

## **Bureaucracy vs. Intellectual Community in the Post-Soviet Space: The Regional Dimension**

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### **Abstract**

The article studies changes in the bureaucracy phenomenon in the modern society in the post-Soviet space. The research is based on theoretical studies of bureaucracy in post-Soviet and foreign sociology. To confirm the conclusions the authors use the results of an own expert survey.

The received data prove that nowadays bureaucracy can and should be regarded as a subcultural entity claiming to become cultural mainstream. It is shown that from the subcultural perspective the modern regional bureaucracy is homogeneous regardless the sphere it operates in; it is aggressive and focused on universal spreading of its values and meanings. The article reveals the peculiar features of the bureaucratic subculture, including the reality simplification, distorted corporatism, imitational nature of social practices, adhocratic treatment of the objects of administration and of social phenomena, exaggerated symbolic demarcation, and systematic reproduction of irrationalism.

Problems in interaction of the bureaucracy and the intellectual community are analyzed. The authors provide interpretation of the results of the expert survey to give an adequate assessment of the potential of the intellectual community in debureaucratization of the socio-cultural and political and administrative space of the region.

**Keywords:** bureaucracy, bureaucratic subculture, intellectual elite, intellectual community, simulation, symbolic demarcation, irrationalism, corporatism

## **1. Introduction**

The increasing role of the bureaucracy in the state and public life manifesting itself for instance in proliferation of the administrative machine, expansion of its powers and universalization of administrative practices is clearly grasped by the public conscience. It is reflected with a difference degree of adequacy in scholarly literature and journalism (Alpidovskaya 2007; Andrianov 2009; Obolonskiy 2002; Slatinov 2011). Nevertheless, researchers and journalists usually focus on socio-economical and socio-political consequences of the expansion of bureaucratic practices. At the same time, they criticize rather openly (though usually without effect) the adverse impacts of the mass introduction of such practices. Targets of criticism are usually state and municipal officials. Thus, A. Levinson, a specialist of Levada-Center, explains:

“A new class has emerged which receives the major part of the national wealth, and it is not because its contribution to management and generation of national wealth increases. Government officials are a significant part of the society. A large part of wealth and resources goes to the society via them, their relatives and people who render services or sell goods to them. They serve as a distributive mechanism. A large part of our service economy feeds on them. And it is just about to be the major economy after the resource-exploration one” (Khachatryan 2013: 3).

In journalism, such attitude is revealed in judgmental titles of articles, for instance “The Class of Parasites” (the “Novaya Gazeta”), “To Do Harm for the ‘Benefit of the People’” (the “Argumenty I Fakty” 2014: 10-11).

There also exists a different attitude which is generally typical for researchers of HR processes in state and municipal agencies. In such studies the phenomenon of bureaucracy is either left unanalyzed (Astakhov 2010), or is regarded with no connection to the socio-cultural medium (Slatinov 2011: 32 - 72).

Obviously, research and even merely public discussion of the social status of bureaucracy and consequences of its proliferation is crucial for understanding of social processes in the post-Soviet space. Yet, this approach, especially if reduced to the analysis of negative aspects of the bureaucratic system, is insufficient and does not give a full picture of its real, increasing and often uncontrolled influence. Bureaucracy passed beyond the limits of state and municipal agencies long ago, and now it is an integral part of almost every social institution. It is not merely an administrative phenomenon: it is conceptualized in a set of concepts, symbols and socio-cultural meanings which are both the source and the objective of subcultural modification of behavioral responses from the broader reference circles (related to the bureaucratic system). Large social groups increasingly frequently adjust to the behavioral patterns initially inherent to officials. Deliberately or not, they assume such patterns as behavior models. Expansion of practices based on such models may be proved, for instance, by a tense competition among young people for majoring in the field of state and municipal administration.

The phenomenon of bureaucracy is embodied beyond the state and in some cases irrespective of it, such as church hierarchy or corporate management. At present it is practical to analyze it as a subcultural entity which does claims not only to become cultural mainstream but to be the only possible cultural and civilizational reality, aggressive (to different extents) towards any counter-agent. Moreover, it is beyond the state and municipal frames where bureaucracy has been consistently developing as a peculiar axiological complex. Worldview assumptions and orientations are implemented through administrative procedures, which become their logical substantive embodiment. Mythologems and practical activity of the bureaucratic system are institutionalized in the form of numerous organizations and structures. The modern state as well as adherent municipal authorities are only one tool of manifestation of the bureaucratic identity and cannot be viewed as the only possible way of its self-expression and self-fulfillment.

At the same time, non-state bureaucracy presents itself very intelligently, taking into account that even a suspicion that its representatives are identical to state officials may be negatively treated by the population. Indeed, a manager / executive who works outside state or municipal bodies formally is not a civil servant in the traditional meaning of the word. In public he is unlikely to identify himself

with a state or municipal official following, in particular, the instinct of self-preservation. Yet, in fact he implements the values and meanings which were initially formed within state bureaucratic structures. In this sense he becomes a bearer of the specific bureaucratic subculture. This feature is crucial to determine the real status of a manager, as well as the nature and the results of impact of the bureaucracy on public processes.

