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## Bureaucracy in perception of Cyril Northcote Parkinson

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# **Bureaucracy in perception** of Cyril Northcote Parkinson

Today the term "bureaucracy" suggests lack of initiative, routine and excessive adherence to rules. Often it is connected with inefficiency, red tape, or even more serious, an impersonal force dominating the lives of individuals. As it will be shown, this term has different meanings and connotations. The volume of the literature on the subject of bureaucracy and its rate of increase is as impressive as the magnitude of the phenomena which it tries to analyze and explain. Contributions to the theory of bureaucracy have come from many sides: psychology, sociology, political science, social psychology, theory of organizations, economics, business administration. Cyril Northcote Parkinson is one of the scholars who were interested in the efficient bureaucracy and efficient administration. His interpretation of "bureaucracy" will be introduced in the second part of this study, because at first the evolution of the term "bureaucracy" will be shown.

The word "bureaucracy" steams from the French word bureau used to refer a writing desk, an office, a workplace, where officials worked, and a Greek suffix -kratia or -kratos denoting power, rule<sup>1</sup>. This term came into use shortly before the French Revolution of 1789, and from there rapidly spread to other countries. Probably a French economist Jean Claude Marie Vincent de Gournay was its inventor. In the bureaus he saw the forth or even the fifth form of the government which he called bureaucracy. He used to say that in France there was an illness called "bureaumania"<sup>2</sup>. Bureaucracy for him meant imperfect government of officials who wanted to cross their own roles. De Gournay started the concept that is alive to these days – a pejorative connotation of the term. On the other hand, in a letter of July 1,

See different definitions of bureaucracy: [online] <a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/serch?q=bureaucracy">http://dictionary.reference.com/serch?q=bureaucracy</a>, retrieved on 24.09.2007.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> E. Littre, Dictionnaire de la langue française, Paris, 1959, vol. I, pp. 1315–1316.

1764, French Baron de Grimm declared: "We are obsessed by the idea of regulation, and our Master of Requests refuses to understand that there is an infinity of things in a great state with which a government should not concern itself". In another letter of July 15, 1765, Baron de Grimm also wrote: "The real spirit of the laws in France is that bureaucracy of which the late Monsieur de Gournay used to complain so greatly: here the offices, clerks, secretaries, inspectors and intendants are not appointed to benefit the public interest, indeed the public interest appears to have been established so that offices might exist".

On a large scale it was started to talk about bureaucracy in the 19-th century. This term was ubiquitous in Germany and there bureaucracy was a synonym of disadvantages and defects. For example, Karl Marx saw bureaucracy as a disturbing element of the modern society. In Marx's theory, bureaucracy rarely creates new wealth by itself, but rather controls, coordinates and governs the production, consumption and distribution of wealth. The bureaucracy as a social stratum derives its income from the appropriation of part of the social surplus product of human labor. Wealth is appropriated by the bureaucracy by the law through taxes, tributes, fees, levies, licensing, etc. Bureaucracy is the cost of society. Of course its cost may be accepted as it makes social order possible and maintains it by enforcing the rule of law<sup>5</sup>. Nevertheless there is a constant conflict connected with this cost, because it has the huge effect on the distribution of incomes. All producers try to get the maximum return from their product and minimize administrative costs. Typically, in epochs of strong economic growth, bureaucracies proliferate, and when economic growth declines, a fight breaks out to cut back bureaucratic costs. Central to Marxist's concept of socialism is the idea of worker's self - management, which assumes the internalization of morality and self – discipline among people that would make bureaucratic supervision and control redundant, together with a drastic reorganization of the division of labor in society. Bureaucracies emerge to mediate conflicts of interest on the basis of law, but if those conflicts of interest disappear, bureaucracies will be redundant<sup>6</sup>.

