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Clientelism and Slovenian Public Administration Reform

Abstract: Since disintegration of former Yugoslavia, Slovenia applied series of reforms in all spheres of life, including public administration. The main reform was contracted on introduction of modern trends in public administration. The article discusses main reforms of Slovenian public administration and their efficiency to change the bureaucratic system into an effective modern one. However, the article aims to understand modern Slovenian public administration within the elitist approach, which seems to explain certain malfunctions of Slovenian public administration after these reforms.

Keywords: Slovenia, public administration, bureaucracy, elite, post-communist reforms

Introduction

Despite it seems that reforms of public administration are a fact all around the world, there are countries where these reforms are much more needed and it seems that they are also more systematically observed due to different reasons. One of such cases is Slovenia and reforms of its public administration. Other countries were interested in Slovenian public administration reform (same can be argued for other Central and Eastern European countries), due to two main reasons. The first one is connected with democratization process in former socialist/communist countries. The second reason is mainly connected to the European Union, which wanted Slovenia to harmonise its public administration with "European standards of public administration." Technically speaking, Slovenia fulfilled the criteria of professionalism, low level of corruption, high level of transparency and modernisation and was thus accepted in the European Union in 2004.

However, from national perspective, the situation seems to be much different and some questions on basic principles of successfulness of public administration reform arise over and over again. Series of different scandals, questionable application of rule of law into the practice and nepotism seems to jeopardise the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of public administration. At the same time such behaviour systematically reduces trust in Slovenian public administration.

In this manner the article defines main concepts of administrative elitism and presents the main reforms of Slovenian public administration in the sense of lack of serious reform activities.

Public Administration Reforms

Public administration reforms are constant in the modern world. They can be mainly connected to the question of "right way" to rule and manage the state. The "right way" is strongly connected to the historical time, the level of development and self-perception of certain political system. Within the continental tradition of western democratic countries the predominant role in the history of public administration belongs to so-called Weberian bureaucracy, which is hierarchical, structured, law based production of services for the state. Citizens are as objects for realization of state needs and public administration is a production process, which supports state goals. In the times of public finances crisis (which seems to be permanent and more connected to politics than to public administration) after the second world war, states started to search for a new model of administration, which would reduce budgetary expenses in every possible way and field. In this situation, the system of innovative practices, mainly based on privatisation of public services, higher level of public administration autonomy within the legal provisions, improved treatment of citizens in administrative processes, etc, creating a system of positive practices, which was proclaimed as a *New Public Management* (NPM). The latter was a prevailing reform approach, which started in 1960s and was slowly developing to the level as achieved in the mid 1990s (Lane, 1995, Lane 2000, Osborene, Geabler 1993). In 1990s, states started to realize that NPM itself was not systematically helping to more competitive, effective, efficient, economic or ethical public administration or public services. In this manner administrative science, together with politics and international organizations (such as UN or OECD) started to search for new approaches such as "good governance" (see Klimovský 2010), "creative governance," "participatory governance" and "public governance." The main characteristics of all named approaches, is that they are strengthening certain aspects of the NPM as more important than the others (usually they support more participation of citizens, or they add transparency as one of crucial elements). For instance, participatory governance demands a higher involvement of citizens into governing processes. In any cases, one can say that NPM is still more about managing state affairs in benefit of citizens and the state, while governance is more about governing the state affairs with a higher inclusion of citizens. However, these models got their real opposition in the so-called neo-Weberianism/neo-Weberian state (NWS). NWS is based on the fact that a state cannot be treated as an enterprise, but one has to take into consideration its specific nature. NWS suggests a need for a strong role of the state, which is responsible for providing public goods. However, at the same time NWS takes over certain characteristics introduced by NPM and different approaches towards modern governance, such as result orientation, stronger involvement of citizens in decision-making processes, need to serve to citizens (see Drachsler in Dunn, Miller 2007: 352). Dunn and Miller (2007) argue that NWS is more of a criticism of NPM than the answer to overlooked problems in NPM approach, which are not just a question of post-communist countries. Nevertheless, some authors (e.g. Kuhlmann, Bogumil, Grohs 2008) are offering arguments that, even in established democracies with long bureaucratic tradition, NPM failed to change the nature of public administration in general.