Though, the author assigned these features only to state officials, while the current situation, if to study the phenomenon of the bureaucracy comprehensively, presupposes a larger range of objects. It is clear that it should include executives in various organizations who represent the bureaucratic subculture.

The subculture of modern Russian bureaucracy in the given context makes up a local axiological world of managers which differs from the 'larger', 'parent' culture. It is an established fact that the subculture differs from the parent culture in individual and collective behavioral stereotypes, specific activity manifested in signs and symbols, sociocodes, forms of consciousness and structures of individual identity; in subsystems of styles and style behavior; in group forms of cultural standards and products of the spiritual sphere (Rimskaya 2011: 45). These signs are prominent in the functioning of modern bureaucratic structures.

Therefore, trying to assess the position of modern bureaucracy, we should assess its subcultural peculiarities as soundly as possible, because at present it is them rather than socio-status factors, that distinguish this group from the population as a super-state and trans-state organization, and a certain quasi-cultural order. The bureaucracy has successfully captured the role of the architect of socio-cultural meanings from the intellectuals. While the latter mostly limited their activities to the sphere of spiritual work and exchanges, the bureaucracy turned the specific cultural creative work into a system of real practices and made it its *modus vivendi*.

## **2. Previous Research**

The phenomenon of bureaucracy was extensively studied by scholars in the frame of the organizational theory since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Multiple theoretical studies have proved that bureaucracy is an essential element for the state growth and development and the most effective means of increasing state capacity, improving collectivist orientation, and decreasing corruption. For instance, Max Weber regarded bureaucracies, staffed by bureaucrats, as the ideal organizational form, based on legal and absolute authority, logic, and order (Weber 1947). Yet, further studies proclaimed that ideal bureaucracy of Weber has inhibiting dysfunctions, characteristics that prevented it from being optimally efficient – and negative effects on the people who worked in it (Merton 1957).

In the past century there were attempts to comprehensively analyze the phenomenon of bureaucracy and to outline its main characteristics.

Characterizing a bureaucratic environment, D. Wren includes in it (a) authority and responsibility clearly identified and legitimized; (b) hierarchy of authority producing a chain of command; (c) leaders selected by technical competency, training, or education; (d) leaders appointed, not elected; (e) administrative officials work for fixed salaries and have no ownership of process or organization; and (f) administrators subject to strict rules for control (Wren, 2005).

D. Green (Green 2008) argues that in terms of the source of power, bureaucratic organizations rely on position, as well as both coercive and reward power strategies.

The Soviet researcher V.P. Makarenko (Makarenko 1989) offered to study the bureaucracy in the frame of professional subcultures development:

“Analysis of bureaucracy is not reduced to an empirical description of the administrative, political and ideological spheres of the society and is not a part of theory and practice of the state law” (Makarenko 1989: 15).

Using the available resources, the author, though still working in the frame of the Marxist paradigm, tried to expand the scope of sociological and political analyses of the object of his research. His monograph "Bureaucracy and Stalinism" which is in many aspects preserves up-to-date even now, displayed an attempt to reveal certain constants of the bureaucratic culture, such as loyalty, tendency to distort reality and to prohibit truthful reporting of facts and social relations, and non-complying to the law.

Studying the bureaucracy as a cultural phenomenon with a set of values and codes led to its symbolic interpretation within Symbolic Organization Theory. Thus, Jacob (Jacob 1969, p. 414) pointed out that "it is possible for an organization to conform little or not at all to the conditions of bureaucracy, while maintaining an image of complete adherence to bureaucratic ideals". Yet, as Jermier (Jermier et al. 1991) argues, though any feature of organizational life may be viewed symbolically, but analysis of the formal structure of an organization as a symbol is further developed than other features.

Special attention is paid to negative traits of bureaucrats. For instance, R. Merton (Merton 1957) states that the stress on depersonalization of relationships, which is a feature of the bureaucratic structure, contributes to the bureaucrat's trained incapacity. This detachment from the public is noted by W. Ouchi, as often bureaucrats, trained not to allow personal values to intrude on decisions, treat their customers, in an unfeeling manner. Besides, the machinery of government responds slowly with poor coordination between agencies, because they are trained not to trust one another, not to rely on subtlety (Ouchi 1981).

Yet, the twenty-first century requires a different leadership style from organizations within the public sector which brings forward the notions of post-bureaucracy (Parker and Bradley 2004, Johnson, Wood, Brewster and Brookes 2009) or neo-bureaucracy (Farrell and Morris 2003, O'Reilly and Reed 2011).

The conventional ideal of a unified public sphere and its corresponding vision of a republic of citizens striving to live up to some "public good"; become in this view obsolete (Keane 1995).

Parker and Bradley state that preference for post-bureaucracy is a characteristic of the discourse of new public management, which has been influential in the public sectors of advanced economies (Parker and Bradley 2004). The paradigm is clarified as a democratic political agenda by comparing and contrasting it with other critiques of bureaucracy like those deriving from neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism (Quicke 1995).

Hitt and Ireland stress that these tendencies are forcing a new paradigm for leaders (Hitt and Ireland 2004). This new type of leader must be involved with building an organization's infrastructure and capabilities with a stress on the intangibles, such as social capital.