Describing bureaucracy as a defective official corps was widely adopted in France. It was Honore de Balzac who contributed to such reception with

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Baron de Grimm and Diderot, Correspondence litteraire, philosophique et critique, 1753–69, 1813, vol. 4, p. 146, 508 – cited by M. Albrow, Bureaucracy, Pall Mall Press, London, 1970, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibidem, p.16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> As far as Marx conception of bureaucracy is concerned, see N. P. Mouzelis, *Organisation and Bureaucracy: An Analysis of Modern Theories*, published by Aldine de Gruynter, New York, 1967, pp. 8–14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See Marx comments on the state bureaucracy in his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, [online] <www.marxist.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/index.htm>, retrieved on 25.09.2007.

his book Bureaucracy published in 1837. This pejorative, dysfunctional understanding of bureaucracy started to be adopted by different languages and countries. For example in England this term came into use in the first part of 19-th century. The term "bureaucracy" had different synonyms in different countries and many of them were of course pejorative, like French paperasserie and fonctionnarisme, Russian kancelaryzm, German Vielschreiberei and Vielregiererei, Polish oficjantyzm and urzędomania. English "red tape" was a derisive form for the excessive regulation or rigid conformity to formal rules that was considered redundant or bureaucratic and hinders or prevents action or decision - making. It was and it is usually applied to government, bat can also be applied to other forms organizations. Red tape generally includes the filling in unnecessary paperwork, having multiple people or committees approve any decision, obtaining of unnecessary licenses and various roles that make conducting one's affairs more difficult and slower. The origins of the term are obscure, but probably they are connected with the 17-th and 18-th century English practice of binding official papers and documents with red tape.

It is worth mentioning that modern sociology after Max Weber's conception of bureaucracy, tries to use the term "bureaucracy" in a not pejorative way<sup>8</sup>. Bureaucracy frequently becomes a concept in sociology and political science referring to the way that execution and enforcement of rules are organized. According to Max Weber, living in the top level of Prussian totalitarism, four structural concepts are central to any definition of that term:

- 1. A well defined division of administrative labor among persons and offices.
- 2. A personal system with consistent patterns of recruitment and stable linear careers.
- 3. A hierarchy among offices, such that the authority and status are differentially distributed among actors.
- 4. Formal and informal networks that connect organizational actors to one another through flows of information and patterns of cooperation<sup>9</sup>.

Bureaucracy is the administrative structure of any large organization, public or private. Ideally bureaucracy is connected with impersonal roles of bureaucrats, recruitment by competence and fixed salaries.

It is significant that it is sometimes forgotten that the term "bureaucracy" is very similar to the term "administration". Sometimes these terms cross

 $<sup>^7</sup>$  H. Balzac,  $Bureaucracy,\ 1937,\ [online]$  <www.intratext.com./IXT/ENG0807/>, retrieved on 24.09.2007.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> More about Max Weber's perception of bureaucracy see: E. Sokalska, *Biurokracja jako metoda funkcjonowania nowoczesnej administracji w ujęciu Maksa Webera*, "Studia Prawnoustrojowe" 2003, nr 2, pp. 115–124.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> See [online] <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/bureaucracy">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/bureaucracy</a>, retrieved on 3.07.2007.

with each other or even cover. The term "administration" is even much older than the term "bureaucracy". It steams from the Latin word ministrare, which means service. Connecting with prefix ad- the word ministrare started to mean 'manage'. "Administration" has many meanings. It can be treated as the management of any of any office, business or organization; as the duty or duties of administrator in applying the executive functions of the position; as the function of a political state in exercising its governmental duties; as the management by the administrator of such duties; as a body of administrators, especially in government; as the period of service of a governmental administrator or body of governmental administrators; as any group entrusted with executive or administrative powers; as an act of dispensing (administration of the sacraments)<sup>10</sup>. Andrew Dunsire accepted fifteen different meanings of that term<sup>11</sup>.

It shouldn't be forgotten that to the term "public administration" is not exactly so far different from the term "private administration", but this term is rather connected with administration of the government, and public affairs. "Public administration" can be broadly described as the implementation and study of government policy. It is linked to pursuing the public goods by enhancing civil society and social justice.

Undeniably bureaucracy as well as public administration existed in imperial Rome and China and in the national monarchies. "Administration" understood functionally should have existed in the different historical types of states, but not every kind of organizing activity of the state could have meant "administration". Literature pays attention to the fact that only such organizing activity of the state can be called administration, which is conducted by bureaucratic system and includes immense range of the social cases and is regulated by general system of law.

