

## Cadre Rota(tion)

### The analysis of nomenclatures (cadre-jurisdictional lists) in the case of Hungary

An important constituent of the communist (Bolshevik) system was the nomenclature. As in many other cases the term nomenclature is used by researchers of the area in different meanings.<sup>1</sup> In what follows we also give an interpretation of the term.<sup>2</sup> Instead of giving as an introduction, a theoretical or historical background we present our definition of the term: nomenclature system is the comprehensive system of appointing (evaluating) jurisdictions of party organs on different levels.

Let us see what should we know about this phenomenon!

The nomenclature resolution includes certain jurisdictions. It defines somebody's right against somebody else that means it defines one-way relationship between actors of a social relationship. In what follows it seems to be wise to separate analytically the different types of actors (appointer, appointee) and their relation. This is important because with time the content of the nomenclature resolutions has changed, the range of actors was broadened or narrowed.

### The content of cadre-jurisdiction

Let us begin with a more thorough analysis of the actors (i.e. the appointer and the appointee)! Relying on the resolution we have to make clear what is the content of the different appointing jurisdictions, what is the basis of their different types and what is the legitimation need behind them.

---

<sup>1</sup> We refer to only two authors who dealt with the nomenklatura system. Bohdan Harasymiw was the first who mentioned the term of nomenclature and in our opinion T.H. Rigby dealt with it most deeply. See: Harasymiw, B.: The Soviet Political Elite and How It Is Chosen, in: Political Elite Recruitment in the Soviet Union, MacMillan, 1984, pp. 153-186; Harasymiw, B.: Nomenclature: The Soviet Communist Party's Leadership Recruitment System, in: Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. II., No.4., (December 1969), pp. 493-512.; Rigby,T.H., Introduction, in: Rigby,T.H. & Harasymiw,B. (eds.), Leadership Selection and Patron-Client Relations in the USSR and Yugoslavia, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1983, pp. 4-10.; Rigby,T.H., Introduction: Political Legitimacy, Weber and Communist Mono-organisational Systems, in: Rigby,T.H. & Fehér, F. (eds.), Political Legitimation in Communist States, London and Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1982, pp. 1-26.; Rigby,T.H.: Staffing USSR Incorporated: the Origins of the Nomenklatura System, in: Soviet Studies, Vol. XL, No. 4, (October 1988), pp. 523-537.

<sup>2</sup> The present study is the shortened and essay-style version of a longer manuscript. Documents used are the relevant resolutions of the Hungarian Communist Party. We do not indicate archive sources. On cadre-jurisdictional lists (nomenclatures) see: T. Varga György & Szakadát István: Íme, a nomenklaturák! (Look at the nomenclatures) in: *Társadalmi Szemle*, 1992, No. 3. pp. 73-95.

Nomenclature resolutions generally did not publish the content of cadre-jurisdictions. This is true especially for the fifties. As we know it precise enumeration of these jurisdictions was first included in the 1977 and 1981 resolutions. As a point of departure let us quote the relevant passage from the 1977 resolution:

"Cadre-jurisdiction includes the following personal matters:

- appointment (election), promotion, transfer, absolution, replacement, calling back, transfer to a lower post;
- rating;
- government distinction;
- sending to high level political or state school;
- longer official trip abroad;
- authorization of a disciplinary procedure."<sup>3</sup>

If we look at the nomenclature resolutions more closely we find in them other authorizations too above those listed. An example is the fact that members of different party organs could travel abroad only with the permit of the responsible party organ. Another "nomenclature-jurisdiction" was (even in the eighties!) the appointment to academy correspondent membership, to member of parliament, to the post of army general. It would be interesting to track down the changes through time of different administrative authorities, their weight and importance but instead we assume (by a simplifying assumption) that the most important component of cadre-jurisdiction is appointment-callback. By this assumption we lose important areas of investigation but nevertheless: in what follows we reduce the analysis of jurisdiction to appointment/callback and leave out disciplining, punishing, "travel", schooling, promotion and "transfer".

Cadre-jurisdiction defines pure authority relations between the appointer and the appointed.<sup>4</sup> Relying on the classic Weberian theory of authority (domination) we will use two institutionalized-institutionalizing types of authority (domination) – the rational and the traditional. In rational-legal authority based on a rational world view an important element is to define roles of authority and rules of how one can get into such authority roles.

It follows from the character of rational authority that fulfillment of roles of authority is dependent on the will of a given person or group. These wills create roles of authority in two directions. Since authority is – by its essence – an asymmetric relation authority cannot come about without a "commanding" and an "obedience" role and persons fulfilling these roles. Rationally only two principles creating such positions are imaginable: appointment and election. With appointing will is directed "downwards": the appointer assigns a person to the role of obedience whereas with election the "elector" raises a person above himself into an authority position. With appointment the appointer remains in dominant position (e.g. if the main department appoints a head of department) but with election the elector becomes "dependent" (e.g. when party members elect a party president).

In modern societies appointment and election are almost exclusive forms of filling dominant positions. This was true for the nomenclature system too. There is only one – very important – instance when positions are filled relying on another principle ("chosen-ness") and we encounter it when we investigate the legitimacy of the rule of highest party leaders.

We need yet another important distinction. For the role of appointment-election both the corporative and the monocratic principle might be applied. Authority is monocratic if it is practiced by one person. The corporative principle means that decisions made in dominant position are the manifestation of collective will. The corporative principle has several interpretations. From these we shall present some

---

<sup>3</sup> A Közpointi Bizottság 1977. október 18-i hatásköri listája (Nomenclature of the Central Committee from 18. October 1977.)

<sup>4</sup> The term authority (domination) is interpreted as power to command which unavoidably has a normative content. See Max Weber: *Gazdaság és társadalom* (Economy and Society), Budapest, KJK, 1987, pp. 221-224.

in what follows.<sup>5</sup> Corporative principle can be attached to such notions as voting, consensus, majority, compromise.

Let us call the attention to the fact that with certain implementations of the corporative principle the same decision-making technique may be applied as with election. This technique is voting. When electing somebody the method nearest at hand to aggregate individual wills is voting. But the same tool is used when – in order to weaken monocratic authority – instead of one-person decisions corporative decisions are prescribed and bodies have to vote (e.g. on the appointment of an employee).<sup>6</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

We have to stress one important difference: the authority of central, mid-level and local party organs were different in the Kádár-era at least on paper. According to documents at our disposal central and mid-level party jurisdictions were endowed with personnel jurisdiction (and nomenclature lists) whereas local party organs had only the right to express opinion. This was a kind of veto right with delaying effect that is not a classical appointment-absolution right and this is explicitly acknowledged by the document:

"... the right to express opinion ... means that the responsible state, economic, cultural organs or leaders before deciding in personal matters of persons figuring on the list of the primary party organization have to ask the opinion of the leadership of the primary party organization. This opinion – unlike the decision of the higher party organ – has no exclusive force. At the same time it delays decision i.e. it is a right of veto. Accordingly if the leadership of the primary party organization has a different opinion the responsible organ or leader cannot effectuate the measure: they have to ask final decision from higher party or state organs."<sup>7</sup>

We shall see later that in certain periods other rights (e.g. preliminary agreement) also appeared on the central lists but here we will not differentiate between different forms of jurisdiction (decision, agreement, opinion etc.). The simplification unavoidable for analysis will be done along the regional dimension (center, county, primary party organization etc.).

## The claims of legitimation of cadre-jurisdiction

Up to 1968 nomenclature documents wrote about cadre-jurisdiction that certain posts are in the jurisdiction of the said party organ or that certain jobs should be filled by the party organ. From 1968 an interesting distinction emerged relative to the different types of jurisdiction of party organs:

"The Central Committee

a/ elects according to the Organizational Rules from among its own members...

b/ appoints...

c/ Before election or appointment takes a stand in the matter of those suggested for the following posts..."<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> More on this see in: M. Weber: *Gazdaság és társadalom* pp. 275-285.

<sup>6</sup> Both in election and in territorial appointment there are aggregation techniques different from voting e.g. compromise. E.g. when choosing the pope one can use the tool of voting but in other cases only compromise is feasible.

<sup>7</sup> *Szervezeti kérdések a Magyar Szocialista Munkáspártban* (Organisational problems within the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party), Budapest, Kossuth, 1986, p. 64. Let us mention that the right of veto is a special case of the territorial principle since it means that leadership of primary party organisations, the leaders of organisations "concerned" (and higher organs) produce the decision on appointment by a "collective" method of aggregation of individual will.