Still, much concern remains that bureaucrats prefer not to change the status quo. As it was put by R. Merton (Merton 1957), bureaucracy is administration which almost completely voids public discussion of its techniques. In view of this, lack of publicly available data make rare the assessments of projects involving private sector participants that compare pre-project forecasts to post-project outcomes (Gunton 2003). In line with this is the statement by Krogh, Ichijo, and Nonaka (Krogh, Ichijo, & Nonaka 2000) that most managers attempt to control information rather than support knowledge creation. If such inequality in decision making power is indeed a real threat, it will turn out that bureaucratic organizations, while being largely motivated by considerations of procedural fairness, may in fact constitute quite unfair procedures (Koll 2009).

It is considered that this status quo may be changed if bureaucracy undergoes control and is opposed by public activists where the intelligentsia, or the intellectual community plays a crucial role (Ginsburg 1987, Hirszowicz 1978). Ginsburg (Ginsburg 1987) urges the professoriate to become activist in order to avoid their assimilation and conquest as intellectuals by and in the interest of elites.

In this article we are going to show the ways the intellectual community may influence the bureaucracy and the challenges it encounters at the regional level within the Post-Soviet space.

### 3. Hypotheses

For studying the bureaucratic subculture and the potential of the intellectual community as an opposition to it, we test the following hypotheses:

**H1: With the expansion of the bureaucratic subculture other social practices obtain simulation features**

H2: The regional intellectual community constitutes a power to reduce the negative consequences of bureaucratization through intellectual activity

## 4. Hypotheses Testing

### 4.1. Specificity of Bureaucratic Subculture

Genetically the bureaucratic subculture is rooted in the patterns and standards of thinking inherent to state servants and reproduce the specific features of a hierarchical and rigidly oriented to formal rules organizational environment where the statuses distribution and, above all, promotion are virtually independent of personal abilities with the possible exception of skills necessary for bureaucratic games. The standards and sociocodes inherent to this environment correlate with maximally formalized organization realia and often almost do not go in line with or even contradict ideological structures, scientific theories and common sense where the priority is given to the content as interpreted by a social entity. The bureaucratic subculture assigns priority to the formal side which is the basis for major patterns of the administrative consciousness.

First of all, these patterns include *the tendency to simplification (primitivization) of social phenomena and processes*. Bureaucratic management is based on a set of unified practices. Besides, this unification is increased with optimization of the bureaucratic system and is represented in complete standardization and regulation of processes. A rather ambiguous idea that the most possible regulation is a way to optimize work sees quite consistent implementation. Standardization and regulation lead to increase in the document flow regardless the data media used. Correspondingly, the requirements to the employees' skills and abilities and their performance assessment change as well: the most skillful and successful specialists are those who can meet the standards and manage the document flow the best.

Adequacy of such assessment is disputable even for state and municipal agencies. In other spheres, the effectiveness of unification and simplification is even more dubious and mostly harmful, especially in the fields where intelligence, creativity and informal communication are crucial.

Simplification – deliberately or not – encourages the contrastive perception of the reality by executives without open-mindedness. Yet, the society becomes increasingly variative and the social systems – non-linear which makes them potentially open for strategic breakthroughs. Successful management increasingly depends on its actors' capacities for probabilistic thinking. Still, bureaucratic self-organization and its tendency for simplification turn an individual to the opposite approach where the major value is the unambiguity of choice, or its absence. This attitude, being perceived by the public conscience as the only possible way to succeed in administration, builds the culture of technological cretinism among executives. Its components include the stereotypes about absolute power of technologies, universal nature of algorithmic decisions, belief in the ability of a so-called 'effective manager' to resolve issues in any field without preliminary deep training, and overestimation of administrative (sanciont-based) influence. It should be noted that, as a rule, executives do not admit their adherence to these stereotypes, but it does not prevent them from implementing them in practice.

Expansion of reality-simplifying stereotypes beyond state and municipal authorities has a certain positive effect; for instance, it encourages the personnel transfer between state (municipal) bodies. In past it was hampered chiefly not by formal but by cultural factors, such as another way of life, another frame of thinking, or specific traditions. Nowadays the possibilities of such transfer are much broader. Yet, as in many other cases, minimization of obstacles for this transfer leads to erroneous ideas that management practices in different fields do not have specific features. The

negative traditions of a part of the Soviet bureaucratic apparatus, where it made no difference what to run: a bath-house, a candle factory or a university, are reproduced in a new way. Though, it should be noted that even in the Soviet period such misconceptions were often criticized and even ridiculed.

Stereotypeness becoming a universal value is harmful not only for the management culture but also for the culture as a whole. It serves as a basis for standardization of thinking and perception of any deviations regardless of their content and potential value as unacceptable, abnormal and indecent. As a result, a real development is replaced with its simulacra. In provincial regions this trend is backed by the stagnation of socio-cultural environment which was greatly deepened in the past decades due to degradation of culture and education rooted, among other reasons, in bureaucratization of these spheres.

