of his characterizations of bureaucratic comportment refer precisely to what can be called a *detached* demeanour. So, Weber writes that the bureaucrat in the discharge of his duties should act «without regard for persons», but should take into account only objective considerations (Weber 1978: 975). Bureaucrats' official conduct should be governed by the principle *sine ira et studio* – without hate or love. The bureaucrat, unlike the feudal lord, should not be lead by «sympathy and favor, by grace and gratitude» (*ibidem*). Weber is quite unequivocal on this subject:

Bureaucracy develops the more perfectly, the more it is “dehumanized”, the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation (*ibidem*).

A developed bureaucracy in a highly differentiated and complex civilization demands a «personally detached and strictly objective *expert*» (*ibidem*). A bureaucrat's impartiality demands, in Weber's words, «a supremely ethical discipline and self-denial» (Weber 1922: 331). This description does not mean that an official does not have any freedom of action. On the contrary, as John Rohr shows, the discretion of the public official is an integral part of the work in the public administration and in the last decades it has even widened following the expansion of the fields of responsibility of the agencies in the public sector (Rohr 1998). The creative element in the activity of an official is present, but that action is not arbitrary, is not lead by «*personally* motivated favor and valuation» (Weber 1978: 979).

Discussing impartiality and neutrality of the bureaucrat Weber refers to several situations: impartiality to 'persons' when an executive public official is considering the cases of the citizens; impartiality, professionalism and objectivity in relations with the colleagues; and neutrality in relation to the political bosses. In the context of the democratic state the ethic of the bureaucrat is distinctive from the ethos of the politician. Weber put it in the following way:

'To be above parties' – in truth, to remain outside the realm of the struggle for power – is the official's role, while the struggle for personal power, and the resulting personal responsibility, is the lifeblood of the politician as well as of the entrepreneur (Weber, 1978: 1404).

If necessary, a bureaucrat should implement an order or policy which is contrary to his personal convictions or political creed. Or, as the case may be, he should control personal enthusiasm towards the policies

promulgated by the elected politicians. As Weber has emphasized, such «supremely ethical discipline and self-denial» (Weber 1922:331) is necessary to keep the state from disintegration.

In the political system, state bureaucracy serves, in Paul Du Gay's expression, as a gyroscope of the state: it provides stability, continuity and institutional memory of the state (Du Gay 2006:18). The role of a bureaucrat in the modern democratic state, in his view, is to be cautious towards various political creeds and not overzealous about implementation of particular courses of action. A bureaucrat and public administration should be separated, divorced from «private moral absolutisms» (Du Gay 2006:5). Without such feature, the important traits of public administration, like reliability and procedural fairness, could not be ensured (*ibidem*).

When discussing the “neutrality” of a public official in his relations with the civil society, Du Gay points out that an official should be autonomous and superior to extra-official ties to “kith, kin and conscience” and separate himself from the extra-official ties, including his personal interest (Du Gay 2006:3).

In official documents and regulations this stipulation is known nowadays as a rule limiting the conflict of interests. Conflict of interests is generally defined as a situation in which a public official has to perform an action in which he, his relatives or business partners are personally or financially interested. With some modifications the rule prohibiting performance of an official action in such situation can be found in the codes of ethics or other types or regulatory documents all around Europe and other parts of the world. The purpose of such regulation is to ensure the neutrality in the official work of civil servants. Nowadays it is recognized that an official, dealing with matters affecting him or members of his primary group or business partners is likely not to act without personal involvement. Personal interest, or involvement, in the issue at hand can unduly affect the course of official business and the decision to be taken. The conduct of a bureaucrat in such situation can take a direction which would be contrary to the purposes of the office. In extreme forms the “involved” behaviour in the institutional context of the state grows into “corruption” – the misuse of the public office for private gain of the officials or other related persons. In cases of corrupt acts committed by public officials, striving for satisfaction of short-term wishes completely overrides the orientation to the long-term reasons of state. Explanations of the rationale for introduction of the rules regulating the behaviour of an official in the situation of conflict of interests and the ways to solve such situations explicitly refer to the necessity to ensure autonomy and independence of an official action.

Du Gay considers bureaucracy an important positive civilizational achievement which is crucial for the functioning of the constitutional democracy (Du Gay 2005). Successful fulfillment of the official duties presupposes a ‘learned behaviour’ in accordance with the official status and role – «capacity to set aside one’s private, political, moral, regional and other commitments» (Du Gay 2000: 76). In his view, bureaucracy serves as a «buffer between civic comportment and personal principles» (*ibidem*). Indeed, this can be seen when bureaucracy is examined in the context of its relations to the politicians and its relation with the civil society.