<sup>8</sup> A Központi Bizottság és szerveinek 1986. január 23-i hatásköri listája (Nomenklatura of Central Committee and its organs from 23. January 1986.)

The cadre-jurisdiction of the given party organ can take the form of election, appointment or taking a stand.<sup>9</sup> Three kinds of cadre decisions had to be distinguished thereby. A new element relative to previous documents is taking a stand. Let us recognize that the above three types of decisions can be arranged into two groups. The positions figuring on the list can be separated according to the post being in the jurisdiction of the appointers (the central party organs) or not. In this respect the party organ exerting cadre-jurisdiction:

a/ takes a formally binding decision or

b/ a formally non-binding decision in personal matters.

In the first case the form of the decision is either appointment or election but it always followed the formal rules of filling a post whereas in the second case the form of the decision was taking a stand. In a formal sense it could be only a suggestion and the formal decision belonged – according to the written Organizational Rules – in the jurisdiction of others: members and leaders of organs other than the central party organs.

The intention of separation is clear-cut: they wanted to symbolize the "respect for" the autonomy of autonomous and autocephalic organizations<sup>10</sup> relative to central party organs.

An important norm of party life was democratic centralism whose important element was a kind of autonomy of elected party bodies. In certain cadre problems the party statute gave full autonomy to party committees:

"Party committees chose among their members an executive committee and elect the first secretary and the secretaries of the party committee."<sup>11</sup>

The right of party committees to elect their own leaders formally could not be challenged in the Kádár era by calling right of appointment on the CC nomenclature the jurisdiction over the post of first secretary of the county-level party committee. The center could "only" take a stand in this matter. Of course we might suspect that the practice described so succinctly in the "self-critical" account of Mátyás Rákosi (who was the first secretary of the party) from 1949 prevailed not only in the Rákosi era:

"... It is a transgression of democratic centralism if not an elected but an appointed organ is given a function belonging to the elected organ. But in its suggested form it is not dangerous, we do it every day that we transfer the function of an elected organ to a appointed organ."<sup>12</sup>

Of course if we want to challenge the autonomy of lower level party organs it should be even more so in the case of non-party organizations. Those who are familiar with the communist political order know that it had no organizations wholly independent from the party. From the nomenclature documents we cannot reveal this fact. Only actual analysis of the mechanism of cadre appointment can assert that the jurisdiction of central party organs included extra-party positions resp. lower level party positions.

Although the mere existence of nomenclature lists corroborates our above statement which we feel totally correct in the study we can formulate the problem only in the form of a hypothesis:

in the communist system all personnel decisions of the effective decision-making party organ (i.e. taking a stand too) were obligatory.

---

<sup>9</sup> In later documents other expressions (decides, approves, assents, expresses his opinion) also appear but we can arrange them safely into the categories of appointment and taking a stand: decision here means appointment whereas approval, expressing opinion and assent are equivalent to taking a stand.

<sup>10</sup> We call an organization autocephalic if its leadership is elected by the "membership" whereas we call it autonomous if the organization determines "him" its internal rules. See: M. Weber: *Gazdaság és társadalom*

<sup>11</sup> A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt Szervezeti Szabályzata (The party rules of the HSWP), in: *Szervezeti kérdések a Magyar Szocialista Munkáspártban*, p. 1970.

<sup>12</sup> A hatásköri lista vitája az 1949. szeptember 7-i Titkársági ülésen (The debate over the nomenclature on the 7. September 1949. session of the Secretariat).

Let us mention that below the central level the situation was not that clear-cut and for lower levels the statement may be false.

The differentiation between different types of decision within the nomenclature documents is very important from one respect namely the singling out of taking a stand. In the above we said that decisions taken both relative to intra- and extra-party functions were obligatory for the "appointees" and therefore both decisions were based on jurisdiction, but nevertheless the two terms involve differing types of authority. In this study we cannot analyze in detail the different types of authority within the communist (Bolshevik) political system, therefore we only formulate an – unproved – statement:

there are two stable types of authority within the communist political system. The dominant type is the rational-legal authority spreading irresistibly with modernization. Rational-bureaucratic hierarchies of the political, economic and social life include practically everybody into some network of authority. The other type of authority is the domination of the party organs and party leadership based on traditional legitimation.

Our deliberations concerning cadre-jurisdiction might be closed by the acknowledgement of the parallel existence of the two types of authority. The new term appearing in the nomenclature-resolutions namely taking a stand is unequivocally based on the traditionally legitimated authority of party leaders whereas election and appointment belong to rational authority.

## The appointers: the "authorized"

In the literature sometimes the term of nomenclature is used in a broad sense to include nomenclatures of extra-party organizations. Harasymiw writes that in the Soviet Union non-party organizations too had their nomenclature.<sup>13</sup> We shall use the term of nomenclature only to designate nomenclatures of organs of the communist party. The appointing-absolution rights are located in nomenclature resolutions to different organs and leaders of the party.

For historical analysis an illustration of the relationship between different party organs and primary organizations (changing in time themselves) would be needed<sup>14</sup> but here suffice it to enumerate the party organs holding the right of appointment. Organs and actors with cadre-jurisdiction were the following: Central Committee, Organizational Bureau (1946-1953), Politburo, CC Secretariat, CC secretaries, CC heads of department, county level, Budapest, district level, city party committees, party committees in factories, offices, institutions and villages, primary party organizations.

For the analysis of the list of party actors it would be necessary to investigate that part of party resolutions which deal with those authorized. Let us depart from the broadest definition we know of:

"In personal matters the Central Committee has jurisdiction. In exercising this jurisdiction it follows a differentiated practice; certain personnel matters are decided in collective sessions, others are transferred to CC organs. The organs of the CC: the Politburo, the Secretariat, secretaries and heads of department of the CC exert this jurisdiction in the name and by the authorization of the CC."<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Harasymiw, B.: *Political Elite Recruitment in the Soviet Union*, MacMillan, 1984, p. 162.

<sup>14</sup> On the organizational structure of the party and its changes see: *Szervezeti Kérdések a Magyar Szocialista Munkáspártban*, p. 178-181 and the Chronology chapter of *Segédkönyv a Politikai Bizottság tanulmányozásához* (A Reference Book for the Study of the Politburo). On the history of the leading organs of the party see also: István Szakadát: *A párt szervezeti felépítéséről* (On the organizational setup of the party) in: András Nyíró: (ed.): *Politikai szociológiai tanulmányok a kommunista bürokrácia vezérkaráról* (Political-sociological studies on the general staff of communist bureaucracy), Budapest University of Economics, Sociology Department, 1990.

<sup>15</sup> A Központi Bizottság 1971. június 1-i hatásköri listája (Nomenclature of the Central Committee from 1. June 1971)

We see from the quotation why CC secretaries and CC heads of department were "organs" included into the party hierarchy. There were times (in the history of the Kádár era) when not only leading party bodies had – regional – cadre-jurisdiction but also secretaries and heads of department.

The organizational rules of the party made a distinction between party organizations and party organs. Party organizations were the primary party cells (the smallest party units with right for autonomous decision) whereas party organs were the elected party bodies. To the latter group belonged party committees, executive committees on different level, high level organs, boards. Primary party organizations were given only right (unfortunately we do not know when) to take a stand and only party organs (i.e. elected party bodies) had true and full cadre-jurisdiction.

If we aggregate party organs and party organizations along the regional dimension we obtain three levels of party hierarchy: central, regional and primary organization.

In what follows we concentrate – due to its outstanding importance and the content of documents at our disposal – to the central level.

## Hypothesis on jurisdiction of CC

According to the formal party hierarchy the Central Committee is above all other party organs. That this – assumed – domination of the Central Committee was totally formal is demonstrated by the simple fact that before 1956 the Central Committee itself had no nomenclature right. They were "distributed" among other leading organs. (In a resolution before 1956 only the Political Committee, the Secretariat and the Organizational Bureau had nomenclature lists and the name of the Central Committee figured only in the title of nomenclature resolutions). This could not be otherwise in the Kádár-era either. The subordinated role of the Central Committee is highly probable for long periods. In what follows we depart from a hypothesis, which – even if evident – can be proved definitely only by analyzing documents and facts beyond the nomenclature-lists.

Up to 1956 the Central Committee had no true jurisdiction. Positions given in the 1956-1988 period into the jurisdiction of the Central Committee are located after 1956 to the Political Committee and/or the Secretariat considering that they were the true decision-making bodies. On the other hand we assume from 1988 the at least partial autonomy of the CC relative to the PB and therefore separate the nomenclatures of the CC and the PB.