***Distorted corporatism.*** The corporative nature of the administrative sphere is rather understandable especially now when management is frequently built on the team-spirit principle and the concept of 'team' becomes central for defining the corporation. A team is understood as a 'group of like-minded people gathered around a leader. A team usually exists and acts as a structure within which informal relations may have no less and sometimes even more influence than formal ones'(Ovchinnikov 2004: 28). This statement is true even for bureaucratic corporatism in state and municipal bodies. Naturalness of corporate relations for municipal administration was declared by the Russian researcher I.N. Voronin in his thesis. Though a part of the academic expert community is skeptical about this idea, it can be stated that corporate relations in state and municipal administration are not totally harmful. Group solidarity regardless the sphere where it is displayed is one of prerequisites for achievement of collective goals, defense of professional interests and the personal self-fulfillment (Voronin 2007).

Adverse consequences of corporatism emerge when it becomes excessive, its support becomes a goal in itself and is achieved by illegal or immoral means, when 'own' corporate interests are opposed to 'theirs' which are at once declared unacceptable. In this case the statement by M.A. Ovchinnikov about establishment of an 'ailing' corporate culture is applicable. The researcher claims that its features include decision-making based on personal relations, opposing organizational changes, assignment of managers oriented towards current issues and not towards prospects, closedness to third-party experience, and the 'superiority syndrome'(Ovchinnikov 2004: 68 - 69).

The administrative circles create favorable conditions for expansion of these distortions due to the specific nature of the management processes organization. The latter is localized in the social chronotope and requires proactive interpersonal communication; it envisages understanding by all participants of the major importance their activities have for common people and requires specific knowledge and skills not characteristic for objects of management (outsiders).

An important marker of distorted corporatism is group thinking as a state of mass intra-group conformism which is usually increased in the course of teambuilding together with indeliberate suppression of reflection and criticism.

Bureaucratic 'distorted corporatism' tends to expand to the 'non-bureaucratic' environment as it shows the competitive advantages of a consolidated group over divided though professional circles. Distortion, though criticized, is perceived as a way 'to survive' and even as a proof of specific intelligence and business acumen. Following these patterns in practice serves certain individuals as a justification of their illegal and immoral actions, i.e. it becomes a model of everyday behavior for various social groups unrelated to the bureaucratic corporation. It can be stated that at present the 'bureaucratic myth' sees massification and glorification: it existed for a long time, but usually did not contain the heroic component.

Nowadays, the core of this myth is that the manager's way of life which used to be considered illegal and immoral, is viewed as not only effective, but also a reference. The myth becomes basic for building the social position, designing and implementation the life strategy for an increasingly large part of individuals, especially for young people.

It is a basis for legitimating not only misappropriation in the material production and commodity exchange spheres, but also intellectual theft and frauds. Justification thereof becomes one

of the most significant consequences of the influence of the bureaucratic subculture on the society. As a result, public officers obtain the right to simulate brainwork, including frauds of academic degrees and titles and fake inclusion in teaching processes.

Distorted bureaucratic corporatism is potentially harmful because it distorts the inter-group communication as it does not presupposes respect to the position of counter-agent who represents another (less successful) corporation. Adherence to this assumption by both administrative staff and their followers from other status groups desocializes public practices, because, as M. Weber claimed, 'action is social when, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual(s), it takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby guided' (Weber 1947: 88).

***Imitational nature of social practices.*** In the postmodern society imitation and simulation become a norm which is spread over the management system. We already analyzed the content of imitation practices in state and municipal bodies as a system of actions where real meanings and senses are replaced and substituted with formal reproduction of operations and procedures in the journal 'Vlast' (Babintsev 2012). State and municipal bodies have factors encouraging substitution of a real management process with demonstrations, decorations and declarations. First of all, the state and municipal administration process is represented in collective efforts of many participants. In most cases, it is difficult to estimate an individual official's contribution as well as to compare it with 'products' of other actors. It gives grounds for potential exaggeration of personal contribution and perception of this exaggeration as a reality. Secondly, up to now there are no informative indices to show the official's performance. Those used in practice are formalized, which makes it possible to fake results by replacing real changes with mere reports. Thirdly, in many cases the management 'product' cannot be objectively assessed; its perception depends on basic values which provide for merely subjective assessment. Besides, usually there is a more or less significant time lag between the action and the result which gives much space for such interpretations.

Outside the system of state and municipal administration these factors are usually less evident as management becomes more domain-specific, and therefore can be assessed by a set of rather rigid indices. Yet, managers in these spheres use available set of imitations based on the intentionality of social action encouraging a) the symbolic legitimation of authorities with the help of imitation practices; b) revealing the treatment of the power by the 'mass individual' (if he accepts a 'quasi-parliament', 'quasi-modernization' or 'quasi-elections' he trusts the authorities and does not consider these artifacts delusive (Shalyugina 2012: 28).

***Adhocratic treatment of objects of administration and of social issues,*** if the latter do not concern the executive's personal interests. The priority of formal aspects for the executive's work makes him almost unable to comprehend general issues, to reveal fundamental processes and trends of social development. General issues require understanding of historical perspective, willingness and ability to make value judgments. But a prerequisite for bureaucracy is a deliberate refusal to openly discuss axiological issues which are considered a domain of the head officers.

As a result, a manager has minimum opportunities to master strategic management though this task is set to him by his senior management with increasing frequency and usually no success. Administrative staff, especially state or municipal officers, are aimed not at perspective, but at the current situation because their performance is assessed on the basis of handling current issues. Adhocratic treatment of the reality is inherent to various social and professional groups and is used in specific situation, but only the bureaucracy makes it a norm, legitimizes it and regards an attempt to look ahead as an unacceptable deviation.