Elitism

Etzioni-Halevy defines elites as a group of privileged people "differentiated from the public by the extant of their power and influence" (Etzioni-Halevy 1997). In this manner, elite is a group of people who occupy the most important and powerful places or professions in different social sectors in modern industrial societies. Elites are characterized by various overlapping resources including power (which can be political, economic or cultural), organizational, personal and symbolic resources, interconnection, ownership of assets, etc. (see Putnam 1976, Dogan 2003, Etziony-Halevy 1997 and Coenen-Hunter 2004). Pareto defines elite as a class with the highest index of their activity, but otherwise this class is so named to point out the inequality of talents, which individuals in every sphere of social life possess, but it is also a starting point or basis for further defining and researching the power elite (Pareto in Bottomore 1994).

We can distinguish between governing elite and power elite (Mills 1965). Governing elite was formed after the collapse of political regime characterized by public discussion about alternative choices and the existence of public and coherent parties at nation-wide level and other autonomous organizations, which connect lower and middle levels of authorities with upper ones, where decisions are taken. Such structures were a basis where power elite was formed (see Mills 1965) as a group of individuals having in common different interests, like the control of means of production and means of violence. The power elite has increased due to decline of professional politicians and due to the power of corporate managers, what could only occurred because of the lack of skilled and independent public administration or stakeholders. This is not the dominant political group consisting of the hereditary nobility, the members of this class come from the old and the new upper class or local metropolitan cities (Mills 1965).

The power elite, which consists of three fractions: the corporate elite, the military elite and the political elite, it is composed by individuals who, beside of their wealth, occupy the most important places in large and crucial institutions, which are an indispensable base of power, governance, wealth and social prestige (Mills 1965). At the same time, these institutions are the main mean of implementing the authority for the acquisition and retention of higher forms of social prestige. Institutional means of power give individuals the possibility of governance and control. Not all the power is centralized in such institutions and shall not be invoked simply by using their assets, but only in these institutions of government and with their help, the power is more or less stable and important, as well as wealth which is obtained and preserved through these institutions (Mills 1965). The situation of individuals, who form the power elite allows them to be in upper position in hierarchy in comparison with other (average) holding positions where decisions are made with long-term consequences (Mills 1965).

Elite differentiate from the masses since they control crucial resources, resulting as a privilege (Mann 1986). However, elites become more differentiated, more open, flexible and especially more dispersed. Keller (1991) claims that in modern society "there is not only one homogeneous ruling class, but the top of society consists of several strategic elite" and in this context refers to a new phenomenon *stratarchy*,

which can be understood as a coexistence of multiple hierarchical arrangement of different sectors (Keller 1991). These elites are responsible for a successful functioning of various social sectors. Therefore, there are many different elites in relation to the functions they perform and by their functional specialized field run by them (Keller 1991). Field et al. (1990) also claim that "strategic elites" are individuals who, on the basis of their strategic positions in various major organizations, are able to permanently and significantly influence national policies.

Administrative elites are, despite often underestimated, one of the most important elites, given the fact that they are considered as the highest rank civil servants, who are involved in policy-making and policy-implementing processes (Bauer, Pitschel and Studinger 2010; Warrington 2008). Despite they are usually hidden behind political elite (composed of politicians of legislative and executive branch), they are extremely powerful due to their ability to suggest policy solutions and support them by arguments, which might be selectively chosen.