To illustrate this our hypothesis let us quote from the document which finalized the occurrences of the 9. February 1962 session of the CC when PB informed CC members about the most important personnel changes (the quotation demonstrates that the "validity" of our hypothesis extends to a short period only):

"PB adopted resolutions on its 30. June of 1962 and previous sessions in important personal matters. These continue the execution of the resolution of the CC from 12. September 1961 on "Raising the level of leadership and operative work".<sup>16</sup>

The personnel decisions referred to concerned among others the appointment of certain heads of department of the CC. The document unequivocally shows that CC jurisdictions existing on paper were formal only since – as the document testifies – CC obtained information only to approve cadre appointments which were – according to the resolution valid at that time<sup>17</sup> – in its jurisdiction.

---

<sup>16</sup> A Politikai Bizottság 1962. január 30-i határozata (The resolution of the Political Committee from 30. January 1962).

<sup>17</sup> A Központi Bizottság, a Politikai Bizottság és Titkárság 1960. február 23-i hatásköri listája (Nomenclature of the CC, the PB and the Secretariat from 23. February 1960.)

Beyond the above example our hypothesis is corroborated by the fact that nomenclature resolutions were made before 1956 by the Secretariat and later, till 1988 by the Political Committee. From among the documents we know of only the 1988 resolution on nomenclature lists and the 1989 resolution on "abandoning cadre-jurisdiction" both taken by the Central Committee.

It is a telling fact too that the assignment of CC members was a task of the PB.

In order to understand the whole system it would be extremely important to investigate the effective distribution of jurisdictions among the PB, the Secretariat and the first secretary. But since we have no conclusive material we have to formulate our statement as a hypothesis.<sup>18</sup> To reveal the outstanding role of the first secretary within the communist (Bolshevik) system is one of the most important tasks of analysis.

## **Intra-party hierarchy (and prestige) levels**

We may set up a new system of classification of party actors which would better suit our later analysis. The fact that we aggregate positions in the jurisdiction of the PB and the CC Secretariat when dealing with the question "Who is the real decision-maker?" does not mean that in other respects they are not different. Positions belonging to the CC jurisdiction might be held more important than posts figuring on cadre lists of "subordinated" organs. This "ordering" might be performed progressing downwards along the formal party hierarchy.

That such qualification is not unjustified appears from the following excerpt from a document:

"Part of leaders concerned by the decentralization of jurisdictions apprehended that they were classified lower: included into the taking a stand authority of primary party cells or left totally out from party authority. Some of them felt offended and complained at higher party organs."<sup>19</sup>

The motives for the offence hinted at in the report are easy to understand. In such a system – even if it sounds funny – it was better to depend on a higher-level party organ.

Partly because of this, partly to assist later analysis we divided positions figuring on the lists into different levels. (Central Committee – first level; Political Committee – second level; CC Secretariat – third level; CC secretaries – fourth level; CC heads of department – fifth level. The classification might be followed with the inclusion of nomenclatures of regional organs. E.g. county level party committee – sixth level etc.).

Another important element of nomenclature resolutions is the set of positions (the "appointees") included in the jurisdiction of different party organs. In resolutions sometimes the terms post or charge or function are used instead of position. In what follows we do not differentiate between these terms and try to use always position.

Every position involves an institution and a job within this institution. Organization and institution are equivalent for our purposes. (Thereby we narrow down somewhat the sociological meaning of institution).

---

<sup>18</sup> In the Hungarian literature András Nyíró dealt first with the problem of "first secretary versus PB". András Nyíró: *Testületek a párt vezetésében* (The party's leading bodies), in: *Segédkönyv a Politikai Bizottság tanulmányozásához*, p. XXI-XXXI. On the topic see: Greame Gill: *Personal Dominance and the Collective Principle: Individual Legitimacy in Marxist-Leninist Systems*, in: Rigby, T.H. & Fehér, F.: *Political Legitimation in the Communist States*, Oxford, 1982, pp. 94-110; Archie Brown: *The Power of the General Secretary of the CPSU*, in: Rigby, T.H., Brown, A. & Reddaway, P. (eds.): *Authority, Power and Policy in the USSR*, MacMillan, London, 1980, pp. 135-157.

<sup>19</sup> Jelentés a Politikai Bizottságnak a káderhatáskör rendezésének tapasztalatairól (A report to the Political Committee on experiences with reshuffling in cadre-jurisdiction, 4. November 1975).

## The peculiarities of the nomenclature system

In the world of modern politics we find everywhere phenomena similar to the nomenclature. When filling posts in state administration one also adheres to some jurisdictions for appointment and election laid down in the constitution. The peculiarities of the communist (Bolshevik) nomenclature system should be determined with this in mind. These peculiarities are – according to a study by Rigby – the following:

" first, the concentration of important positions in all official and 'voluntary' organizations in the nomenclatures of party committees; second, the inclusion of elective positions (and most of the more important ones are in form elective); and third, the comprehensiveness of the system, which omits no position of any significance in the society ..."<sup>20</sup>

In another place he uses the term mono-organizational.<sup>21</sup> A similar term will be used by us too, nay it is in our opinion one of the most important characteristics of the system.

## Heterocephality

In the world of modern politics rational appointment into leadership posts of different organizations might be performed in two ways: either by election by those concerned (e.g. members) or by appointment "from outside". (Thinking it over rationally we find other possibilities too: e.g. rotation used when selecting the president of the state in former Yugoslavia. But the fact that it is used so rarely in politics suggests the deficiencies of this method).

In democracies parliament elects its own leaders, in a presidential system citizens elect the president and similarly political movements and parties elect their own leaders. Formally in the communist (Bolshevik) system too there were such elections: on paper the Central Committee and party committees elected their leading organs and first secretaries. Formally in almost all important social and political movement and organization there was some election procedure. In the Patriotic People's Front the first secretary of the National Council, in the trade union movement the president and first secretary of the National Council of Trade Unions, in the youth movement the first secretary of the Communist Youth League were elected according to the organizational rules. Naturally we know that this principle was not adhered to in practice but this is a fact we will raise later only.

If the principle of elections prevails in practice then the given organization is called autocephalic. In modern political systems we find several autocephalic organizations but the number of heterocephalic organizations is not small either and there are among them important institutions too. We have to deal therefore with some problems of heterocephalic organizations and we should characterize them in such a way as to express the "degree of dependence from outside".

Analyzing the chances of organizational leaders to advance into higher position we ought to formulate the statement that thinking about it rationally it turns out that every act of appointment from outside is preceded by an act of election. We find the election not necessarily in the "first step". In the case of the politically most important organizations (state bureaucracies) we often have to make "two steps backwards" in order to find the act of election. Appointments often are arranged into a series and in such cases several appointments are legitimized by one election.

---

<sup>20</sup> Rigby, T.H.: Staffing USSR Incorporated: the Origins of the Nomenklatura System in: Soviet Studies, Vol. XL. No. 4. (October 1988), p. 524.

<sup>21</sup> Rigby, T. H.: Introduction: Political Legitimacy, Weber and Communist Mono-organisational Systems in: Rigby, T.H. & Fehér, F. (ed): Political Legitimation in Communist States, London and Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1962, pp. 1-26.

Let us take the president of the Parliament who is at the same time the chief executive of the parliamentary office. This latter job he could obtain "only" from outside (as the president of Parliament) and by appointment. He would be elected into this job if the employees of the office would elect him as their own office leader. The same is true for the relationship of a party leader and the party apparatus. We think that relying on the above we can safely state that under rational rule every appointment is "preceded" by an ultimate act of election.

If within rationally based political systems there are organizations, which are autonomous, and autocephalic then election and autocephaly are dependent on one-another. In modern political democracies there are several such phenomena, the most important among them being political parties. Within the process of modernization perhaps the most important phenomenon of political life is that rational-bureaucratic authority became dominant. The characteristic form in bureaucracies of raising someone into a position is appointment. This is at the same time a major tool of maintaining discipline in bureaucracies. In politically important bureaucracies (offices of state administration, parties, social, state, corporate, economic, cultural etc. organizations, in bureaucratic apparatus of mass movements) there is one non-bureaucratic role only: those on the top are not appointed from within. They are appointed from outside. Bureaucracies are not autocephalic organizations. But appointment of their office leaders – as we have already shown – necessarily presupposes some former election.

Relations between election and autocephaly, election and bureaucracy, election and rationally-based political system are very important. Considering the above we can safely declare that in modern political democracies one of the most important principles on which organizations are based is election.