***Exaggerated symbolic demarcation*** as a prerequisite for building of internal and external communication. It is manifested in a rigid status division, in overestimation thereof and, correspondingly, in transfer of status values to the personality. V.P. Makarenko emphasized this feature of state officials as he claimed: "The hierarchy principle means: the higher is a person or a body the more they are qualified as a concentration of cognitive, moral and political values" (Makarenko 1989: 17).

Demarcation consistently divides 'Us' (i.e. those directly included in the administrative-management process or is related to in any form) and 'them' who remain outside the administrative apparatus and are objects of influence. Symbolically, demarcation is manifested in a system of ranks (at a state and a municipal levels), specific language, a right to participate in prestigious actions (events), and demonstration of access to exclusive information or people viewed as power holders (demonstration of connections). Inside the administrative system its participants are separated according to their titles. Besides, each step up the career ladder is accompanied by building-up of the person's symbolic capital.

Symbolic demarcation is the most evident in post-Soviet regions where the elites are recognizable, and their symbolic capital is easy to identify.

Idealization and universalization of administrative control practices. Confidence in exceedingly broad powers if not omnipotence of controlling practices is typical for representatives of the state bureaucratic system. Moreover, public officers treat control one-sidedly as a formal act enforced officially by authorized agencies and officials. Informal control carried by civic institutions and individual citizens is usually formally acknowledged but is usually not welcomed in reality. Besides, state and municipal officials often create a complex system of barriers reducing transparency of their activity and hampering access to external assessment.

Building such barriers is combined with more or less distinct but stable ambition to expand formal control, to increase the number or controllable objects, to elaborate increasingly sophisticated forms and methods and to increase rigidity of governing rules and corresponding practices.

These assumptions are complementary to the consciousness of administrative personnel who act outside state and municipal agencies because large-scale control systems ensure their domineering over other subcultures. These subcultures include first and foremost intellectuals, with sources of bureaucratic influence have always been questionable for them as these sources were formed in spheres not directly related to the cognitive creative (by its nature) process and did not have a proper value within it. This gives grounds to a well-spread concept of uncontrollability of the intelligentsia<sup>1</sup> among administrative personnel.

***Systematic reproduction of irrationalism***, or rather 'transrationalism', manifesting itself in the practice of quasi-rational construction of formal systems and exclusion of rationally grounded meanings. The management practice often sees a paradoxical situation characterized by chimerical combination of logic of specific technologically consistent actions within which each subsequent action is more or less coherent with the previous one and therefore is well-grounded and their substantial absurdity in the historic perspective. It goes without saying, transrational practices are spread in organizations and corporations to different extent, with the extent largely determined by their field, limiting the possibilities of administrative absurdity. Still, in any case this trend exists and forms the psychology of double standards among the administrative staff.

### **Expansion of bureaucratic subculture**

During a rather long period of the national history the bureaucratic subculture was intentionally isolated from the parent culture. Bureaucracy protected its world by creating myths about its identity to everyday practices of an 'ordinary person'. Such construction was an effective way to protect it and to raise it above criticism. Yet, lately the situation has changed drastically due to a number of various conditions.

Firstly, universal expansion of new information and communication technologies greatly reduced possibilities for disguising corporate cultural patterns which did not go in line with the

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<sup>1</sup> We regard the notion of 'intelligentsia' as not equal to that of 'intellectuals'. Intelligentsia is an axiological category formed within specific traditions of Russian culture. Affiliation to its group does not always envisages intellectual labor and is determined mainly by the specificity of worldviews and the way of life.



domestic traditions. Secondly, an extensive marginal group of 'semi-bureaucrats' was formed on the periphery of the bureaucracy. On the one hand, they got, though limited, access to bureaucratic values and meanings and managed to apply them to themselves. On the other hand, in many respects they preserved cultural stereotypes of non-bureaucratic environment. This peripheral group included employees of state institutions and enterprises as well as of public sector. Lately post-Soviet bureaucracy has been proactively creating a 'circum-bureaucratic' environment on the border between the state and the civil society through the public chambers, trying to introduce leaders of NGOs into them. At the first sight, this practice seems feasible due to the fact that these people rule the public opinion. Still, bureaucrats view another aspect as more important, namely the possibility to control 'formalized' opinion shapers because the majority of NGOs, at least regional ones, cannot survive without state support.

In the socio-cultural aspect, the marginal 'semi-bureaucratic' groups make up a certain 'hybrid' of the bureaucracy and the intelligentsia, often taking far from best features from both spheres. Finally, the present general ideological background in the country is likely to become so complementary to the bureaucratic subculture that the representatives of the latter do not wish to conceal their attitudes any longer and treat them as reference points. Contrary to the situation fifteen or twenty years ago, bureaucrats become public figures and manifest their standpoint openly even if it contradicts to the opinions prevailing in the public conscience. An example of such behavior are conflicts between the heads of the Ministry of Education and Science and the community about assessment of higher education institutions and reforming of the Academy of Science.

These changes resulted in an active and mainly successful expansion of the bureaucratic subculture to other subcultural spaces. It is facilitated by the fact that at present there are no socio-cultural entities which would be countercultural to bureaucracy and would be immune to expansion of the administrative socio-codes and behavioral patterns.