Problems of bureaucracy and public administration were dealt with by many scholars and thinkers, even if they didn't use these terms. Thinkers such Plato, Aristotle and Machiavelli wrote about the moral and political nature of problems connected with organization of public administration. Machiavelli wrote his book *The Prince*, which offered the guideline for European rulers. The national state was the reigning model of the administrative organization from the 17-th century in Western Europe. These states needed an organization for the implementation of law and order. The need for expert civil servants with the knowledge about taxes, administration statistics and military grew. In the 18-th century Frederick William I of Prussia establi-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Dictionary.com Unambridged (v 1.1). Based on the Random House Unambridged Dictionary, Random House, Inc.,2006, [online] <a href="http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/%20administration">http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/%20administration</a>, retrieved on 27.09.2007.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Administration. The World and Science, London, 1973, p. 29.

shed an economic and social school of thought (cameralism) in Prussia to reform a society. Johann Heinrich Gottlob Justi, the most well known professor of cameralism, linked cameralism and the idea of natural law with each other, but the leading public administration scholar at that time – Christian Wolff-wasn't a cameralist.

Lorenz von Stein is considered the founder of the science of public administration. He was since 1885 a professor in Vienna. He applied new opinions concerning the science of public administration, which was considered to be a form of administrative law. His innovative opinions were connected with the point that the science of public administration was the integrating science of several disciplines, like political sciences, sociology, public finance and administrative law. According to Lorenz von Stein the science of public administration was an interaction between theory and practice. He considered the public administration as leading practically, but the theory had to form the base. For him public administration should strive to adopt a specific method.

It shouldn't be forgotten that a significant person who considered public administration was Woodrow Wilson in the United States. In 1887 he wrote The Study of Administration, in which he considered four modern concepts: separation between politics and the public administration; consideration of the government form a commercial perspective; comparative analysis between en political and private organization and political schemes; reaching effective management by training civil servants and assess their quality. The separation between politics and the public administration, which Wilson argued, has been the subject of debates for a long time, and different points of view on this subject differentiate periods in the science of public administration. Later Luther Gulick<sup>12</sup> and Lyndall Urwick integrated the ideas of earlier theorists like Henri Fayol into a comprehensive theory of administration. They believed that the thoughts of Fayol offered a systematic treatment of management of companies as for administrative sciences. They didn't separate the two disciplines, but they believed that the administration, which exceeds the borders between the private and the public sector, could exist. Later, the science of administration would focus primarily on the government organizations<sup>13</sup>.

William Niskanen inaugurated in 1971 an influential new stream of rational choice analysis in public administration. In his "budget-maximalizing" model argued that rational bureaucracies will always and everywhere

More about his conception see: B. R. Fry, Mastering Public Administration: From Max Weber to Dwight Waldo, Chatham House Publishers, New Jersey, 1989, pp. 73–88.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> About development of education in public administration see: F. C. Mosher, American Public Administration: Past, Present, Future, University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, 1975, pp. 11–49.

seek to increase their budgets, thereby contributing strongly to state growth. He took a part in the US Council of Economic Advisors under President Ronald Regan. Niskanen's model provided a strong underpinning for the worldwide trend towards cutbacks of public spending. His approach was critiqued by a range of authors who argued that official's motivations are more public interest oriented.

Cyril Northcote Parkinson was a naval historian and author of more than sixty books. The most famous of his works – Parkinson's Law – was his best seller, which led him to be also considered as an important scholar in the field of public administration. He was born in 1909 in Barnard Castle, Durham in England. He was the youngest son of William Edward Parkinson who was an artist and principal of York School of Arts and Crafts. The young Parkinson attended St. Peter's School in York, then Emmanuel College at the University of Cambridge, where he was graduated in 1932 and received his Bachelor of Arts degree. Parkinson developed an interest in naval history, which he pursued when the Pellow family gave him access to family papers at the recently established National Maritime Museum, allowing him to write his first book Edward Pellow, Viscount Exmouth, Admiral of the Red in 1934. In 1935, as a graduate student at King's College in London, he wrote his thesis on War in the Eastern Seas, 1793-1815, which was awarded the Julian Corbett Prize in Naval History for 1935 and Parkinson earned a Ph.D. in history.