Before analyzing the relationship between the communist (Bolshevik) nomenclature system and the principle of election it is worthwhile to characterize "outside dependence" of heterocephalic organizations. It is evident that it is a different kind of dependence (heterocephaly) if only the highest-level leader of an organization is appointed from outside as when his deputies and other, lower level leaders also are "recruited from outside". If we want to characterize the phenomenon theoretically we have first to introduce – relying on the notion of hierarchical relationships within modern organizations – the term level of hierarchy.

In what follows level of hierarchy of an organization will be that subset of the complete and ordered set of positions (and also the people filling these positions) which involve similar, prescribed job content and authority (domination) jurisdictions. An organization is called first-degree heterocephalic if people on the first hierarchic level, i.e. the leader (or if the principle of collective leadership is applied the leaders) are appointed from outside, all the others from inside. An organization is called second degree heterocephalic if people on the second hierarchic level of the organization, i.e. the leader(s) and his (their) deputies are appointed from outside but only they. Naturally organizations on different levels of heterocephaly can be defined relying on the same logic and principles.

It is evident that the higher the degree of heterocephaly of an organization the less its autonomy and vice versa .... "Selecting" from outside is in inverse relationship with the autonomy of the organization.

## **The comprehensive system of appointments and the emptying of the principle of collective leadership**

Relying on what had been said in the previous section one can formulate an important characteristic of the phenomenon of communist (Bolshevik) nomenclature: the nomenclature system rules out election in the sphere of politics and in politically important organizations.

At this point an important question emerges: how to define politics. One can say that political is every action involving appointment by the holders of state power. In this sense it depends on the "conception" of the holders of state power which organizations and appointments are political. If we

look more closely at different political systems this statement – in our opinion – has strong empirical relevance.

The exclusivity of the appointing principle means on the other hand that previously autocephalic organizations become heterocephalic and only heterocephalic organizations survive in social-political life. Although the ruling out of elections concerns every organization it is worthwhile to single out the problematic of elections within the communist party. We shall return to this problem later. Another important characteristic of the nomenclature system is that positions important from the point of view of exerting and maintaining political power are arranged in one interconnected system.

Whatever changes have occurred in the system of nomenclature with passing time its essence remained the same since the "one-way" centralization of the political system remained. Only the shape, form and density of the nomenclature net holding organizations in dependence changed but the necessity of such a net was never challenged.

As we have demonstrated earlier Rigby used for this phenomenon the term mono-organizational society, a term we are wary to take up. We think Rigby's term unfortunate because it suggests a too strong relationship between organizations connected by the nomenclature – due to the widely held interpretation of the term organization. As if the whole system would have been one huge organization. But for the description of organizations we use beyond the dimension of autocephaly-heterocephaly also the dimension of autonomy-heteronomy and we cannot assume total heteronomy for organizations held in strong dependence. Even when despotism was highest different organizations had certain autonomy.

A better term would be monohierarchy<sup>22</sup> but due to the interwovenness of hierarchy and unequivocality we do not deem it successful either. Although the system consisted of one huge network of relations it was not unequivocal, therefore not hierarchic due to the existence of double jurisdiction. Within one particular organization the internal system of appointment "lived alongside" with the system of party jurisdiction, therefore double appointing jurisdictions existed. For when appointing into a dependent post according to the organizational rules the boss had the jurisdiction but under the nomenclature system the responsible party organ had "jurisdiction" too.

An acceptable solution might be to introduce a new term. The treatment of the phenomenon of nomenclature was reduced in the above to appointing events. In this respect we used several times the terms autocephalic and heterocephalic. Relying on them monocephalic is the best characterization – in our opinion – of the nomenclature within political organizations. Outside dependence of heterocephalic organizations was arranged into a chain and thus practically a "centralized" appointing system raised. The nomenclature system made the appointing principle almost exclusive. A different principle was used only at one point: namely in the case of those party bosses who operated the whole system.

In the above we did not differentiate between organizations when investigating the neglection of election results. But here we should – even if cursorily – treat separately the problem of making formal intra-party elections.

The central slogan of party life was that within the principle of democratic centralism democratism means collective decision-making. Democratism was identified with one variant of the collective principle and implemented accordingly. According to this principle – at least in a formal sense – party leaders could obtain position only through election. It would require a separate historical analysis to answer the question how leaders could make elections formal. They had to employ several methods

---

<sup>22</sup> A similar "suggestion" is made by Mihály Bihari when he speaks about overlapping of hierarchies and the existence of the hierarchic principle. See Mihály Bihari: *Politikai rendszer és szocialista demokrácia* (Political system and socialist democracy) ELTE CJK, 1985, p. 115 (Mária Csanádi when characterizing the "basic texture" speaks about "partially hierarchic structure" and singles out one-way character as decisive, recognizing at the same time that mutual dependence is a very important moment in the system. Mária Csanádi: *A döntési mechanizmus szerkezetéről* – On the structure of the decision-making mechanism... p. 7-8.

and techniques for this aim. The most important technique was ruling out alternatives, to propose "one candidate".

The collective principle is the tool not only of dictatorships. Under the system of functionally divided branches of power we find the collective principle in e.g. parliamentary representation, in the veto of the president of the republic, in the act of signing by the prime minister. Let us also mention that making certain elections formal (i.e. without a stake, "predetermined") occurs not only in dictatorships: in democracies too it may occur that preliminary agreement makes elections formal (e.g. parliamentary voting "brings" the predetermined result). An important difference in this case relative to dictatorships totally neglecting elections is that at least once, when electing parliamentary representatives, such manipulation is not possible.

Another form of the collective principle was realized within the nomenclature system through the "preliminary agreement right" and the "right to express an opinion". These techniques became tools of reducing the concentration of power (on lower levels of course).

## **The nomenclature system as a tool of control over society. Patron-client relationships**

In order to operate the nomenclature system successfully it is also necessary that every power in society important from the point of view of political activity be attached to "nomenclature" positions.

In modern societies we find several organizations independent from the sphere of politics, i.e. autonomous resp. autocephalic. A large part of parties, social movements, economic, cultural, educational, mass communication etc. organizations are such. In democracies their number cannot be reduced or can only to a small extent. To successful management of the nomenclature system "manageable size" i.e. the smallest possible set of organizations is necessary. This is particularly so with economic organizations. Private economic organizations are contrary by their mere existence to the nomenclature system since by their autonomy over economic resources they constitute an important source of power in the modern world. For the management of the system this alternative source of power should be "closed", i.e. the sphere of economy should be politically "positioned". In this respect nationalization and the collectivization were important events in the history of the system. The same could be said on any other source of power. Another characteristic of the system was that different sources of power were "nationalized" i.e. attached to certain positions, what meant that every concentration of power outside the nomenclature was ruled out.

Thereby it became impossible to enforce power outside the system, in a way transgressing the system.<sup>23</sup> An important consequence of all this was that the system could be "abolished only from inside. Nomenclature system presented above was a strikingly stable political formation. The cause is simple: a principle was given whose employment made it possible to control political (personal) relations and processes on a large scale. This was the principle of "give him a division and rule over him" ("divisio et impera").

This principle was an "invention" of the communist (Bolshevik) system. Although the techniques of political personnel changes are only one factor in the functioning of political systems, personnel problems have an overriding importance for the nomenclature system.

Although the party did not rely on rational legitimacy when requiring "leadership role", the nomenclature system itself proved to be a rationalistic and powerful tool. Naturally enough – as so many over-centralized systems – this too was not transparent and manageable from above. That is why certain autonomy of local party organizations appeared within the system. Although it is true that the

---

<sup>23</sup> István Szakadát: A nómenklátúra – avagy az "oszd be és uralkodj" elve (Nomenclature or the principle of "give him a division and rule over him" in: *A nómenklátúra csúcsán*, A BME Szociológia Tanszék kiadványai 1, Budapest, 1991, p. 5-8.

nomenclature system created an all-embracing network of patron-client relationships but on the other hand the system of "clienture" was structured, on every level new and new "patron-client" relationships appeared. Later within the Kádár system lower level party organizations too acquired a kind of autonomy. To prove this let us quote from a document whose content might be generalized during further research.

"In decisions concerning cadres within the jurisdiction of ministry and national level party committees (promotion, absolution, distinction etc.) higher – level party and state organs have to ask the preliminary opinion of the responsible party organ."