Social Capital or Corruption and Clientelism

Social capital is considered as a phenomenon on personal level and as the possibility of individuals to gain benefits with mobilization of contacts through membership in different social structures and networks (see Bourdieu 1985). At this point, Frič argues, that the use of this word in public discourse is connected with the increase of conspiracy theories about the hidden misconduct of national elites. Public do not trust these elites and see them as they only pretend their responsibility and accountability (Frič 2008). Some authors, Putnam (1976) for instance, see social capital as a key factor for successful operation of political institutions, causing virtuous circle and positive atmosphere, which is reflected in high level of trust and willingness to cooperate. On the contrary bad an inefficient work of public institutions causes vicious circle and thus a negative capital (della Porta in Tomšič 2002). All this contributes to the emergence of corruption and clientelism, which is opposite to accountability. In this case leaders and members (elites) of informal networks, which can become informal centres of power, abuse their informal relations for gain personal privilege and achieve goals. This strategy of using informal relations (through friends, relatives or acquaintances) to prevail the disorganization of the formal institutions is still very popular in the (post)communist countries (Frič 2008).

We can speak about corruption when in return for money or any other illegal awards, an individual acts in a way to privilege the giver of these awards and bribes, damaging this institutions, organizations or the state (Friderich 1972). In democratic regimes corruption is perceived as a negative phenomenon, acting against the principles of social equality, since it restricts the access to public goods and services of weaker groups, who not have resources and opportunities for bribes (Tomšič 2003). Despite globalization, development of the country, its culture, political and economic system, morality, values, constant attempts of regulation of economic and political society etc. corruption is widespread and deeply rooted in many countries and spheres of

society. In turn this can lead to emergence of informal centres of power, centralization of power and clientelism. Clientelism is a type of "principal-agent relationship" which involves at least two to three actors: a principal, a client and sometimes an agent who is an interfering party (Brinkerhoff, Goldsmith 2002; Muno 2010). The clientelist exchange is done openly and contravenes neither a legal provision nor a custom (Muno 2010). If the exchange goes counter to public sentiments, it still qualifies as clientelism although the public disapprove it. If such an allocation breaks the legal provision and is done secretly, clientelism turns into corruption.

Corruption and clientelism have a negative impact on the society as a whole, damaging social cohesion and causing social erosion. With this, principles of freedom and equality, which are fundamental principles and rules of the political management of the state, are violated (Kaase and Newton 1999). Both, those who are offering and receiving benefits in the system of corruption, violate moral and legal norms and destroy bases of democratic society and the rule of law (Dobovšek 2004).

Informal Networks in Post-Socialist Countries

The concept of (informal) networks in post-communist countries has a negative connotation and is associated with egoistic power elites (Ganev 1998). Post-communist societies and societies which recently underwent the process of transition are at higher risk of clientelism or corruption (Muno 2010). Zver et al. (2005) believe that in transition countries, cultural trends from the past, which may act as a contra culture, and may constitute a negation of modern or post-modern culture, are still present. They are shown in the rate of rejection of democracy, in adopting autocracy, expertocracy in the system of privileges, state control, tax frauds, corruption, etc. However, Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (2002) point out that also stable democracy is not save from clientelism, which is able to adapt and exist in new forms. Dobovšek and Minič (2005) note that not only clinetelism but also corruption is present in societies and countries with a long parliamentary tradition, where we can also detach corruption of politicians, political groups and other entities that have an impact on top political elites. If we try to apply these elements to post-communist countries, which have gone through the process of transition, we can claim that such countries (societies) face the negative image of informal networks as they are seen and perceived as societies with high levels of corruption and where public administration institutions, political, economic system etc. are under the influence of informal networks. We distinguish three types of them, which have an undermining impact on responsibility of formal institutions and elites in post-communist societies, these are: *Predatory Networks* (Moore 1978; Levy 1981), *Redistributive Networks* (Šrubař 1991), *Helping Networks* (Uslander 2004).

Informal networks are deeply rooted in post-communist societies and thus constitute a parallel power structures taking care of any formal requirements. Frič (2008) states that "it is a "public secret" that all important public interest decisions are made within informal networks to their members benefit." Post-communist countries are a "paradise" for informal networks, which were inherited from communism or were

formed later, under new regimes, they are perceived as parasitic phenomenon in public administration and society, draining the resources needed for society's development (Tucker in Frič 2008). By this, many rent seeking elite networks in political, economic and administrative areas were formed with a negative influence on society, which control government ministries or the governments of individual countries. Róna-Tas (2008) claims that informal networks have also taken control of the privatization of public property since government institutions in post-communist countries are often made into private agencies under the influence of informal networks.