As a graduate student, Parkinson in 1934 joined the Territorial Army as a member of the 22<sup>nd</sup> London Regiment and commanded an infantry company at the jubilee of King George V. Then he commanded an infantry unity of the Cambridge University Officers' Training Corps. In 1938 he became senior history master at Blundell's School in Tiverton and when Great Britain entered the II-nd World War, Parkinson was an instructor at the Royal Naval College in Dartmouth. In 1940 he was commissioned an Army captain in the Queen's Royal Regiment, which led to a range of staff and military teaching positions in Britain. During the war he attained the rank of major as a member of the Queen's Royal Regiment of the British Army. It was during his wartime service, working in training and administration for the British War Office and the Royal Air Force, that his inspiration for *Parkinson's Law* was born<sup>14</sup>.

Demobilized from the Army in 1945 Cyril Northcote Parkinson was an appointed lecturer in history at the University Of Liverpool. In 1950 he was appointed Raffles professor of history at the newly established University of Malaya in Singapore, where he initiated a series of important historical

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> More about C. N. Parkinson's life, education and military career see: C.M. Turnbull, "Parkinson, Cyril Northcote (1909–1993)" in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2004.

monographs on the history of Malaya, publishing the first of the series in 1960. After serving as visiting professor at Harvard University in 1958 and the University of Illinois and the California University, Berkeley in 1959–1960, he resigned his post in Singapore at the University of Malaya to become an independent writer. To avoid a high taxation in Britain, he settled at St. Martin's, Guernsey (the Channel Islands). His writings from this period included a series of historical novels about the Napoleonic era, connected with a fictional naval officer from Guernsey – Richard Delency. At the age of 83 Parkinson died in 1993 in Canterbury.

In addition to his career as a professor of history, Parkinson was a prolific writer and published a number of books prior to releasing Parkinsons Law and Other Studies in Administration. His expertise in naval history translated into the bulk of that work, and he was highly regarded as one of the foremost naval historians in Great Britain and throughout the fading British Empire. The publication of *Parkinson's Law and Other Studies in Administration* by Houghton Mifflin Company in Boston in 1957 marked a somewhat new direction for the historian. Next year almost the same book was published by John Murray in Great Britain with a changed title: *Parkinson's Law or the Pursuit of Progress*<sup>15</sup>. Like Peter Briemlow says, Parkinson "wrote not in jargon or algebra but in brilliantly readable English. He published not in tomes but in terse essays, the most famous less than nine pages long. He used historical and military analogies, but then he had actually been a historian and a soldier. He was scathingly witty, so much so that some readers assumed that his purpose was only satirical" 16.

Cyril N. Parkinson's the most famous work was a book that expanded upon a humorous article that he had first published in the *Economist* magazine in November 1955, satirizing government bureaucracies. This collection of short studies explained the inevitability of bureaucratic expansion, arguing that "work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion" 17. This was the source of the maxim "work expands to fill the time available". For Parkinson general recognition of the fact that work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion "is the fact shown in the proverbial phrase "It is the busiest man who has time to spare". Thus an elderly lady of leisure can spend the entire day in writing and dispatching a postcard to her niece at Bognor Regis. An hour will be spent in finding the postcard, another in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> There are many many mistakes in publications connected with C. N. Parkinson as far as the title of his most popular book is concerned. The author of this work (Edyta Sokalska) owns the first printing of Parkinson's book and shows the proper title.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> P. Brimelow, How do you cure injelitance? (C. Northcote Parkinson, the father of Parkinson's Law), published on vdare.com on March 28, 2003, [online] <www.vdare.com/pb/parkinson\_review.htm>, retrieved on 22.08.2007.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Cyril Northcote Parkinson, Parkinson's Law and other studies in Administration, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1957, p. 33.

hunting for spectacles, half an hour in search for the address, an hour and a quarter in composition, and twenty minutes in deciding whether or not to take an umbrella when going to the mailbox in the next street. The total effort that would occupy a busy man for three minutes all told may in this fashion leave another person prostrate after a day of doubt, anxiety, and toil" 18. Then he assumes: "granted that work (and especially paperwork) is thus elastic in its demands on time, it is manifest that there need be little or no relationship between the work to be done and the size of the staff to which it may be assigned. A lack of real activity does not, of necessity, result in leisure. A lack of occupation is not necessarily revealed by a manifest idleness. The thing to be done swells in importance and complexity in a direct ratio with the time to be spent. This fact is widely recognized, but less attention has been paid to its wider implications, more especially in the field of public administration. Politicians and taxpayers have assumed (with occasional phases of doubt) that a rising total in the number of civil servants must reflect a growing volume of work to be done. Cynics, in questioning this belief, have imagined that the multiplication of officials must have left some of them idle or all of them able to work for shorter hours. But this is the matter in which faith and doubt seem equally misplaced" 19.