Bureaucracy serves a restraining function to the sometimes overzealous and passionate politicians: political ideas have to pass the filter of autonomous and professional evaluation of corresponding departments; bureaucratic experts should weight the consequences of the proposed policy, its costs and benefits, and take into account the experience and institutional memory of their agency. Again, as Weber noted, the occupation of the position in the state bureaucracy presupposes a lengthy training. Nowadays this is exceedingly so. Civil servants are supposed to have specialized knowledge in the field of their expertise and the competence of their agency. Their professional competence is further advanced by state-financed programmes of training and improvement of skills. Civil servants, according to the widespread norm of their codes of conduct, are supposed to give “honest and fearless” advice to their political heads. Such advice should be based on learning,



scientific knowledge, facts and accurate analysis. Furthermore, as a rule, civil servants are protected by the law from undue influence on their decisions or activity and from the arbitrary removal from the office, to encourage honest and autonomous fulfillment of duties. Political neutrality of the civil service has been an accepted norm in many democratic polities. In this sense state bureaucracy can be seen as a means of “civilizing” of politics.

The similar idea pertains to the relations of the state bureaucracy to the public. Public administration has a degree of autonomy from the civil society. It has its own reasons and means to prioritize and deal with the issues of the community. The official has the primary duty to be led by the “reason of state” rather than “concerns of the people”: «the term “public” comes to refer to the offices themselves rather than the “common concerns” or more specifically, the latter come to be seen exclusively in terms of the former» (Du Gay 2006: 8). Du Gay therefore refers to the pertinence of the critique of recent movements of populist “direct democracy” to subject the work of public administration increasingly to the opinion of the groups of citizens rather than professional or legal standards (*ibidem*).

Bureaucratic detachment and the autonomy of the state

One can ask: by virtue of what social mechanisms state bureaucracy assumes a detached position in relation to society? Discussing the definition of democracy, Emile Durkheim makes a point that one should not be mistaken by thinking that under the democratic regime the society governs itself. In democracy society rather is governed by a group of individuals that is *detached* from the rest of society, but maintains a regular communication with the governed. Society cannot be governed by a public opinion which exists in a diffused form in it, at least in case of complex social systems, not the simple communities. In order to be able to govern, the state should be connected to but different from the civic life. State does not simply “reflect” the individual opinions of the members of society. It should take consideration of many aspects of social life and have therefore a different perspective on the society. In order to govern, it should contemplate the whole of the social life. The state provides a different point of view and therefore its deliberations cannot be but different from mere a sum of opinions of individual citizens:

The State comes into existence by a process of concentration that detaches a certain group of individuals from the collective mass. In that group the social thought is subjected to elaboration of a special kind and reaches a very high degree of clarity. Where there is no such concentration and where the social thought remains entirely diffused, it also remains obscure and the distinctive feature of the political society will be lacking. (Durkheim 1957: 82).

Durkheim, however, remained unclear as to the social and historical processes and mechanisms which led towards the detachment and autonomization of the state apparatus from the rest of society.

On this subject, one can consult a more recent literature on state-building. Among sociologists, Reinhard Bendix, distinguished in the social systems two aspects: authority and association, arguing, that in the former actor’s orientation to hierarchy and order predominates, while in the latter – orientation on utility and reciprocity of interests. He argues that such a differentiation is a product of a historical process of development of polities, specifically, in Western Europe. During this process the idea of the office as a personal and inheritable property gave way to the idea of a bureaucratic office as non-owned and distinct from the personality of the incumbent. In course of this state-formation process, the number of functions were, using the words of the Swedish historian Kerstin Strömberg-Back, lifted «out of the social order and into a special politico-administrative sector which possessed sovereign authority» (quoted in L. Jespersen, 2000: 36). Administra-

tive centralization of politics was the process of particular significance. In course of centralization of politics the rulers subdued the local nobilities, magnates and representatives assemblies and ensured more effective implementation of the flow of commands issuing from the royal council. Proprietary office-holding would be a hindrance to the governing of the state – an obstacle to hierarchical ordering of administration and ensuring reliable execution of orders. Thus there occurred a transition from patrimonial form of administration to state bureaucracy. At the same time administration was divorced from family and property relations and interests by means of which insulation of the administration from society took place:

By ordering and facilitating the faithful implementation of commands, authority insulates officials from influences which would interfere with that implementation. (Bendix 1964: 139)

More recently, Michael Mann provided a more general sociological conceptualization of the state as an autonomous social power. As it is helpful for understanding of the process of detachment of bureaucracy from the civil society, I will make an outline of his main arguments.

Michael Mann builds upon the critique of the concepts of the state which consider the state a mere reflection or fusion of the wills of the social actors in the civil society. For example, in Marxist conceptualizations of the state, the state apparatus acts predominantly in the interests of the capitalist class. In the liberal conceptualizations the state is viewed as a result of a social contract concluded by the individuals. He dismisses both approaches on the empirical grounds showing in his two volumes *The Sources of Social Power* that the state can act as an autonomous actor.