The main reason of the lack of such entities is probably the fact that each social or professional group and each social institution are built as hierarchical structures, so they are susceptible to ideas and opinions formed within the 'ideal' hierarchic system. Managers working in non-state and non-municipal organizations treat public officers as similar in their status ('socially close') and in many cases as a reference; the way of life and mind of the latter are consciously or unconsciously copied.

We believe that the bureaucratic subculture may be opposed only by an axiological complex that would be based on a fundamentally different, not hierarchic, but 'horizontal' system. It is natural that in this case we consider real network structures or at least structures which can potentially function as social networks. At any rate, these are systems where the decisive role is given not to formal factors (status, rank, image etc.) but to the person's individual resources as the latter are impossible or difficult to simulate at least for long.

### **Intellectual community in the region**

One of potential opponents to the bureaucracy is the intellectual community, which at the regional level comprises a relatively small group of people with high intellectual abilities, socially active, engaged in mental work and using their intellect as a resource both to ensure personal success and to resolve social issues. The most characteristic feature of this group is the particular way of perception of the social reality mainly through conceptual and logical constructions and on applying scientific concepts to elaboration and implementation of life strategies. There are no clear boundaries of the intellectual community as inclusion and exclusion to it do not need formal actions and are based on mutual recognition or absence of it. Moreover, integration to the intellectual community is not rigidly bound to engagement in mental work as the latter does not always have the intellectual aspect.

The intellectual community is the medium and the source of resources for creation of the intellectual elite, which differs from other elites in several aspects. Firstly, its activity is chiefly aimed not at external counter-agents (except for establishing communication with intellectuals) but at its internal environment. In this context it is possible to state that the intellectuals' action is to a certain degree 'nonsocial' in Weber's terms. Yet, contrary to the bureaucracy, its 'nonsociality' does not

develop to 'anti-sociality'; it is rather detachment from the everyday reality. This is the reason why it is often difficult to introduce authentic, not artificially nominated members of the intellectual community into practical activities which is much complained of by practitioners. Nevertheless, it should be noted that 'nomination' (appointment) of intellectuals by bureaucrats has become lately common practice. For instance, intellectual clubs and centers established by the authorities become increasingly fashionable. This fact has a vast impact on the positioning of the intellectual community.

Secondly, as the capacity for intellectual work is the main criterion for inclusion in the intellectual community, there are less possibilities for transformation of its elite into the hereditary one comparing to other elites. Still, the recent years have seen changes even in this aspect: a part of the intellectual elite members use formal tools for transferring of their symbolic capital to their children and grandchildren who have no required capacities (one of the tools is commissioning other specialist to write a thesis for such person).

Thirdly, the intellectual activity does not require a rigid structure and hierarchy. Its subjects tend to self-organization and self-regulation; they are greatly autonomous. Obviously, there are constant attempts to introduce external control over the intellectuals' work. Yet, they usually end either in creation of the above-mentioned 'circum-bureaucratic' surroundings, or in potential degradation and discrediting of the intellectual process, or the authorities do not reach their goals.

The first option is the most common for Russian regions because there the intellectual community usually depends on the authorities and cannot oppose the influence of the state and municipal agencies. This dependence is rooted in many reasons, among them insufficient demand for the intellectual activity and limited resources for it; lack of scientific and academic schools which are externally supported and recognized at the federal and international levels; and insufficient experience of opposing administrative pressure among regional intellectuals.

The regional intellectual community can be structured. It comprises at least three groups which have different influence upon social processes. The first group includes the so-called 'technicians' engaged in scientific and academic work in the technical field. This group is chiefly indifferent to the administrative system, has poor knowledge about its structure and as a rule takes only episodic part in social activities when need to resolve certain issues. The second group is 'sociologists' which includes academic workers in the fields adjacent to the functioning of the society (political scientists, sociologists, economists and managers). They are the most competent in the administrative sphere and are most frequently engaged by the bureaucracy both in elaboration of real projects and in simulation of scientific grounding thereof. The third group includes 'humanitarians' working in the field of creative sciences. Managers use them for creation of the positive image of the region and particularly of the administrative system.

The difference in standpoints and therefore in interests of the intellectuals hampers articulation and aggregation of demands to the bureaucratic system by their community.

### **Anti-bureaucratic potential of regional intellectual community: an attempt of sociological appraisal**

There naturally arises a question to what extent the regional intellectual community is ready and able to oppose the expansion of the bureaucratic subculture. We studied one of its aspects in an expert survey dedicated to the issue of bureaucratization of the social medium and conducted in five Russian Federation entities (with 2 experts to participate), namely in Belgorod, Kursk, Lipetsk, Orel and Tambov regions. 67% of respondents represented the intellectual community (scholars, university lecturers). Inevitably, this selection of experts does not represent the whole structure of the intellectual community in the region, but it allows us to obtain a rather clear picture of the standpoint of its core, formed by scholars and lecturers of higher professional training institutions.