To be more explicit, this case shows that work expands as to fill the time available, but many other examples were also given by Parkinson. Most of the population assumes that a growing civil service reflects a growing workload. Parkinson insists that situation is much different and he uses the following arguments. Civil servant is overworked. He has only a few options: he may leave, share his work with colleagues as the same level or appoint two juniors. It is important to note that he has to appoint two juniors, because a single subordinate would very quickly assume almost equal status with A in their own minds as well as others and would therefore be a rival. This is also a reason against sharing the work with someone on the same level. So now, assuming A didn't leave, we have A and two subordinates B and C. Very soon either B or C will complain about being overworked and two more subordinates to them will be appointed. Another two will have to be appointed to keep the other original subordinate happy. There is a situation in which seven people is doing the work of one man. All will be busy passing paperwork or e-mails between themselves, correcting each other grammar, passing decisions in different directions, and wanting someone else to take the blame. Person A is now reduced to management, something he may not be happy with, in fact he may have had his level of incompetence enforced on him.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Ibidem, p. 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Ibidem, p. 34.

Parkinson had a few variations of his idea. One being that in deciding on capital projects the time taken to reach the decision will be inversely important time to the cost of the scheme. For example, building a multi-million pound tent in London goes through on the nod, but deciding what shape the ash trays will be will invoke a month-long project. He theorises that when the costs go way beyond the incomes of those deciding they switch off, after all what's another million here or there. When amounts are closer to those they are used to in their own lives they are more willing to debate over a few thousand<sup>20</sup>.

Parkinson's Law states that bureaucracy expands all the time which was based on extensive experience in the British Civil Service. The scientific observations which contributed to the law's development included British overseas empire declined in importance but the number of employees at the Colonial Office increased. According to Cyril N. Parkinson, this situation is motivated by two forces: "An official wants to multiply subordinates not rivals, and officials make work for each other"21. He also noted that the total of those employed inside a bureaucracy rose by 5-7% per year irrespective of any variation in the amount of work to be done.

It is noticeable that Parkinson also proposed a rule about the efficiency of administrative councils. He defined a coefficient of inefficiency with the number of members as the main determining variable. In his essay The short list of principles of selection a writer shows one of the main aspects of well working public administration – the problem of selection adequate people to its staff. A proper choice of the right personnel should be really taken into account by administrative boards<sup>22</sup>. Administration needs proper people, with proper personality and education.

Parkinson's Law – "work expands to fill the time available" is known as his first law. But several other ideas have been attributed to him. Parkinson's Second Law stands that expenditures rise to meet income. Writer's discussion of the dynamics underlying the historic expansionary tendencies of government budgets, reasoning as always from the self-interested behaviour of individuals, concluded that programs cannot be reduced piecemeal. Only across-the-board cuts will work.

Formulated in 1962, Parkinson's Third Law states that expansion means complexity, and complexity decay. This idea defied the consensus of the day to an extent that is easily forgotten. Economists believed in economies of scale. Now the advantages of restructuring, entrepreneurship and decentralization are generally acknowledged, even if not always applied. But Parkinson's attitude still places him athwart the tide. For example, he is opposed to Britain's membership in the European Community.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Parkinson's Law, created on 5.06.2001, [online] <www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A563843>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> C. N. Parkinson, Parkinson's Law or The Pursuit of Progress, John Murray, London, 1958, p. 5.  $$^{22}$  C. N. Parkinson, Parkinson's  $Law...and\ Other\ Studies...,\ pp.\ 45–58.$ 

The other Parkinson's idea is known as the Law of Triviality: the time spent on any item of a committee's agenda will be in inverse proportion to the sum of money involved. Parkinson was interested in committee behaviour and examining the history of British Cabinet he argued the most effective size for any meeting is five. Unfortunately interest groups pressing for representation inevitably expand a committee in stages to twenty, at which point conversation will not be efficient, because members will stand to make themselves heard and then will start giving speeches and the useful members will be making plans to settle outstanding issues latter. In the Law of Delay, which means delay is the deadliest form of denial, Parkinson analysis the incentives that inspire negativism in officials.