The first approximation to the concept of the autonomy of the state can be made by pointing to its double set of tasks – one external, oriented towards the other states, and one internal, directed towards civil society and the class structure. The state is basically a military organization which function is to defend the territory, or a domain of sovereignty. In Elias' terms, the modern nation-state is a survival unit (Elias 1987, Kaspersen, Gabriel 2008). Charles Tilly has shown that the internal institutional expansion of the states was to a considerable extent caused by their military activity – preparation for wars and waging of wars. Military and state elites had to extract the resources needed for war but they also had to ensure the reproduction of the resources and their availability in the future. They were forced to engage in building of civil institutions, including civil bureaucracies, and attending to the educational, health, and social needs of their populations (Tilly 1990). Possessing huge material, financial and administrative resources, the state elites could use these resources «with a degree of autonomy against either the dominant class, or against domestic war or peace factions and foreign states» (Mann 1988: 3).

Mann set out to advance beyond the militaristic conceptualization of the autonomy of the state. As a point of departure he takes the bounding rule-making activity of the state. «Rules are necessary to bind together strangers or semi-strangers», Mann writes (Mann 1988: 12). Other forms of regulation of relationships like custom, exchange or force, are insufficient in the long run. Enforceable rules are useful for every social group. Besides this function Mann points to other functions which states perform: maintenance of internal order; military defense or aggression; maintenance of infrastructures of communications like roads, message systems, monetary system, weights and measures and so on; economic redistribution between different social groups, age groups and so on, to ensure, for instance, the subsistence of the economically inactive (Mann 1988: 13-14). The state fulfills multiplicity of functions which can be best performed from the center. Territorial centrality is the third decisive feature of the state. The state employs various means of power which by themselves are not specific for the state. Economic, ideological or military means of power can be possessed by various groups of society, for example, entrepreneurs, priests or warrior bands or groups of armed citizens. But only the state uses these powers in combination as a territorially based and

centralized organization possessing the authority to issue and enforce the rules applicable within the demarcated territory. In this, Mann argues, lies the nature of the autonomous power of the state. Other social groups can control some the sources of social power – economic, ideological, military, but only the state has the power of territorially based centralized coordination. And they become dependent on the indispensability of the state personnel. Thus for Mann, the primary source of the autonomous power of the state lies in its infrastructural power – the ability to «penetrate and centrally coordinate the activities of civil society through its own infrastructure» (Mann 1988: 7). By means of the despotic power state elite controls the infrastructural power and rules over society. The notion of the despotic power is the conceptual means by which one can argue that the state is actually an actor. Mann mentions examples of the divide-and-rule strategies employed by the state elites and documented by historians and historical sociologists. Absolutist monarchs can be the instance here. They could manipulate with the needs, interests and fears of different groups including aristocracy, urban elites and rural groups and “play off” them against each other and thereby assert their independence and autonomy. Studies of absolutism have demonstrated the working of this mechanism (Anderson 1987, Elias 1969). Another example is the military function of the state as an aggressor or defender by which it gained autonomy from the dominant economic class.

Infrastructural and despotic powers vary across the historical time and the world regions. The infrastructural power of the state may be weak, that is, its ability to perform regulatory, policing and certain universal welfare functions and control the means of administration. If this is so, the means of administration will “disappear” into society and will be “leased” to or appropriated by socially powerful groups. Historically this situation is observed in feudalism and patrimonial type of administration. Or the state can be infrastructurally strong. This type of infrastructural power of the state is exemplified by state bureaucracy. Mann observes that during the past 150 years in the Western world the tendency has been towards the increase of the infrastructural power while the overall trend of the development of the despotic power remains unclear.

This notion of usefulness of the centrally and territorially based organization of the state possessing infrastructural power and providing services for the groups of civil society is helpful for identifying the source of the autonomy and detachment of state bureaucracy. State bureaucracy is in principle *useful and necessary for all groups* and therefore it can assume a *detached position in relation to any particular group*.

Emphasis on usefulness and functionality, however, has led Mann to the hypothesis that the state power emerges by conferring resources and authority to the groups assuming the function of the central coordination by the members of ‘civil society’ as an act of free will. Then these central coordinators begin to exploit their position. Once the autonomous power of the state emerges, it becomes very difficult for other social groups to get control over it, for the reasons discussed above. Mann puts it in the following way: «The hypothesis is that civil society freely gives resources but then loses control and becomes oppressed by the state» (Mann 1988: 20).