"In matters of appointment and absolution of leaders belonging to the jurisdiction of the Central Committee:

– about appointment and absolution of ministers, leaders of national authorities and deputy ministers the responsible party committee should be informed before execution and publication of the act;

– in the case of appointment and absolution of deputy leaders of national offices, their heads of department and higher posts – if promotion is from the local apparatus – before final decision the opinion of the responsible party committee should be asked."<sup>24</sup>

## Changes in the nomenclature system

"We did it so that beforehand we looked at how things were done in the Soviet Union and other people's republics .... There were one or two speeches held in the Soviet Union dealing with this matter. To these we adhered principally. Relative to the relationship to the state and the mass movements' relationship to the party we could not find out anything."<sup>25</sup>

Knowing the peculiarities of the nomenclature system we cannot avoid the question about the origins of the system. How could come about and consolidate such a system? To answer the question of "why" is simple. As with the whole of the communist (Bolshevik) political-economic system here too we can safely assert: since the Hungarian Communist Party owed its power to the Soviets it implemented – relying on the Soviet example, if not directly urged by the Soviets – this power tool in Hungary too. The "confession" of the motto is lovely but it does not change anything in the essence. The empire introduced its own system in its provinces.

As to the question of "how", i.e. the Hungarian specialities of the nomenclature system we can say similar things as Rigby said on the origin of the Soviet nomenclature.<sup>26</sup> Between early 1947 and early 1949 in political power struggles the communist party "liquidated" all its political opponents. The first but we can safely say decisive "slice" in this salami tactics was Béla Kovács the first secretary of the Smallholder Party at that time and primate Minszenthy's detention was the last. During the process the communists took over the control over repressive organizations and over political and state administration (let us mention only the struggle for the police, the border guard, the ministry of the

---

<sup>24</sup> A PB határozata a minisztériumok és országos főhatóságok pártszervezeteinek feladatairól, hatásköréről, irányításának egységes rendszeréről, 1972. július 25. (PB resolution on the tasks, jurisdiction and unified direction of party organs in ministries and central administrative organs, 25. July 1972.)

<sup>25</sup> Hatásköri lista vitája a Titkárság 1949. szeptember 7-i ülésén, Rákosi Mátyás és Földes László hozzászólása (The debate over the nomenclature on the 7. September 1949 session of the Secretariat. The contribution of Mátyás Rákosi and László Földes)

<sup>26</sup> Rigby, T.H.: Staffing USSR Incorporated ..., p. 524.

interior or the B-lists and the process against the ministry of agriculture). When the power struggle was over and the apparatus exchanged, par excellence political organizations were already "prepared" for the introduction of the nomenclature system. The next step necessarily was that the party had to reinforce its economic and administrative positions. This was done essentially with the nationalization in 1948-49 and the "people's front" elections in Spring of 1949. Afterwards only intra-party "discipline" had to be strengthened in order that intra-party elections become formal too. Therefore the "revolution had to consume its own children". Finally: a "suitable" organizational structure for the party had to be created. This last step was made in 1950<sup>27</sup> and since that time for forty years the communist party functioned with an unchanged organizational structure.<sup>28</sup>

## A flexible tool: the nomenclature

With problems of cadre-jurisdiction they dealt "sincerely" the first time on the 7. September 1949 session of the Secretariat. As the minutes testify the nomenclature already existed but its existence is still not documented therefore we do not know its content. Two drafts were prepared for this session as it turns out from what follows:

"University professors did not belong anywhere in the first list, in the second the most important of them belonged to the PB the less important ones to the Secretariat."<sup>29</sup>

In the debate the most important problem proved to be the relationship between the center, the "county-level committee" and the state apparatus. The problem of the repressive apparatus was also hinted at. Finally the resolution of the Secretariat contained that:

"the Secretariat in principle agrees with the suggestion as a point of departure...It suggests to find out how this problem was solved in the Soviet Union."<sup>30</sup>

In October-November of 1949 a delegation was sent to the Soviet Union to gain experience. Let me single out two momentums from the vast activity of the party delegation: on one hand it examined thoroughly the organizational structure of the Soviet communist (Bolshevik) party. On the other hand it tried to understand the functioning of the Soviet nomenclature system. Returning home they naturally wrote reports and suggestions based on the experiences gained "out there". These motions were presented to the Secretariat in the Spring of 1950.<sup>31</sup> It cannot be by chance that on 22 and 29 of March 1950 the Secretariat adopted on two consecutive sessions resolutions concerning the transformation of the central party apparatus and the reorganization of work with cadres.<sup>32</sup> The sensibility of those concerned and those making the suggestion is demonstrated by the fact that right at the top of the report of the delegation to the Soviet Union we can read a remark pinpointing the most important element of the nomenclature system:

---

<sup>27</sup> T. Varga György: Pártapparátus Magyarországon 1948 után (Party apparatus in Hungary after 1948), in: *História*, Vol. X, (1988), No. 1, pp. 28-31.

<sup>28</sup> *Segédkönyv a Politikai Bizottság tanulmányozásához, Supplement: A központi pártapparátus (1944-1989)* (The central party apparatus in 1944-1989)

<sup>29</sup> A hatásköri lista vitája a Titkárság 1949. szeptember 7-i ülésén Contribution of Ernő Gerő.

<sup>30</sup> A Titkárság 1949. szeptember 7-i határozata (The resolution of the Secretariat from 7. September 1949).

<sup>31</sup> A Titkárság 1950. március 29-i határozata (The resolution of the Secretariat from 29. March 1950).

<sup>32</sup> T. Varga György: Pártapparátus Magyarországon 1948 után, pp. 29-30.

"The Party directs government organs first of all through communists sitting in main posts of state administration; the key positions of state administration are filled according to the decisions of leading party organs."<sup>33</sup>

The suggested and adopted system proved to be durable. After the March 1950 resolution the nomenclature system remained essentially intact until the disintegration of the system in 1989.

Although the core of the nomenclature system remained intact between 1950 and 1989 we can reveal certain modifications if we analyze closely the history of the system, small departures from the original pattern and the previous practice. On one hand the "regulation" of the system was gradually formalized, on the other the structure of positions "covered" continuously changed.

One of the most important elements of change within the history of the nomenclature system was the change in the role of "CC organs" and actors with jurisdiction. In the Rákosi era only leading party organs were given cadre-jurisdiction, thus the Political Committee, the Secretariat and the Organizational Bureau (OB) – until it was abolished. The Central Committee had no separate cadre list although it interfered with cadre problems in the name of the PB, the Secretariat and the OB.

After 1956 for 6-7 years the previous system prevailed, i.e. cadre-jurisdiction had the Central Committee, the Political Committee, the newly created and short-lived Organizational Bureau, later its replacement the Secretariat. The only change was that from that time the Central Committee had an "own" list too.

Although the 1962 nomenclature resolution does not show any change in the documents of motions we find a new element. The reduction of central lists could be attained – at least partially – through transferring some positions "for approval to the responsible secretary of the Central Committee".<sup>34</sup> Let us stress again that this was not included into the nomenclature resolution! but this too came very soon. In the next nomenclature resolution the own jurisdiction of CC secretaries and CC heads of department was explicitly mentioned.

"...(CC) ... in order to speed up appointments and approvals has transferred into the jurisdiction of the secretaries and heads of department of the central Committee ... the leaders of government organs and party organs before appointing, absolving, transferring, honoring or letting to travel abroad cadres belonging into the jurisdiction of the Central Committee have to ask the permission of the responsible secretary or head of department of the Central Committee.

If divergence of opinion arises one has to turn to the Secretariat."<sup>35</sup>

Although the last passage of the quotation suggests that secretaries and heads of department had a jurisdiction "shared" with the Secretariat we think that theirs was a true, classical jurisdiction. This our opinion is corroborated by the fact that in the text of the resolution positions were listed as items belonging to the jurisdiction of secretaries and heads of department, and our standpoint is further reinforced if we take into account the changes relative to the jurisdiction of secretaries and heads of department. Next time in 1967:

"Political Committee modified the jurisdiction of CC secretaries and heads of department to the extent that the personal matters of persons under their jurisdiction (appointment, transfer, absolution) could be introduced to responsible lower level party or mass organization or state bodies with their preliminary consent."<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Javaslat a központi pártvezetés munkájának megjavítására és a Központi Vezetőség apparátusának átszervezésére (A suggestion for the improvement of the work of central party leadership and reorganization of the apparatus of Central Committee) (The report of the party delegation to the Soviet Union March 1950).