Referring to Bauer, Pitschel and Studinger (2010) one can argue that the main problem in the post-communist public administration is the too strong linkage between political elite and upper layers of public administration. This linkage between both elites can be observed as a high level of trespassing between both fields.

Main Reforms of Slovenian Public Sector Since Independence in 1991

In years between 1991 and 1999 only few institutional structures and practices were replaced. After the disintegration from Yugoslavia, Slovenian public administration continued with basic governmental duties necessary for the functioning of the state. In this way also some new necessary structures of public administration were made (for example: customs offices at borders with Croatia). However, at that time Slovenian public administration was much more burdened by supporting political and emerging economic elite and by preserving their socialist bureaucratic structures.

In first years after the independence strategies for reforms were prepared. They were mainly based on principles of new public management as a prevailing approach in public administration reforms of that time. The preparation period for reforms of public administration was quite long and also demanding. The result of was the scheme of organizational structure of new Slovenian public administration and a time line needed for reforms to be implemented. Due to the accession to European Union in 1997 and demands of administrative environment for efficiency of public administration and a better quality of public services, the reform of public administration became urgent and it has been ongoing since then (see Trpin 1998). The role of public administration was important in the process of Slovenian accession to the EU since Slovenia needed to develop and adapt the administration system able to work in the framework of European administration integration (the so called common European administrative space).

During the years 1996–1999 the reform was based on the implementation of two main goals written in previously mentioned strategy: increase the effectiveness of public administration and adjust its structure and functions to the needs of uniting with European community (Brezovšek and Haček 2002). However, this was rather a demanding job due to the lack of monitoring and evaluation of reform activities, which are to be crucial in the sense of improving.

The core institution for reforms' implantation was the Office for organization and development of government, which combined four different sectors: sector for

organization and activities of public administration, sector for normative activities, sector for inspectors and governmental academy. The Office represents a strategic and performing part of the whole public reform process later on.

During 1996–1999 period when the process of decentralization of decision making and organizational structures started, a strive for professionalization was obvious, the inclusion of improvement of vertical and horizontal coordination of work happened and much clearer division of work between parliament and government was seen. In those years also the status of para-state institutions was clarified. Next to this, a change in legislative part of reforms started as well. There were first changes in administrative legislation such as Law on Government, Law on public sector, Law on public agencies, Law on civil servants and legislation on local self-governance. According to the previous legislation in this area, more clear relations between institutions were defined as well as their competences and work control possibilities (Bohinc 2001).

However, the European Commission, in its 1998 annual report on Slovenian pre-accession reforms stated: "Slovenia has made progress in the construction of some governmental institutions, but it still had not made enough progress in legislative area and jurisdiction. Slovenia was more concerned of economic reforms and less in short time priorities for membership." Thus, at the end of 1998 Slovenia was still not enough prepared for the membership in EU from the public administration point of view. This clearly shows that public administration reform was subordinated to political and economic goals. However, this only means, the nature of Slovenian public administration stayed more or less unchanged but its role within the system, was rather important in the sense that control over certain positions in public administration, or public sector enabled political and economic elite to support their own activities.

Reforms during 2000–2003 were obvious in various legal documents and laws that were accepted and implemented during this period. Some most important laws, which were accepted or significantly changed are: Law on civil servants, Law on system of payments in public sector, Law on public agencies and public structural funds, Law on Local government and changes of General Administrative procedure act. Basic characteristic of changes was the accountability of public sector and higher level of transparency that was requested especially in public spending concerning payments of civil servants and public procurements. However, as mentioned before, an appropriate legal framework, did not guarantee changes of administrative culture and character of civil servants who developed their identity over 50 years (on identity development see Pinterič 2005) of the communist regime, where they were socialized in supporting political and economic network and not serving citizens in the first place.