Mann encounters difficulties to find historical evidence for this hypothesis. Some of the instances include the foundation of central storehouses found in simpler societies and documented by anthropologists; or crystallization of the military function and subsequent use of the military infrastructure for the centralized coordination of compulsory cooperation, as found, presumably, in ancient agrarian societies. This militaristic route towards the acquiring of the infrastructural and despotic power of the state, however, is more definitely discernable in cases of conquest, not as the result of free placing of the resources and authority in the hands of the specialists in warfare. At the same time in the first volume of his *The Sources of Social Power* Mann points to the evidence which he construes as a persistence in the attempt of the people in pre-historical and ancient world to resist and prevent the stabilization of the centralized authority and “escape” from being “caged” by a power organization, even despite its purported usefulness. He repeatedly points to the exam-

ples, especially from ancient and medieval history, that subordination of the territory to the unit of central coordination often resulted not in permanent centralization of social life but in disintegration of the state-society. The state turns out to be unable to control the means of administration and these “disappear” into the “civil society”. Besides these difficulties, Mann’s conceptualization of the autonomy of the state power is not particularly helpful for understanding the bureaucratization as a part of state-building in the context of the civilizing process.

Differentiation, integration and bureaucratization

In *The Civilizing Process* Elias repeatedly underlines the importance of growing “interdependence” of different parts of the country on each other in the course of the civilizing process. The growing division of functions with the concomitant process of increasing integration – interdependence among groups and regions, for Elias, lies behind the mechanism of political centralization. On the examples from medieval France he shows that economic autarky and political autarky are interrelated. Even in the medieval period long-distance trade was not entirely absent, but it was limited mostly to luxury goods. Domains of feudal lords were economically in main self-sufficient. Even wine was not generally traded over long distances and if one wanted to consume it, one had to produce it in his own land. That is why, Elias, writes, grapes were cultivated in the northern regions of France, where wine of good quality could not be produced. At the same time the tendency of political decentralization in the 12th century in France had developed so far that the king of France could not effectively rule over the territory of the kingdom; his authority in fact was circumscribed by the borders of his domain lands. He traveled very little outside of his domain and communication with his vassal was very sparse. The feudal lands became independent territories and the vassals acquired hereditary rights over them.

The situation of decentralization and entwinement of political and economic autarky is not limited to the medieval period if one looks at other regions of Europe. Under different historical circumstances, a somewhat similar picture could be observed in the 18th century in territory of the present day Latvia. Formerly a part or a dependency of Sweden and Poland (from 16th till 18th century), in the course of the 18th century it was annexed, by the means of military conquest, by Russia, which at that period was becoming an empire. As it is known from the historical and sociological literature, empires are inherently weak administratively (Mann 1988; Held *et alii* 1999). They cannot effectively control the means of administration and these pass into the hands of local elites. Patrimonialism thus is the natural type of local administration within the empires. The German landlords, who were the effective masters of this territory and possessed control over the local population, succeeded in allodification of the lands they used, that is, in converting the fiefs into their property. They enlarged their lands and, given the level of economic development of that time, concentrated almost entire social system within their estates: industrial production, agriculture, trade and “court” life (Dunsdorfs 1973: 315). During the same period, they succeeded in acquiring even more authority over the peasants. Latvian provinces were formally the area of jurisdiction of Russian empire but most spheres of life in the territory of Latvia in the 18th century were regulated by laws passed in assemblies of the local landowners as well as by the rules issued by the particular estates. The landlords exercised disciplining and policing power, they could be, for certain types of transgressions, simultaneously prosecutors and judges over the peasants and were of course masters and employers to them. The governor and his staff, through whom the emperor ruled over provinces of Latvia, did not possess sufficient administrative capacity to counteract the landowners either in towns or in the rural areas. Only in course of the 19th century the central government



of the empire succeeded in creating a more far-reaching set of administrative institutions and tightening of the administrative control and supervision. As Latvian historian Edgars Dunsdorfs stated succinctly: «In the eighteenth century in Latvia the monopoly of the state power belonged to the estate» (Dunsdorfs 1973: 379).

Elias wrote that for the king the role of the military leader was the means to assert his authority and keep his kingdom together. The urge to conquer or need to defend the territory is a prominent factor which integrates and binds together population of territories lying far apart. Not for all time, however, the military activity is possible or necessary. Under the conditions of medieval life, when wars ceased, the centrifugal forces set in motion again. When the king does not manifest himself in the belligerent role, his other functions, for example, of the highest judge, lose significance and slip away from him. When people of scattered territories are not interconnected and interdependent and live mostly autonomous, autarkic life, the central ruler lacks the basis for power in the time of peace. There is no much need for the centrally coordinated infrastructure, for, under conditions of predominantly domestic and barter economy there is no need for developed means of communication or exchange.

Growth of population for Elias is one of the principal moving forces behind the increase of the division of labour. Growth of population produces a pressure for the progressing division of labour. With the increase in differentiation of functions the need for more intense interaction and communication arises. There intensifies the need for exchange and the means of exchange – the money (Elias 1939: 206). The spreading use of money in turn opens up more possibilities for differentiation in work and consumption thus setting in motion a mutually reinforcing process (*ibidem*).