<sup>34</sup> Javaslat a Politikai Bizottsághoz az MSZMP Központi Bizottsága, Politikai Bizottsága és Titkársága hatásköri listájára (A draft for the nomenclature of the Central Committee, Political Committee and Secretariat of the HSWP, 18. July 1962). Let us mention that such kind of jurisdiction for secretaries is very probable in previous periods too but hints at it in the text of the 1960 resolution are "weak".

<sup>35</sup> A Központi Bizottság 1967. május 9-i hatásköri listája (Nomenclature of the Central Committee from 5. February 1963)

<sup>36</sup> A Központi Bizottság és szerveinek 1967. május 9-i hatásköri listája (Nomenclature of the Central Committee and its organs from 9. May 1967)

In the draft of the resolution we find a short motivation:

"Thereby one can avoid that decisions of lower level party, mass movement or state bodies could be changed by one person."<sup>37</sup>

In the documents we find the formulation that the preliminary consents of secretaries and heads of department is necessary in personnel matters relative the above mentioned posts. The cadre-jurisdiction was therefore split among secretaries, heads of department and the leaders of other responsible organs and organizations. A kind of collective leadership principle was applied in this area. The fact that the 1967, the 1968 and the 1971 resolutions on cadre lists did not mention who can decide in disputed matters suggests that in final account it was the secretaries and the heads of department who were de facto in power position. This our feeling is corroborated by the knowledge of further events. The Central Committee on its 28. November 1973 session abolished to cadre-jurisdiction of CC secretaries and CC heads of department.<sup>38</sup> That means that the previous situation was qualified even by party documents as cadre-jurisdiction. This becomes even more clear if we take into account that in 1974 this personnel jurisdiction was replaced by the right of preliminary agreement:

"Before the decision of the responsible organ one should obtain the agreement of the responsible secretary or head of department of the Central Committee acting on behalf of the CC Secretariat..."<sup>39</sup>

What is the difference between the two jurisdictions (personnel and preliminary agreement) might be understood by reading the two quotations below:

"The list of functions subject to preliminary agreement does not define cadre-jurisdiction:  
– its character should not be that of approval but that of consultation  
– it ought to be restricted to the reporting on appointment, abolition, replacement, other jurisdiction instances – evaluation, distinction, education should not be subject to it ..."<sup>40</sup>

"If during checking up a difference arises between CC secretaries, heads of department and appointing organs the personnel motion should be presented to the CC Secretariat."<sup>41</sup> Whereas relative to personnel jurisdiction CC secretaries and CC heads of department had positive – even if restricted – rights, with the introduction of preliminary agreement only a delaying but by no means exclusive veto right was left with secretaries and heads of department. It was not even a true right of veto since the final word was with the Secretariat. A further weakening of the power position of secretaries and heads of department (or at least the intention to weaken them) is signaled by the fact that from this time this list of posts liable for preliminary agreement became a common list of the secretary and the head of department contrary to the previous situation when secretaries and heads of department had common lists.

---

<sup>37</sup> Feljegyzés a Központi Bizottság és szerveinek hatásköri listájában javasolt változásokról, 1967. április 29 (A note on the changes in the nomenclature of the Central Committee and its organs, 29. April 1967)

<sup>38</sup> Javaslat a Politikai Bizottságnak a Központi Bizottság hatásköri listájának módosítására (Suggestion to the Political Committee to change the nomenclature of the Central Committee) (Department of Party and Mass Movement, 26. April 1974) and Jelentés a Politikai Bizottságnak a káderhatáskör rendezésének tapasztalatairól: javaslat a KB hatásköri listájának részleges módosítására (Report to the Political Committee on the experiences with the redistribution of cadre-jurisdictions; suggestion on partial modification of the nomenclature of the CC) (Department of Party and Mass Movement, 4. November 1975).

<sup>39</sup> A Központi Bizottság 1974. május 21-i hatásköri listája (Nomenclature of the CC from 21. May 1974.)

<sup>40</sup> Javaslat a Politikai Bizottságnak a Központi Bizottság hatásköri listájának módosítására, 1974. április 26 (Suggestion to the Political Committee to change the nomenclature of the Central Committee, Department of Party and Mass Movement from 26. April 1976)

<sup>41</sup> A Központi Bizottság 1974. május 21-i hatásköri listája (Nomenclature of the Central Committee from 21. May 1974)

Further – and more radical – changes occurred in the second half of the eighties. In 1985 the preliminary agreement right of secretariat as a body was abolished its "nomenclature" right has disappeared too. In the end in 1989 the whole system ceased to exist.

Let us review what kind of jurisdiction had the central party actors in the sixties-eighties!

	1963-1967	1967-1974	1974-1985	1985-1988	1988-1989
CC	collect. c.a.				
PB	collect. c.a.				
CC Secretariat	collect. c.a.	collect. c.a.	collect. c.a.	collect. c.a.	
CC secretaries	full c.a.	limited c.a.	prelim. a.r.		
CC heads of dept.	full c.a.	limited c.a.	prelim. a.r.		

(collect. c.a. – collective (corporative) cadre-jurisdiction;

full c.a. – full cadre-jurisdiction;

limited c.a. – limited cadre-jurisdiction;

prelim. a.r. – preliminary agreement right)

## The number of nomenclature positions

The number of positions figuring on individual nomenclature lists can be estimated only but not given accurately. The above data were gained not from nomenclature resolutions but from different motions. The reason is simple: the number of institutions and positions figuring on the list was not indicated. We cannot know directly how many heads of department were in the ministry. In order to obtain exact figures we ought to perform a full "history of institutions" analysis of the period.

But taking into account the well-known data it can be revealed that with time the number of posts figuring on central cadre lists decreased.

	PB	Secretariat	Org.b.	CC	CC-list	secr-s	heads of dept.,	secr-s & heads of dept.	totally
before 1950	100-150	600-700	2700-3000		3400-3850				3400-3850
1950.III.29.	276	1836	1700		3812				3812
1951.IV.18.	91	736	1587		2414				2414
1951.VII.11.	64	764	1433		2261				2261
before 1956	103	784			887				887
before 1963	599	961		91	1651				1651
1963.II.5.	199	610		82	891	?	?		?
before 1967	599	620		96	1315	629	845		2789
1967.V.9.	426	376		93	895	334	283		1512
before 1971									1639
1971.VI.1.	169	387		95	651	458	475		1710
before 1974									1700
1974.V.21.					785			885	1670
before 1988					1241				1241
1988.VI.14.					435				435

Although the data are not conclusive we can state that on the long run the number of positions included into the nomenclature system decreased, first of all in the eighties.

Naturally we have even less data on the whole system of nomenclature, the total set of positions from those figuring in the CC cadre lists to those figuring in primary organization veto lists. A report of Party and Mass Movement Department from 1975 is telling in this respect.<sup>42</sup> According to it there were in 1971 89.000 positions on the cadre lists of party committees and party leaderships and 81.000 in 1975. Within the veto right of primary organizations there were 280.000 positions overall in 1975 – after a reduction of 20 %.

## Map-map (network-network)

In the above we analyzed positions on the nomenclatures according to their formal characteristics only. It would be interesting to look at the changing place of a position within the list, the changing structure of the list. For want of a computerized data base we can investigate only individual positions, their "rows", and have to concentrate on one or two nomenclature levels. What follows is much more interesting anecdote than serious analysis.

Let us look more closely at the regularities of posts belonging to the CC-s jurisdiction (first party level, period 1963-1988).

The first interesting finding is that in the Kádár era the number of posts figuring on the CC list hardly changed.

The Central Committee elected (according to the party rules) the members of the PB, the CC secretaries and since the seventies the presidents of standing committees (e.g. Propaganda Committee). CC heads of department, the chief editor of *Népszabadság*, the rector of the College for Politics (previously the director of the Party College), the chief director (previously the director) of the Institute for Social Sciences, the director of the Institute for Party History, the president of the Editorial Board of *Társadalmi Szemle*, and the managing editor of *Pártélet*, let were all the time on the list of the CC. These were the most important party posts and their importance was best expressed by including them into the CC (i.e. the highest level) cadre list.

In the third larger bloc of CC cadres we find the first secretary of the Budapest Party Committee, the president of Parliament (P) and his deputies, the president of the Presidential Council (PC), his deputies (the latter only up to 1985), the chairman of the Council of Ministers (CM), his deputies and its other members, the president of the Supreme Court (SC), the Highest Prosecutor (HP), the president of the Council of Budapest, the president and chief secretary of the National Council of Trade Unions, the first secretary of the Communist Youth League, the president and the chief secretary of the National Council of the Patriotic People's Front, the chief commander of the Workers' Militia, the representative of the Hungarian People's Republic in CMEA (only up to 1985).