However, in that period certain changes in the appearance of public informer, the complaints book, unified a schedule of public administration units across the country and across different branches (Administrative units, Units of social security services, tax offices, etc.), informing the clients on procedures, rights, their work, etc. This started to slowly press on public administration in the way to change their behaviour. Special civil servants, called informators in Administrative units, were providing all necessary information to citizens concerning their procedure (e.g. what one needs to

get an ID card, passport, driving license, etc.) were introduced. Informators helped to reduce unnecessary long waiting time at counters, only to get basic information on, how to begin a procedure for a specific document. The positive effect was double, civil servants at counters could become more concentrated on procedures and citizens got information on how to act in specific procedure and which forms to fulfill in much shorter time (we have to understand that most of citizens were not familiar with the work of public administration and procedures before administrative organs).

Books of complaints were not supposed to be only exposed at visible location in institution but also regularly checked and signed by director of administrative unit or by a manager in other institution. Citizens have also had the right to get the information on how the complaint, about the institution or one's subject was resolved. Nevertheless, a right to complain or to get the information were not completely new (the book of complaints was present for longer time), only the obligation of high civil servants to solve the problem and to inform citizens on what was done about a complaint or about some indicative was new. This forced civil servants to take the book of complaints much more serious as before, what resulted in improving the quality of providing social services to citizens. With such activities civil servants started to change their role at least at lower levels of public administration structure.

Special program for diminishing administrative obstacles and law about gaining information was introduced, empowering citizens to access all the collected information about them, by different governmental institutions, with only limited exceptions of information, which could be proved as a matter of state security. This "package" of anti-bureaucratic reforms introduced a new understanding of public administration in Slovenia, as a more client-oriented and client friendly as opposition, as previous model of state-oriented services did. Change of legislation on civil servants payments also introduced a more effect rewarding payment system and de-secured their jobs and positions. Special concern was paid to the small-medium enterprises—public administration relations in order to simplify possibilities to register a company (within 3 days instead of a month or more as it was the case before) and to automate the processes as much as possible (e.g. entrance in a multiple databases register of companies, tax office database, etc.). In such case registration is carried out automatically by a competent institution for registering new companies and it was administrative burden for a new-established company.

By 2003 Slovene legislation was already in accordance with the European Union legal system (acquise communautaire). Slovenian government has also accepted the Strategy for further development of Slovene public sector. The strategy based on New Public Management, Good governance approaches (see Klimovský 2010) and European legislature.

At the same time Slovenian government also introduced norms of quality in this time. The administration uses European standards of evaluation, called CAF (Common Assessment Framework) ISO standards and internal control of work quality. A combination of higher public control over public administration work, introduction of objective quality control mechanisms and destabilization of security of job in public administration, created an environment suitable for changes of public ad-

ministration (Kovač 2002; Kovač 2004). New systematization of civil servants passed and divided civil servants by names and status. Former officials of different ranks were sorted in five different career classes: administrative civil servant (ranked I–IV), higher administrative civil servant (I–III) adviser (I–III), senior adviser (I–III), secretary-general (I–III). A proper education, responsibilities and wages were connected with the title. Wage system become much more defined, but still not achievement-oriented (the major rule of raising wages is still a seniority with almost automatic promotions every three years). However, in practice there were certain malfunctions due to the lack of political willingness to carry out completely the necessary reform. Rewarding good practices in public administration is still not the case in Slovenia (Kovač 2004). The sum of money reserved for rewarding good civil servants is still divided between all employees in the organization in order to prevent tensions between workers. In this sense, the civil servants reform is a crucial part of administrative reform which failed. The reform has experienced many corrections and interventions with the main effect of higher inefficiency and lack of clearness that enabled old administrative structures to more or less keep their positions or at least wages. Civil servants system reform was closely connected with integration in the EU from the beginning, being one of the main goals of the Slovenian Government strategy, successful enough to enter the EU and ineffective enough in preventing Slovenia to make a complete shift from classical bureaucratic public administration to a more flexible one.