With the increase in interdependence among groups and regions there also arises the need for a more developed and differentiated central coordination. And with increase in the need for the centralized coordinating organ, the groups and individuals forming the demarcated figuration of mutual interdependence become more dependent on the central ruler. Then the power of the central ruler increases. Under these circumstances the ruler acquires power to impose on a larger territory a binding set of laws and make provisions for their enforcement. Now Elias pointed out that the structure of human interdependence has a bearing on the structure of the central organs of government: «The structure of the central organs corresponds to the structure of the division and interweaving of functions» (Elias 1939: 207). This statement helps understand the shape that bureaucratization of state administrations took, specifically, their *departmentalization*, that is, specialization of their functions, in the context of the civilizing process.

It is important to note that these entwined processes of differentiation, integration, centralization, growth of the power of the central organs of government are, for Elias, the civilizing processes which had not been planned or deliberately carried out according to a consciously created design. The course of the civilizing processes, as he stressed in his book *The Civilizing Process* many times, are largely unplanned and unintended. Changes in the structure of human relationships and institutions, as Elias put it, were not planned by individuals (Elias 1939: 201). The processes of growing autonomization of the state power and differentiation of its organs of government, as well as changes in the habitus and ethos of personnel which staffed these institutions of government, too, can be understood in terms of unintended consequences of the civilizing process.

Elias wrote that the level of social development which is reached by the moment of inception and consolidation of the political regime has a determining influence on the shape it takes (Elias 1969: 156). At the moment of consolidation of the states of Sweden, Denmark and Prussia there were already available important resources which could be used for building of effective infrastructures of administration: more literate population, groups of people educated in law and arts, a more monetized economy, technically better developed means of communication. These resources were not available for earlier state-builders, like

France and England (Ertman 1999). Political consolidation in the polities in question took place at the moment or intense warfare: during the Thirty Years' War in cases of Sweden and Prussia and during the First Northern war in case of Denmark. This factor facilitated centralization of the regimes.

The administrative reforms in Sweden, which culminated in the Form of Government in 1634, took place during continuous wars which Sweden waged, and the king Gustavus Adolphus was personally involved in campaigns in Poland and Germany and frequently was absent from Sweden. Under these conditions, there was a pressure for formalization and rationalization of government. The main purpose of the reform was to create an efficient and continuous administration in such a way that it could continue to function even when the king was away (L. Jespersen 2000: 69; Roberts 1992: 76). An expert in history of Sweden Michael Roberts considered that the reforms in Sweden, implemented by the chancellor Axel Oxenstierna, were based on principles of «delegation of royal authority, regularization of procedures, and centralization of administration» (Roberts 1992:77). He concluded that the administration in Sweden after the implementation of the Form of Government was «most efficient and up-to-date administrations in Europe. It was not corrupt, indeed, and it did not suffer from the current plague of venality...» (Roberts 1992: 78).

Along with the principle of centralization, the reformed government embodied the *principle of differentiation of the areas of rule*. The government comprised specialized colleges which had defined areas of jurisdiction and competence. On the central level there were organized five colleges: The Treasury, The Chancery, The High Court, The War College and the Admiralty. In 1637 and 1651 the Mining College and the College for Commerce followed. Differentiation of the areas of rule presupposed specialized qualifications – knowledge and skills, for the personnel performing the tasks in these colleges (Roberts 1992: 69). On the progressive bureaucratization Michael Roberts expressed the view that it was principally led by the need «to meet the increasing range and complexity of the state's business» and not, as some scholars had suggested, by the need to control population (Roberts 1984: 59). Although mostly at that time preoccupied with the foreign policy, the government dealt with various domestic issues: local government, crime and disturbances, means of communication, religion, poor relief, education, mining and production of steel etc. To meet the growing complexity and number of administrative tasks, the government was significantly expanded during the 17th century in terms of employed staff. To ensure due performance of tasks, to prevent abuses and correct maladministration, the official procedures were formalized and regularized by means of ordering the offices in hierarchies and internal instructions; annual inspections of the work of the colleges were introduced (Roberts 1992: 78). The work in the department was to become a permanent full-time job for the office-holders; absenteeism was punished. The office holders, as a compensation for the faithful service, received fixed salaries and security of tenure (Roberts 1992: 74).

The overarching purpose of the administrative reforms in Prussia introduced by Frederick William I, according to German historian R. Dorwart, was to ensure «centralization of authority in royal, central offices and officers at the expense of the territories and their institutions and the final integration of these central offices so as to establish a monolith of personal power and the best possible administration» (Dorwart 1953: 123). The reforms were probably to a considerable extent designed after the Swedish pattern (Ertman 1999: 249). These included rooting out of patrimonialism in office-holding and particularism of estates, introduction of hierarchically organized salaried offices, regular auditing and fight with corruption, strengthening the tax-extracting functions with the help of war commissariat, creation of uniform regulation and procedures for the whole administration, assuring, that the primary loyalty of the civil servants and provincial officials would be to the king of Prussia, not the provinces. Again, specialization according to the subject areas, rather than the territorial constituency, was found to be most suitable for meeting the needs of the centralized

rule. Moreover, it was discovered that specialized departments turned out to be dependent on each other for an effective fulfillment of the tasks; this dependency compelled them to cooperate with each other, which in turn reinforced centralization of government. The point of unity of the specialized colleges was the council of state.