We can see that in CC cadre-jurisdiction were included the central organs of state administration (CM, PC, P, SC, HP), the leaders of the most important social movements and interest asserting organs (NCTU, CYL, PPF), the leaders of the capital city (first secretary, council president) and the leader of the party's army (Workers' Militia).

Looking at exceptions, posts which figured originally at the CC cadre list but later "moved downwards" the above statement is corroborated.

In 1963 the post of president of Hungarian Academy of Arts (HAS), president of National Council of Hungarian Women and political chief of department of the Ministry of Defense were included into the highest party level list but from 1967 not. Central Committee for People's Control (CCPC) was until

---

<sup>42</sup> Jelentés a Politikai Bizottságnak a káderhatáskör rendezésének tapasztalatairól: javaslat a KB hatásköri listájának részleges módosítására, 1975. november 4. (Report to the Political Committee on the experiences with the redistribution of cadre-jurisdictions; suggestion on partial modification of the nomenclature of the CC, 4. November 1975)

1981 in CC-jurisdiction ("state administration") the president and the chief secretary of Hungarian Sport Association (HSA), the president of National Association of Cooperatives (NAC), the president and chief secretary of National Council of Collective Farms (NCCF) – "interest groups of social movements" – were left out in 1974.

Only for one "term" (1971-1974) was the leadership of the HSWP representation in Parliament on the list. Its short tenure can be explained by the fact that at that time a "constitutional" drive (separation of party and state) began.

Let us also mention that on CC list only central, national organs figured, mainly the highest hierarchical level in the said organizations.

On the second level (PB-jurisdiction) position are similar in structure to those of the CC list. Generalizing somewhat one can say that on PB list we find the second level of the central party hierarchy (CC apparatus, party press, party institutions), the second hierarchic level of "outside organizations" figuring already on the CC list, and first hierarchic level of some up to then "freelance" organizations. Examples of the former are:

deputy presidents and secretaries of NCTU, second men of ministries (sometimes first deputies of the minister, state secretaries) etc.

Examples of the latter are:

the leadership of HAS, leaders of national organs, county level party and state leaders (county level first secretaries, local council presidents).

It is no wonder that foreign affairs and defense have a special position in this system. One of its signs is that third hierarchic level of these areas is also included in the PB list:

political commissars of repressive organizations (political heads of department of the ministry of interior and the national army), generals, ambassadors.

With positions on the third (Secretariat) level the principles are the same as presented above. Further ties downwards where ties on higher levels already exist and new ties where they did not exist previously. Third level of ties with ministries (jurisdiction over deputy ministers), a further tie with the army (deputies of political heads of department, army commanders etc.) but instead of enumerating further examples let us formulate a statement on the Kádár era.

Although central nomenclatures are central in the sense that they define the cadre-jurisdiction of the highest party organs, the "centralization principle" has another meaning too:

central nomenclatures include only positions of national, central organs (in the Kádár era).

It is worthwhile to ponder somewhat about this statement! In the Kádár era it might happen even with high priority cities that the level of city party committees was tied too, but with other organizations and positions there was a limited, peculiar regional decentralization: county level leadership was dependent for its appointment on the central but otherwise it was free in its personnel policy within the county. This was not so in the Rákosi-era! On central nomenclatures of the fifties we find many county level posts, which were later, transferred to the jurisdiction of the county level (e.g. secretaries of district level party committees, county level secretaries of NCTU, full-time secretaries of cities, county level secretaries of NCC, members of the executive committee of county councils etc.). The positions included in county leadership changed in the Kádár-era too, but the set was not too large even in the beginning (first secretary, secretaries, council presidents, chief editors of county papers, county level police superintendent, county level highest prosecutor, county level police superintendent, county level highest prosecutor, county level chief judge) and changes during the eighties pointed towards decentralization. Naturally the leading posts of large firms, large cooperatives and state farms were more centralized (they were not wholly in the hands of county level leadership) but counties still had enough posts in their jurisdiction. We cannot make a large mistake when we say that vertical (regional) sharing of power had an important role in reinforcing the party-county system.

## Changes in the catching of institutions

Previously we assumed that the overall number of positions included in the network system had diminished. We can safely assume also that by "shortening" of the central lists the jurisdiction of lower level party organs partly increased (through the decentralization of jurisdictions of higher organs) and partly decreased (by further decentralization and by the "reduction" of the whole system).

Decentralization cannot be understood as if lower (regional) party organs would obtain jurisdiction over positions left out from the central list. This certainly might happen. E.g. when the center "passed" a regional position to lower level party organs (e.g. the position of the secretary of the executive committee of county council was "given" by CC to county level party committee). We shall call this phenomenon regional decentralization. Another form of decentralization might be when the center gave some central (national) position to a national organization that previously had only formal jurisdiction over it (functional decentralization). Such events did not touch the life and jurisdiction of regional party organs.

We cannot go into the details of this problem since we do not know anything concrete for want of documents on network rights of lower level party organs. Of course we can formulate some statements and hypotheses relying on existing data.

For the level of primary organizations we can assume that both in the Rákosi and in the early Kádár era primary organizations could not have true cadre-jurisdiction (beyond the right of expressing an opinion). If our assumption is right we can state that the introduction – probably in the sixties – of the right of expressing opinion weakened the network on the level of primary organizations.

Relying on the term introduced above we can divide the history of central cadre lists into subperiods.

First there was the "nomenclature jungle characterized by high level heterocephaly of organizations or to put it otherwise a dense "party network" around political, social, economic and cultural life. This period too had its regularities: the intention was discernible that an organization (e.g. a ministry) was "controlled by the party" through inclusion of the minister into the cadre list of the CC, the secretary of state into the list of PB, the deputy minister, into the list of the Secretariat, into the list of the head of department, secretary of CC etc. (Departing from this one could investigate whether this pattern was general, i.e. whether different hierarchical levels of an institution were put on cadre lists of different party organs).

The first type of change within this system was that nomenclature rights were pushed downwards (regional decentralization). This might be the case when a ministry head of department was transferred from the CC list to the list of the Budapest party committee. (For want of documents we have to use the conditional. We have already hinted at the methodological problem that we do not have regional lists).

The other type of changes was the reduction of "party ties" of given organizations. Such instances are the disappearance of ministry heads of departments from all (!) the lists.

The last phase – still belonging to the nomenclature system – of this series of changes is naturally first-degree party heterocephaly i.e. primal party ties.

Concerning individual organizations (and not the whole system) the most radical change was the abolishing of every "party tie". This could happen by:

- a) giving back the right of appointment to the organization (if it was "originally" heterocephalic): e.g. the leader of a large firm or a national daily with nationwide circulation;
- b) the right of election was given back (if "originally" the institution was autocephalic): e.g. the president of the Association of Writers.

To avoid any misunderstanding let us stress that in this phase several organizations remained under party's jurisdiction, only individual (less important) institutions were exempted.

The disintegration of the nomenclature system occurred when nomenclature right over the most important organizations – the longest held on the nomenclature lists – were abandoned. At that time everything was for sale.

To sum up we can say that there was a movement in the system toward organizations with a lower level of heterocephaly.

## **The inclusion of norm constraints**

If we look at the history of the nomenclature we can say that the arbitrariness, the pressure of the system has eased with time even if its essence remained unchanged. It would not be fortunate to call the process liberalization of the system and it could not be called democratization either. More appropriate would be to rely on Bibó's term despotic concentration of power<sup>43</sup> and designate the process as limitation of the despotic concentration of power.

We mentioned already that the communist (Bolshevik) system relied essentially on the traditional legitimacy of party bosses. At the inception of the communist-Bolshevik rule a traditional despotism prevailed (everything was allowed for leaders, there was no normative constraint, the concentration of power was high). In the "true" Kádár era (beginning with 1962-1963<sup>44</sup>) this concentration of power and traditional despotism was reduced somewhat. This restriction is due not to the appearance of some alternative countervailing political power. Much more to normative restrictions against persons and groups in power emerging from intra-party fights. The process began in small steps in 1963 and accelerated in the seventies-eighties:

### **1. Laying down the content of cadre-jurisdiction**

We do not have to overestimate the fact but it was a kind of restriction that the content of jurisdiction was explicitly enumerated in nomenclature resolutions since the early seventies. In the "relevant" 1957 and 1960 government decrees the jurisdiction of party organs was not even mentioned. Relative to this state the mere fact that these party jurisdictions were explicitly included into state regulations meant a disciplining advance.