There are more ideas connected with the work of bureaucrats attributed to Parkinson, for example:

- If there is a way to delay important decision the good bureaucracy, public or private, will find it,
- The number of people in any working group tends to increase regardless of the amount of work to be done,
- The progress of science varies inversely with the number of journals published,
  - Data expands to fill the space available,
- The time spent in a meeting on an item is inversely proportional to its value (up to limit),
- An enterprise employing more than 1000 people becomes a self-perpetuating empire, creating so much internal work that it no longer needs any contact with the outside world.

It should be underlined that a vital Parkinson contribution to the field of administration studies was his diagnosis of why certain organizations suddenly deteriorate: the rise of authority of individuals with unusually high combinations of incompetence and jealousy ("injelitance"). For the writer "the injelitant individual is easily recognizable from the persistence with which he struggles to eject all those abler than himself, as also from his resistance to the appointment or promotion of anyone who might be prove abler in course of time. He dares not say, »Mr. Asterisk is too able«, so he says, »Asterisk? Clever perhaps-but is he sound? I incline to prefer Mr. Cypher«. He dares not say, »Mr Asterisk makes me feel small«, so he says, »Mr. Cypher appears to me to have the better judgment«. So Mr. Cypher is promoted and Mr Asterisk goes elsewhere. The central administration gradually fills up with people stupider than the chairman, director and manager. There will soon be an actual competition in stupidity, people pretending to be even more brainless than they are"23. Organizations should be cured of injelities spontaneously and fast.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 81.

It is worth mentioning that Cyril N. Parkinson's thoughts are well known in Poland. There are different translations of his most popular books and studies<sup>24</sup>. One of the Polish promoters of Parkinson's ideas was J.S. Langrod. These issues were also present in the writings of J. Kurnal, A. Łopatka, F. Ryszka and T. Drewnowski.

Today many of us regard bureaucracy as a dirty word, suggesting red tape, inefficiency and officiousness. Of course bureaucracies can develop these features, especially if authorities highly centralized. However bureaucracies are better for some tasks than others. Maybe bureaucracies are not well-suited to industries in which technology change rapidly. Cyril N. Parkinson did not give a complete guide to management. His primary focus seems to be rather bureaucratic than commercial. But in fact what he has to say is applicable to any kind of organization. Parkinson's initially satirical laws of business and administration maybe in ten or twenty years will be regarded not purely as humorous but as serious statements on how business was conducting at the time of writing. The inevitability of bureaucratic expansion that he predicted really takes place these days.

#### Streszczenie

Niniejsza praca jest próbą przedstawienia studiów Cyrila N. Parkinsona, który jest jednym z uczonych zajmujących się zagadnieniami związanymi z prawidłowym funkcjonowaniem administracji publicznej. Najpierw dokonano analizy terminu "biurokracja", przedstawiono jego ewolucję oraz podejścia do tegoż problemu w literaturze. Biurokracja nierozerwalnie związana była z administracją publiczną, należało więc zaprezentować jej charakter z punktu widzenia historii administracji.

Parkinson jest uważany za uczonego, który wniósł istotny wkład w dziedzinę administracji publicznej. Najbardziej znane wydaje się być tzw. prawo Parkinsona, według którego praca rozszerza się proporcjonalnie do czasu wyznaczonego do jej wykonania. Prawo to odnosi się do organizacji formalnych typu biurokratycznego i oznacza, że jeżeli urzędnik ma określony czas na wykonanie danego zadania, zadanie to zostanie wykonane w możliwie jak najdalszym terminie. Z pozoru satyryczne i pełne humoru zasady, które określa się jako prawa Parkinsona, dotyczące funkcjonowania administracji publicznej oraz biznesu, w rzeczywistości są pełnym krytyki oraz troski spojrzeniem na sposób działania urzędników państwowych i samorządowych. Nieuchronność rozrostu aparatu biurokratycznego – jaki przepowiedział Cyril N. Parkinson – zaznacza się niestety w większości współczesnych aparatów państwowych.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> For example different editions of Prawo Parkinsona albo w pogoni za postępem.