In providing a more user-friendly services, the progress was made via introducing information technology into political and administrative processes and procedures (see Pinterič 2006; Pinterič 2010). A quick development of Slovenian e-government from isolated attempts to organized reform flow towards e-governance introduced, not only a more diversified options to access public services such, as e-taxes or e-government portals, but also a more user-oriented administrative culture.

We can see that the reform of Slovenian public administration has moved from structural and organizational changes to also a human resource management, the potential of civil servants and orientation towards their professional development. The main goals of reforms in public sector were its modernization, effectiveness and the beginning of communication with users through modern IT technology.

Reforms of Slovenian public administration after 2004 need some additional explanation to readers. Slovenia joined the European Union, and only a month later elections to the European Parliament were held. A twelve-year-period of center left coalition was challenged, but nobody put too much attention to electoral result. In the autumn of 2004 there were also national parliamentary elections, where previously mentioned coalition absolutely lost its position. New, centre right coalition stepped in government and started a great reforming processes in different areas including economy, public media and public administration (especially state administration). Some of more indisputable reforms were already planned in previous terms (2002 and later) while others were absolutely politically motivated consequence of changing relations in political arena. From the clientelist/elitists approach 2004 was an important

year since it showed, for the first time, hat there is such a thing called administrative elite and that political elite is very aware of it.

Main reforms in this period connected to the Slovenian public administration can be divided into client/citizen oriented and into administration oriented. Among client oriented positive reforms in this period we can find a slow erosion of territorial competence, meaning that citizens can ask in any administrative unit in the territory of Slovenia, for services such as registration of car or getting an ID or passport. Prior it was only possibly to ask for these and other documents at administrative unit covering the area of individual's permanent address. Second, such an improvement in the work of Slovenian public administration was connected to the state of e-government. Here we can claim that in this sense the government stimulated e-communication with citizens, introducing more and more services available on-line (the main example is an e-income tax form). In the field of e-public services the latest Slovenian achievement is the e-car registration. This procedure, which previously took more than half day running from office to office in area where the car was registered for the first time, now takes significantly less time. With this reform a citizen has only to pass a test of car's reliability (bakes check, CO pollution, lights, noise of engine) but all other paper work can be done from their couch and signed with a digital signature. Via internet application they can access the public unite, insert data confirming that the car passed the test, register it, and also insure it at the same moment (previously it was necessary do it at insurance company, which meant waiting in row) and finally pay via e-banking system. With this, the whole transaction procedure is complete for one year, without spending a holiday leave since administrative units have official hours during citizens are at work (see Pinterič 2010).

The second part of reforms is connected with the system of civil servants and reforms in this part only took place after few months of new government in role. If Virant, secretary general in pre-2004 government responsible for public administration, was trying to provide as politically independent public administration in Slovenia as possible, after his appointment to the position of minister for public administration he started to destroy his own system of civil servants positions; officially in the name of a more flexible public administration. Main measures in field of civil servants system were connected with payments, responsibility and stability of employment in public administration. There were attempts to better connect payments in public administration with effectiveness of civil servants, and limit automatic rewarding of civil servants, what is positive. The main part of his civil servants system reform was enacted within a document giving to the minister of public administration the power to dismiss high civil servants without any reason and appoint new individuals within first few months after being appointed to the minister position. Slovenian tradition of relatively apolitical and stable job in public administration was strongly endangered with this document. This case went to the constitutional court which ruled out that such act is completely against to existing legal system in Slovenia and it could cause a stronger political influence on professionalism of Slovenian public administration. This part of "reforms" in fact enabled the government to change all crucial people in public administration with more politically "appropriate" candidates.