The survey results proved that the majority of the regional provincial intellectuals give a negative assessment of the bureaucratization process in the post-Soviet space. Yet, only 57% of experts associated with the intellectual community strongly agreed with the statement of growing bureaucratization tendencies in Russia. 43% of respondents preferred the answer 'agree rather than disagree'. The majority of the experts think that most frequently bureaucratization manifests itself in

the growing number of officials and increasing role of documents in social practices (68% of respondents in each case). Significantly more seldom it is related to formalization of interpersonal relations, their depersonalization and viewing a public servant as the central figure of our time (all these points were mentioned by 31% of experts).

The expert opinion distribution testifies to the predominance of formal perception of bureaucratization in the intellectual community. A large portion of intellectuals do not relate it to deep axiological changes in the whole Russian society, which aggravate the contradiction between the natural stereotypes of conscious and behavioral patterns of the bulk of population and the administrative corporation. This contradiction was inherent to the whole history of Russian state-building and manifested itself in lack of understanding between an 'ordinary person' (peasants, factory workers, bourgeois or intellectuals) and public officers. At the same time, the attitude towards bureaucrats was ironic rather than hostile, as they were viewed as an inevitable evil, a nuisance to put up with.

The bureaucratic world was a transcendent world in the parent Russian culture; it was possible to co-exist, but forbidden to conflict with it due to possible unpleasant if not fatal consequences. Common people had even pity for a public officer, especially that of a lower rank, but did not intend to copy his behavior because it would entail ruining of traditional, not always comfortable but 'human' relations.

Yet, present changes drastically modify such attitudes. As a result, formal depersonalized relations and bonds typical for a certain social group become universal. Unawareness of a qualitative nature of the undergoing changes is dangerous not only for the intellectual community but for the whole society. Modern intellectuals in regions tend to see a painful but far less negative consequence of bureaucratization – corruption (68%). A significantly smaller part of respondents (56%) note stronger simulation nature of activities and growing detachment between people (25%).

Mentioning simulation as a negative consequence of bureaucratic tendencies can be regarded as a positive aspect of the intellectuals' conceptualization of bureaucratization, as simulation practices to a large extent reveal negative bureaucratization forms for the post-Soviet space (based on traditional Orthodox Christian) culture. Simulations turn natural relations into their simulation. At the same time, simulations and fakes though frequently captured even by the mundane consciousness do not only obtain positive axiological attributes, but also are above criticism.

Nevertheless, formalization of interpersonal relations destroying time-honored culture of trust has significantly more severe cultural and civilizational consequences. Incapability of the intellectual community to grasp and adequately assess this process may prove that they are influenced by stereotypes of the mass consciousness.

At the same time, 81% of the experts agreed (though, with various degrees of certainty ) with the statement that Russia undergoes formation of the bureaucratic subculture. 62% of them named simulations as the most characteristic feature thereof, while 50% mentioned formalism. Thus, intellectuals acknowledge the profoundness of changes attributed to the growing bureaucracy which makes it possible for them to comprehend the real consequences of these changes in future and to transform their attitude to the socio-cultural transformations.

Yet, it seems that at present intellectuals in the regions do not have a concept of bureaucracy, especially of its civil service aspect, sufficient for drawing conclusions. All respondents agree (with 87% of them strongly) that the officials' consciousness is subject to inevitable mutations. It is difficult though for the experts to capture these mutations. Opinions on their nature were significantly divided. 50% of the respondents attribute them to formation of the concept of self-righteousness; 43% – to immunity from criticism; the same percentage – to the group solidarity; 37% relate them to conservatism and to the high loyalty; 31% – to ad hoc morality.

Still, the majority of the variants chosen by the experts give grounds to say that they more or less clearly see the adverse effects of the bureaucracy, first of all, related to the changes in axiological patterns of the administrative officers' consciousness. At the same time, their vision of these effects is not always adequate. Intellectuals in the regions are unlikely to see the gravity of the situation in

administrative systems of different levels and complexity. For intellectuals bureaucratization is a complex of procedural losses which can be successfully reduced. For instance, 63% of the experts give optimistic prospects for successful fighting of adverse effects of the bureaucracy. Only 25% of the respondents believe in the opposite (with different degrees of certainty).

Excessive optimism as to the development of social processes is probably a characteristic feature of the provincial intellectuals' worldview as it is a natural consequence of their detachment from the real administrative mechanisms. Ultimately, it often created challenges for intellectuals, including defeats in competition for resources with other groups. Speaking about competition with bureaucracy, such defeats are very significant even now and they will be aggravated in future.

The problem lies in the fact that the intellectual community in the regions occupies the space which is subject to specific (and natural) claims by the administrative and management personnel who are more or less aware that the intellectual resource is nowadays a potential source of power and welfare. Managers claim that this resource was wrongfully and long ago appropriated by the people they call the intelligentsia, i.e. by the people who do not know the tools for achieving success in life and who have certain power and influence only accidentally. Factors which granted the intellectuals certain independence and even support by the bureaucracy in the past, now have been greatly depreciated and therefore can be ignored by managers who want to appropriate the intellectual resource (they find such appropriation natural due to the false analogue with creation of other resources) thus reinforcing their positions or at least obtaining significant superiority over the potential intellectual opposition.

### **Summary and Concluding Remarks**

In the given article it was shown that the expansion of the bureaucratic subculture beyond the system of state and municipal administration has significant adverse effects and requires proactive countermeasures. Recent years revealed a set of technological solutions which could resolve the given issue.