The question of loyalty of the civil servants to the king is important in the context of the present discussion since strong loyalty to the king enabled the public administration to work autonomously from the external influences. According to Dorwart, Frederick William himself represented a new type of the statesman in the German lands who tried to subordinate the collective particularisms of the estates and nobility to the common interests of the state. But he also understood that effective operation of administration depends on the honesty of his officials. He made provisions that officials, who connived with the violators of law, would be punished and dismissed from the service. If it was noticed that a civil servant does not work with efficient honesty, industry and thoroughness, the king tried to remedy this in cooperation with the particular college (Dorwart 1971: 158). Prussian bureaucracy at the time of Frederick William I is characterized by Dorwart as «completely loyal to the absolutist monarch» (Dorwart 1953: 152).

The case of absolutist Denmark

Since the dissolution of the Kalmar Union there had been rivalry between Denmark and Sweden over the dominance in Scandinavia and over the Baltic region. Such rivalry provoked military conflicts (Jespersen 1994: 141). In the course of the 17th century there had been a series of wars between Denmark and Sweden but one with substantial implications for Denmark was the war of 1657-1660. In June 1657 Denmark launched attack on the Swedish acquisitions in Germany, but retreated on the invasion of the Swedish army, which was transferred from Poland. In course of the war the very independence of Denmark was threatened as the Swedish troops were besieging Copenhagen in 1659. It was saved with the help of the Dutch navy and interference of England and France. According to the terms of the treaty of Copenhagen the Danish provinces in the south of the Scandinavian peninsula (Halland, Skåne and Blekinge) and some other territories were ceded to Sweden. The war had significant domestic consequences for Denmark. As a result of the war the state acquired a huge debt. The king convened a general assembly of the estates in order to discuss the problem of saving the finances of the state. The question was raised about the burden of taxation of the nobility. The commoners voiced the complaints about the exemption of the nobility from the duty of taxation (Jespersen 2004: 40). In addition, the nobility was held responsible by the commoners for launching the disastrous attack on Sweden and military defeats (Bonney 1991: 255). In this situation the king used the support of burghers and clergy and the kingship became hereditary. This meant that the accession to the throne would become automatic and there would be no need for the accession charter. The constitutional change altered the power balance in the country. The nobility lost its political privileges and the council was abolished. Hannibal Sehested, who was a *stadtholder* (governor) in Norway, was appointed a treasurer and introduced the administrative reforms on the Swedish model (*ibidem.*). The nobility lost its monopoly on the offices of the state and it was proclaimed that hereafter these would be open on the basis of merit, also to the commoners. In a way quite unique for that historical period in Europe, there was issued a Royal Law (constitution) in 1665, which proclaimed “absolute sovereign power the king” and established a direct relationship between the king and the subjects. The Article IV of the Law stated:

The king alone shall have the supreme power and authority to appoint and dismiss all officials, high and low, no matter what name or title they may have, according to his own free will and judgment, so that all offices and positions, no matter what authority they possess, shall have their first source, as from a spring, in the absolute power of the king (translated in: Ekman 1957: 106).

In the early 1600s central administration in Denmark did not have a permanent character with departments organized on the functional basis with clearly defined areas of responsibility. The accession charter constrained the king in choosing the officials and organizing the work of administration. Some of the officials had multiple loyalties to the king, the council and the estates (Jespersen 2000: 72). This pertains also to the chief offices of the state (Steward (finances), Marshal (army), Admiral (navy), Chancellor (judiciary)), which largely had medieval feudal character.

After reorganization the government consisted of six colleges: Chancellery College, Treasury College, Commercial College, Admiralty College, War College and German Chancellery (which in general was dealing with foreign affairs. The heads of the colleges were subordinated to the king and his Privy Council (Jespersen 2000: 77). Local administration was reorganized as well. *Amtsmænd* (regional governors) placed under subordination and supervision of Chancellery College, Treasury College and Commercial College were substituted for *lensmænd*, the local governors usually selected from the local nobility. Some military and tax-collecting functions of *lensmænd* were removed and placed under separate state offices (Jespersen 2000: 78).

Leon Jespersen stresses a number of consequences of the introduction of college principle of organization of government for the position of officials. The division of the field of responsibility meant increased demand for qualification and had consequences for the selection of candidates for offices (Jespersen 2000: 69). The work in the government was now a full-time job. Previously it was considered a sort of a public duty, which did not presuppose specialized knowledge or performance on the full-time basis. This had a consequence that it could be fulfilled irregularly, arbitrarily, and at pleasure. Now the civil servant was paid a salary in money.