One can say that reform of Slovenian public administration faced system shifts over the extended period of time. On one hand the idea was to build a stable, Weberian system of career corporate loyalty to public administration, which would be independent from any daily political influences. On the other hand, the result of such reform is systemically supporting the idea of open model of public administration, where civil servants can enter into the system almost at any given level and they are often more politically than institutionally loyal. The final result in this sense is a mixed model with predominantly closed model at the level of so-called Administrative Units (exposition of the state on local level), where career development and institutional loyalty is the main characteristic up to head of organization. These institutions follow more systematically a combination of positive elements of NPM and bureaucracy. On the other hand, municipalities as well as national administration are closer to open model, with increased level of diversified political loyalty. This can be seen especially by an increasing number of civil servants, entering into the administrative system directly on higher positions (secretaries general of ministries, etc). After the change of government, the new government often keeps them in the system but degrades their competences (according to current Slovenian legislation the salary cannot be reduced on this base). In this manner one can claim that municipalities and state administration follow a pattern of mixed model closer to open mode fullfiled with all NPM's and bureaucratic model. It protects civil servants form loosing their privileges and at the same time it creates inefficiency, lack of economy and effectiveness. Pinterič (2011a) mentions also the fact that in many cases position in public administration (especially as higher civil servant) is understood as a starting position for a political career.

After post-elections changes in 2004 and 2005, only some smaller systemic changes were enacted (one of them was also the act requesting to treat e-communication with citizens equally as other forms of communication) with unsuccessfulness in reducing the number of employees in Slovenian public sector. This was obvious especially in state administration, were we are witnessing a growing number of civil servants connected to the preparations for 2008 Slovenian presidency in the European Union. We can also expect a new wave of civil servants with introduction of second (regional) layer of governance, whenever it will happen. Especially after beginning of the economic crisis in 2008 Slovenian public administration reform was concentrated on shrinking the public sector. Despite the decrease of civil servants and employees in public sector was expected, taken measures were mainly concentrated on reducing costs of workforce and material expenses. In this manner there are reports that certain institutions (had to) reduce material expenses for 50%. In 2012 new government lowered salaries of those employed in public sector by 8% (the initial idea implemented a 15% lower wages), one day of public holiday was abandoned, maternity leave was planned to be paid gradually less (it was not accepted in final version), some social security benefits would be available only to those under certain level of wealth (not earnings—housing is understood as capital and it is bringing towards the overall wealth of individual or family). In general last changes in Slovenian public administration are more incremental adjustments as a response to economic crisis and cannot be understood as a serious change.

Despite it seems that Slovenian public administration reform was developing rather smoothly, we need to expose some of examples that are introducing the idea of negative social capital and clientelism within Slovenian public administration. We can hardly talk about serious elitist approach in the sense of closed group of seniority as it was observed in the case of Slovenian political representatives (see Pinterič 2010a). Main characteristics on all levels of Slovenian public administration are (we can try to believe due to the relative small overall population) a strong connectivity among different people, with interestingly high amount of different relatives employed in inter-connected institutions. This correlates with the definition of clientelism, where different power players reward their supporters by providing them rewarding positions in public administration, where at the same time, rewarded people will further support main political players by preparing desirable policy solutions. The last such example, which was recently exposed in media is the municipality of Novo mesto, where at least 6 of different civil servants and political leaders employed their children or partners at relevant public functions (Božič Kranjec 2012). Such a behavior goes further, completely up to national level of government when ruling SDS party, after the election composed a list of more than 200 people who seemed to be politically appointed (SDS, 2011) and who were already partly changed (despite the top of Slovenian public administration being composed from around depends on certain government) 20 state secretaries and about 60 directors of directorates. The research, conducted under Slovenian branch of Transparency international (see Habič 2012), also shows that Slovenian police (as a part of public administration) got the second lowest level of trust, which can be partly explained also by the fact that their function seems to be more budgetary than security (see Pinterič 2011b). From these cases one can assume, that civil servants are preserving the culture of supporting different people like relatives or economically/ politically influential individuals. The report on national system of integrity shows that public sector is able and willing to jeopardize accepted legal norms in order to fulfill requests from economic and political elite and that its reforms did not provide the level of transparency and accountability as it would be expected (see Habič 2012). It seems that typical cases of Slovenian clientelism are connected to nepotism (family related type of clientelism). Such cases occurred when the prime minister Andrej Bajuk named his son-in-law as a head of his cabinet. Similar happened when Gregor Virant got employed as a state secretary for public administration when his father-in-law was one of the ministers (internet 1). Another such case can be observed also in providing business opportunities by civil servants to private companies of their friends or spouses (e.g. renewal of building of district court in Ljubljana).