### **2. Giving formal autonomy**

Our previous deliberations relative to need for legitimation of authority rights we analyzed in detail the motives behind the appearance of the category of taking a stand. This step could be evaluated as the first step towards autonomy of social, state and economic organizations (even if we know that party bosses of the time did not think autonomy seriously).

Another – intra-party – example of giving back autonomy in a formal sense only is the inclusion into nomenclature documents of the jurisdictions of the Central Control Committee (CCC). In 1985 CCC obtained the cadre-jurisdiction over its own members.<sup>45</sup>

### **3. Reducing individual despotism**

In party life (and in the whole political sphere) democracy had to be implemented by relying on the collective principle. In the Kádár-regime there were personnel (cadre) jurisdictions since 1963 with the

---

<sup>43</sup> István Bibó: Az európai társadalomfejlődés értelme (The meaning of European social development) in: Válogatott tanulmányok – Vol. III. Budapest, Magvető, 1986, pp. 5-124.

<sup>44</sup> On certain characteristics of the Kádár era see: István Szakadát & László Szakadát: A Magyar Kommunista Párt Politikai Bizottságának és Titkárságának egymáshoz való viszonya (Interactions between the Politburo and the Secretariat of the Communist Party of Hungary), in: Journal of Communist Studies, Fall of 1992, forthcoming.

<sup>45</sup> We have dealt from a different approach with the change in the autonomy of the Central Control Committee in István Szakadát: A párt szervezeti felépítéséről (On the organizational setup of the party), in: András Nyíró: Politikai szociológiai tanulmányok a kommunista bürokrácia vezérkaráról, p. 31.

aim of reducing the burden of leading organs. From that time through twenty years there was a certain personnel jurisdiction in the system. This personnel jurisdiction has been "weakened" through time but till it existed the personnel jurisdiction remained. The taming of the nomenclature system pointed undeniably towards "normalization".

#### **4. The appearance of procedural rules**

As we have already mentioned in 1963 the rule was established whereby if a disagreement arises around appointment of persons under personnel jurisdiction one should turn to the Secretariat. The role of arbitrage – even if only with posts belonging to personnel jurisdiction – remained part of the system. In 1985 a further norm restriction was built into the system:

"Suggestions prepared for decision or preliminary agreement should be introduced in a written form to the supervising department of the Central Committee. Suggestions should be checked by responsible organs. The result of checking – even diverging opinions – should be included into the motion."<sup>46</sup>

Let us remark that this rule appeared already in early phases of the system's functioning but initially this kind of norm constraint was "located" not with party actors but with "extraparty" leaders as it turns out from the following quotation:

"If a personnel department head thinks that the personnel decisions of the director are not conform with regulations he has to object it. The objection should be sent by the director to the leader of the supervising organ (if he does not agree with it). The objection has no delaying effect."<sup>47</sup>

#### **5. Cycle prescription**

In the 1986 CC resolution on cadre policy we find every important new element on cadre-jurisdictions. From that time a very serious norm control was introduced relative to the filling of posts:

"... Central Committee thinks it wise to introduce a practice whereby a certain range of elected and appointed party, state and mass movement posts should be filled with the same person only in two consecutive cycles. In exceptional cases the Central Committee may decide otherwise."<sup>48</sup>

Although it is evident that this resolution was easy to circumvent ("sparrows are moving to another branch" – was the popular saying during the 1987 – in our opinion important – personnel changes). It did not change the power system considerably. Nevertheless this resolution was the most serious restriction in the history of the nomenclature system.

#### **6. The request of written motions**

It appeared in nomenclature resolutions from 1974 that in personnel matters under cadre-jurisdiction (taking a stance, expressing opinion) decision should be based on written motions. Although we should

---

<sup>46</sup> A Központi Bizottság és szervei 1985. július 30-i hatásköri listája (Nomenclature of the Central Committee and its organs on 30. July of 1985).

<sup>47</sup> A Magyar Forradalmi Munkás-Paraszt Kormány 3285/1960 sz. határozata a személyzeti munkáról szóló 1050/1957 (V. 31) Korm. sz. határozat kiegészítéséről (Decree 3285/1960 of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker – Peasant Government which supplements the 1050/1957 (31.V.) government resolution on personnel work/ New Hungarian Central Archiv, IX-A-83.

<sup>48</sup> Az MSZMP KB 1986. március 18-i határozata a párt kádern munkájáról (The 18. March 1986 resolution of the CC of HSWP on cadre work of the party), in: Az MSZMP határozatai ,s dokumentumai 1985/86, Budapest, Kossuth, p. 172.

not exaggerate its impact it was undeniably a step forward relative to the "freedom" (arbitrariness) provided by oral administration.

## 7. Prescriptions concerning the review of lists

This was not an important restriction but we should mention that regulations concerning the review of nomenclatures were "introduced". Before 1975 there was no such thing although we do not think it probable that there was such a decision. In resolutions from 1975 and 1977 it was declared that CC nomenclature should be reviewed at least once in every two years. In 1981 this resolution was modified in that review was due in five year intervals (during the party congress).

## 8. The publicity of nomenclature resolutions

Although nomenclature documents had the sanctity of "hidden knowledge" and only those involved could see them, these resolutions too had some intraparty publicity. It is worthwhile to see who obtained the full list and who certain parts of it, how the range of those "knowing the secret" changed with time.

	1963	1967-68	1971	1975-77	1981	1985	1988
CC members	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
CC heads of departments	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
first secretary of Budapest PC	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
first secretaries of county PC-s	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
members of Council of Ministers	x	x	+		x	x	x
leaders of administrative organs	x	x	+		x	x	?
secretaries of ministry PC-s	x	x			x		
national leaders of mass movement concerned		x	+		x	?	?
first secretaries of county level PC-s				+	+		x
president, secretary of Central Control Committee					x	x	x
leaders of party institutions					x	x	x
secretaries in charges of party and mass movement of Budapest, county and county level PC-s					x		
president, secretary of Presidential Council					x	x	x
leaders of NCTU, CYL, PPF, NCHW					x		
president of the Office of the Council of Ministers							x

Notes:

- "x" – obtains the whole list;
- "+" – obtains the portion concerning himself;
- "?" – one cannot make out from the list what happens.

Before 1963 nomenclature resolutions did not publish the name of those who "ex officio" obtained the resolution. The first time this was indicated in the resolution of 1963. The range of the initiated included CC members, CC heads of department, regional party bosses (the members of the party elite) and also leading cadres of state administration. At that time the "commissars" of the government, that is the secretaries of ministry party committees had a much higher standing.

In resolutions from 1967 and 1968 the national leaders of mass organizations and mass movements were included. This step demonstrates the intention to incorporate into leading party bodies the representatives of different pressure groups. Another constituent of this effort was the much more serious attempt at the separation of party and "state". This attempt was discernible in the composition of the Political Committee too. At that time state (deputy prime minister, minister) positions were "left

out" from the Political Committee.<sup>49</sup> All this was expressed in the area of nomenclature by the fact that the range of those obtaining the full resolution was reduced ex officio to party bosses.

In 1975 and 1977 the range of diffusion of "excerpts" was enlarged to include all the leaders of organizations concerned. In the eighties a reversed process has started. As the system liberalized the publicity of nomenclature resolutions has increased. In 1981 the range supplied with new resolutions was the same as that of the sixties (the range of diffusion of "excerpts" was enlarged too since they were obtained not only by leaders of the organizations concerned but also by the concerned persons themselves):

In 1985 the range was further enlarged. In 1988 practically all the leaders of organizations included in the list obtained the resolution that is the degree of publicity attained its zenith.

Although by 1989 the political situation has changed considerably and the content of the nomenclature resolution has changed too, it is nevertheless characteristic that instructions were issued concerning the publicity of the resolution:

"The resolution should appear in the Primary Organization Prospectus."<sup>50</sup>

To sum up we can state that (party) publicity of nomenclature resolutions gradually increased in the Kádár era since parallel with the weakening of the constraints of the system and the concentration of rights information ought to be disseminated in wider circles and possession of "decentralized" jurisdiction was possible only with necessary information.

---

<sup>49</sup> See: István Szakadát & Gábor Kelemen: Career types and Mobilization Channels in the Communist Party of Hungary, 1945-1989, in: *Journal of Communist Studies*, Fall of 1992, forthcoming.

<sup>50</sup> Az MSZMP káderhatáskörének megszüntetése, 1989. május 8-i határozat (Resolution on the abandoning of the cadre-jurisdiction of HSWP from 8. May 1989)