Another principle of the new administration was that the colleges were to function continuously, no matter whether the individual members of the colleges were at places or not. Unpermitted absence was prohibited. The place of the meetings of the college could not be changed. «This reflected the principle of authority, which had to work in definite forms» (Jespersen 2000: 69).

An official henceforth could exercise the authority only in the area of the responsibility of his college. «This formally indicated a new kind of distinction between a man and his office» (*ibidem*). Before the reforms exercising of the public duties was associated with the privileges of personal character attached to particular individuals.

Leon Jespersen considers that the development of the college system of government was a consequence of changed socio-economic circumstances (increased complexity of the tasks of the central administration) and situation in the sphere of security and foreign policy, as Denmark had to find means to defend itself against the threat from Sweden (Jespersen 2000: 78-79). Harald Gustavsson points to the connection between bureaucratization and integration meaning by that subordination of the territory of the state to a single system of rule (Gustavsson 1994: 77). This integration, however, should be seen also as a systemic integration of the realm by virtue of which the country came to be perceived as internally connected whole, what was described above, with the reference to Elias, as a growing interdependence of the regions of the realm, economic differentiation of functions, division of labour and formation of the country as an economic entity. There was a corresponding intellectual development in political and administrative thinking. Organization of government on the departmental basis was a realization of a new perception of the state seen from a more detached and abstracted point.

Such new perception and the social and technical development which backed it, made it possible and in effect necessary to organize the governance of the territory on the departmental principle. The formerly quasi-independent estates of the nobility lost their autonomy and became territories or provinces of state. Each department (or college or ministry) had a competence and authority for a certain aspect of the whole, which was “assembled” for the purpose of governance in the Privy Council or king’s chancellery. Authority of departments cut across borders of the estates. The departmentalization also introduced the principle of specialization and knowledge-based competence in the professional code of the civil servants.

British historian Richard Bonney wrote that the rise of the European absolutism was a tendency in the 17th century (Bonney 1991: 358). But such abrupt and radical shift as it happened in Denmark in 1660 was very rare. In most countries assemblies retained some power. The king ensured that the estates renounced the criticism and opposition to his power. On the other hand there was drawn a constitutional law which stipulated certain obligations on the king, and in this respect the case of Denmark was quite unique (Bonney 1991: 359). In practice the absolute regime was not despotic. The Danish Law issued in 1683 set boundaries to the interference of the power of the state and presupposed civil freedoms, for example, to enter legally bounding agreements for the subjects (Jespersen 2004: 47). Absolutism in Denmark was considered compatible with civil freedoms, a line of thinking similar to Samuel Pufendorf, whose book *De Officiis* in Danish appeared in 1742 (Horstbøll 1988:16, Horstbøll and Østergård 1990: 158).

Perhaps it could be considered a peculiar Danish development that public administration due to historical and constitutional reasons assumed a role of the channel of communication and interaction between the central government and the subjects. This served also as a formative and disciplining condition for the civil servants. Civil servants were expected to be loyal to the king and professional in performing their tasks. At the same time they had a duty to deal with subjects and their issues who had the right to send a petition to the higher level. The subjects also had the right to make an appeal to the court or present a complaint about the official. Even before the abolition of absolutism in 1848 the citizens had the right to request the grounds for the administrative decisions from the officials.

In Denmark in the 18th century the hierarchy of officials encompassed the whole country, with some limitations on the local level. The official procedures, routines and the filing system were relatively well defined, especially on the central level. There was introduced in 1736 an obligatory examination in law for candidates for positions in the civil service which was to be passed at the University of Copenhagen. H. Gustafsson characterizes the system of state administration in Denmark as «to a considerable extent a professional bureaucracy which was in some ways set apart from the rest of population» (Gustafsson 1994: 92). Denmark, along with other Nordic countries, inherited in the 19th century well consolidated and disciplined bureaucracy, which ensured its independence of professional official action.

Habitus of the civil servant

N. Elias underlined that in order to understand and explain the civilizing processes one has to investigate both social structure and habitus and their transformations (Elias 1939: 411). One of the sources of information about the norms of conduct in the past is the manuals of good behavior. For the case of royal administration of Denmark, one can have a source of similar kind in the form of a book written by a civil servant in the 19th century. Study of this source can give an idea of the patterns of self-restraint and self-image of the civil servant in the Danish royal administration of that time.



A senior civil servant of the Royal Customs and Commerce College Frederik Stoud (1759-1823) under pseudonym Frederik Corsten in 1816 published a book *On writing official letters* (Olsen 2002: 618). This book, consisting of two volumes, was written in a form of six “letters” in which a senior and experienced civil servant addressed a newly employed civil servant. The book addressed the issue of official correspondence in different situations: responding to a complaint, giving grounds to a citizen about a decision taken in his case, writing a letter to a minister or a colleague etc. The principal aim of the book was to give advice to young civil servants on how to write official letters in terms of language, to ensure that it is understandable to non-specialist citizen, and in terms of giving grounds for the official decisions. Intended to be a manual of the official language to be used in the public administration, Frederik Stoud, however, could not avoid dealing with wider issues of ethics of civil servants, particularly, the attitudes towards the wider social environment and the ethical principles which should govern the conduct of the civil servant.