Firstly, these include an increasingly popular mechanism of manufacturing of quasi-intellectual statuses by administrative officers (primarily, by public officials) by obtaining degrees and academic titles. This mechanism is rather rarely implemented by the candidate's own efforts; usually it means collective creative work of specially hired intellectuals. It should be noted that no rational forces in the state or in the society have so far managed to oppose the practice of statuses manufacturing.

Secondly, it covers the establishment of pseudo-intellectual centers within administrative institutions with hired manageable researchers and lecturers. It leads to creation of servile scientific corporations attending to the clients' interests. This situation is rather characteristic for regional sociology and becomes increasingly inherent to sociological research. As D.L. Konstantinovskiy, A.A. Ovsyannikov and N.E. Pokrovskiy put it, "It is only regrettable that sociologists perform specific service functions in the established system of interaction with the authorities. His interaction scheme reduces to the following rule. If a sociologist submits sociological estimates or judgments which contradict estimates made by the authorities he will have to listen to reproaches of inanity of such sociology. The task reduces not to building models for understanding of the social reality but to foreseeing of the authorities' expectation" (Konstantinovskiy, Ovsyannikova 2005 : 13).

Servility is particularly typical for sociologies in the regions that lack demand for research and where state and partly municipal authorities may be a reliable customer offering decent remuneration for scholars. Besides, at the regional level the authorities still preserve means of indirect influence on researchers. With their help regional authorities can rather easily ensure emergence and publication of complementary sociological data, usually necessary for electoral campaigns and building up their positive image.

Thirdly, it is discrediting of independent scientific centers and certain researchers, or, at best, hindering access to information necessary for analysis of social processes, especially of those in the administration sphere. It is typically achieved with the help of control and unofficial censorship justified by state interests.

Though the abovementioned and other solutions and actions lie in simulation of meanings and brazen replacement of content with form which is evident to common sense, they are considered rather adequate and reasonable as they correspond to the general logic of bureaucratic thinking.

In regions the opposition to the bureaucracy may be formed by the intellectual community, which comprises a relatively small group of people having high intellectual abilities, displaying social initiative in the field of mental work and using their intelligence as a resource to achieve personal success and to resolve social issues.

At the same time, analysis of interaction between the regional intellectual community and bureaucracy shows that in the region the former occupies the field which is an object of special (and quite natural) claims of the administrative and management personnel who are more or less aware that the intellectual resource is nowadays a promising source of power and welfare. The intellectual community is split and does not possess the resources for response. The factors which used to grant the intellectual community certain independence and even support from the bureaucracy have been significantly depreciated nowadays. Therefore they can be ignored by the managers who aspire to reinforce their positions or at least to secure superiority over the potential intellectual opposition by appropriating the intellectual resource.

The inconsistency in positions and therefore in interests of intellectuals prevents their community from articulation and aggregation of demands to the bureaucratic system. Besides, the intellectuals do not see the gravity of the situation which is formed within the administration systems of various level and complexity. For them bureaucratization is a number of procedural challenges which can be successfully overcome. Representatives of the regional intellectual communities are excessively optimistic as to the development of social processes which is a rather natural consequence of their detachment from the real mechanisms of administration. In the long run, it often had adverse effect for the intellectuals, including competitive losses in struggles for resources with other groups. As to the competition with the bureaucracy, it can be said that such effects are rather significant now and are likely to be aggravated in future.

As practice shows, in the present conditions established in Russian regions, the opposition between the bureaucracy and the intellectual community is chiefly virtual due to the crucial inequality of the opponent's resources. Yet, it is evident that the absolute dominating of the bureaucracy is destructive for the society. The strategically-oriented authorities despite their historical grounding on the bureaucratic system, should take measures to reinforce the intellectual opposition

In view of this, we find it feasible to take the following actions:

- to develop a system of fostering the intellectual elite by dedicated selection starting from the pre-school years. This should be based on creation of maximum conditions for free creativity for children and the youth and their self-fulfillment. Yet, it is quite clear that it cannot be achieved within the modern Russian system of education as it is oriented towards reproduction of formal practices, is overloaded with documentation and excessive control. As it is impossible to change the situation determined by the federal agencies within the system, it is feasible to develop alternative network-based platforms which would provide the space for intellectual activity. Creative education should leave the formal system that constantly discredits itself, at the same time it should be backed by the state and municipal authorities and public institutions;
- to develop a network of intellectual clubs, centers and seminars which would become forums for discussion of the crucial for the region topics. Besides, the administrative decision should be taken only after being discussed at these platforms. It is obvious that traditionally passive population is an unavoidable obstacle for this action. Yet, such platforms should not be mass; besides, creative citizens should be motivated to take part in them with the greatest motivator being the fact that recommendations of the intellectual community are implemented;
- to strengthen the image of mental labor by mass media, web-technologies and public events with the heads of the regions;

- to encourage promising research and development in the field of management. It can be achieved with the help of regional and municipal grants on condition of professional selection thereof both by officials and by academicians;
- to constantly renew the staff of expert groups working in the entities of the post-Soviet space by involving young scientists. Moreover, it may be effective to engage doctoral and even graduate students in analytical and expert work.

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