Professionalism, objectivity and fairness were the key concepts of good administrative practice for Stoud. In Stoud’s book the experienced civil servant instructed the young one that it was obligatory in every case to examine the situation truthfully. Pursuing the truth was crucial for the administrative practice in Stoud’s view.

A Danish expert in public law Jens Olsen in a book chapter on good administrative practices wrote that during the period of the absolutist regime a civil servant presenting his case and decision to the king had to demonstrate to the king that he had made a comprehensive and thorough work. To be meticulous and thorough in investigating a case, to take it with seriousness, are the attitudes also underlined by Stoud. Presentation of the cases had to be based strictly on legal principles and this tradition has remained in place until nowadays.

Jens Olsen mentions a case from the administrative practice from 1848. A group of army officers was applying for a permission to hunt in a particular area. A civil servant rejected this application, referring to several arguments. There was no reason to give such hunting rights because everybody else could not obtain it; and if only one group would be given permission, other groups in the society would be annoyed by that (Olsen 2002: 619).

A basic principle of conduct was a complete loyalty of the civil servant to the king. Loyalty to the society, however, was also considered important by Stoud, although not as much as loyalty to the king. The decisions taken by the civil servants had to serve primarily the good of the state but also the good of the bourgeois society (common citizens).

Stoud treated the issue of the honour of the civil servant. He wrote that in particular situations decisions taken by the civil servant may not be liked by the general public, despite that they are very well grounded. If these decisions are for the good of the state and the government, the high ranking civil servant has to bear the non-sympathetic attitude towards him, thereby sacrificing himself, but saving the honour of the state. He should not try to provide unofficial justification to save his image; his personal image may suffer, but this situation should be accepted by the civil servant for the sake of serving the state and the government.

Loyalty was also understood in a quite broad and abstract way, as loyalty to profound, sacrosanct principles of natural law. The civil servant has to be loyal to them. But he has to be critical to his understanding of these higher principles. Especially in the situations, when the opinion of the civil servant is opposed by society or colleagues, he should thoroughly and critically evaluate his understanding of the principles of natural law and reflect upon his application of particular higher principles of natural law to the case in question.

Honesty and dignity are other core values for Stoud. He takes it as absolutely mandatory and obvious that a civil servant should never accept bribes. Honesty and dignity mean in this context complete resistance to corruption. This was particularly important for Stoud because he worked in Customs and Commerce Col-

lege which was dealing with extraction of taxes and dues and where corruption risks were high. He was also mentioning that to receive excessive per diems for the civil servants traveling around country to fulfill their duties was unacceptable and should be avoided because general citizens would disapprove that. Only if the civil servant is clearly by law entitled to per diems, he can accept them. Civil servant cannot ask for extra income from the state for travelling on the basis of past practice. This would be inappropriate and a violation of the principle that a civil servant cannot be a judge in his own case. A civil servant should be objective and forget himself in making decisions (Olsen 2002: 620).

A good civil servant, according to Stoud, should be able to give orders. The civil servant has to be able to effectively pursue implementation of his decisions on the basis of his conviction about the truth in these decisions even despite eventual opposition. Despite that a civil servant may be exposed to criticism, if he is able to defend his decisions, he will be highly valued by the government. Loyalty and honesty should back his conduct in the face of possible opposition (*ibidem*).

A civil servant should take necessary time to evaluate cases and make the right decisions. Doing things in a hurry can damage handling and scrutiny of the cases. It also goes against the esprit de corps of the department, because it is a good practice that a civil servant, if necessary, asks advice of his colleagues. A civil servant dealing with an application or a case should make sure that his decision is in a common spirit of his colleagues. This would increase the fairness and higher quality of decision. At the same time, in some cases the civil servant should be prepared to make quick decisions (Olsen 2002: 621).

Conclusions

Seen from the perspective of the theory of the civilizing process, bureaucratization can be understood as a part of a conscious state-building activity embedded within unplanned and unintended civilizing processes. Entwined processes of differentiation, integration and centralization of polities created conditions for autonomization of the state and its apparatus and growth and departmentalization of the institutions of government. The latter processes enabled the state bureaucracy to become detached from society and maintain autonomy of its operations and valuations. Bureaucratization formed a new habitus of individuals. Many of those employed in state bureaucracy came to exemplify such qualities as industriousness, thoroughness and accuracy, honesty, loyalty, efficiency, competence, politeness, self-control and detachment from personal motivations. Bureaucracy continues to exert civilizing effect on present-day politics.



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