Despite the fact that majority of clientelism affairs in Slovenia emerged only after 2000, it is not far from true that they were not present before, but they only became more evident by more regular shifting of the government. Between 1992 and 2000 there was no change in ruling party and clinetelist networking was more hidden and well established as normal relations. Since 1.1.2000 until June 2012, six different governments were composed and change of higher civil servants became much more evident.

Concluding Remarks

Members of an elite are merged in informal networks, which can eventually become centres of power and cause corruption or clientelism. Members of such networks or lobbying associations often exploit this privileged status for maximize their power, resources, and consequently control the society and its individuals through various channels. Informal networks are strongly rooted in all spheres of all societies, which ensures elites and ruling oligarchy even more power, control and wealth. The fact that the ability of control is concentrated in the hands of this power elite is problematic, since they can (ab)use obtained information for own benefits. These associations and networks are extremely extended in post-communist and transitional societies, where socialistic legacy and culture is still present and very powerful. In these societies rule of law and formal institutions are not functioning as they should, they do not cooperate much, and what is more important, informal networks prevail over them. Members of this associations have strong connections in political and economic sphere and use them to gain personal benefits on the cost of masses. The result of such acting are feelings of inferiority, isolation and utilization in other individuals (mass), which has a negative effect on the society as a whole. Such conduct, involving the abuse of power and responsibilities and violation of social norms and basic human rights, may lead to dysfunctional conflicts and social action, which produces negative social capital. All this harms society and can, in a long term, cause social erosion and state-level conflicts.

As it is obvious from the short historical overview of Slovenian public administration reforms, we can argue that more than reforms itself, it is all about the reforming process which is sometimes too strongly connected to the daily politics. This was especially obvious after the 2004 Slovenian election. Appointment of high civil servant who set up the most important public administration reforms until 2004 to the position of minister for public administration (the same person came to the position of higher civil servant in the time when one of his relatives was minister) was one of crucial shifts form attempts to make public administration as apolitical as possible back to previous tradition of political influence on civil servants.

Despite different attempts to supplement bureaucratic model of Slovenian public administration, there is still not enough flexibility that is appropriate for modern environment demanding a quick response and client friendliness. For successful introduction of management concepts of work into the public administration, which is a basic principle of Slovene reform, the ideas have to be accepted by employees. At the same time more strict rules about clientelism and especially nepotism need to be applied in order to further reduce the influence of politics over the public administration, as well as the influence of public administration over policy-making. The lack of ethics in public administration can be seen also through late acceptance of ethical codex of civil servants (April 2011), which already failed at first political test with new government in 2012 changing long list of higher civil servants just for political sake.

Next important changes in the Slovenian public administration will be connected with the introduction of regional level of administration (between national and lo-

cal one), which will demand new layer of civil servants and will most likely cause new growth of employees in public administration and consequently new budgetary expenses that will cause new need for another cycle of public administration reforms.

In general, one can say that despite unique, Slovenian, transitional problems in reforming public administration, some of them might be seen as a broader problem of enforcement of NPM's reform ideas as the only possible and working way. Failures of NPM in the field of automatic change of administrative culture, failed privatization that reduced the quality of important social services as public health or education level and continuous growth of public sector shows that NPM might not be the universal solution for challenges of modern state. Under these circumstances NWS emerged as more and more elaborated answer to weaknesses of NPM. Despite it seems that NWS tries to be as a reintroduction of the strong state paradigm, it is mainly a good explanation why NPM failed. At least in the case of Slovenia, it can be said that it is due to political elite, demands for strongly centrally controlled and politically influenced state administration, which can be closer to principles of NWS than NPM. However, in reality reform of public administration in Slovenia mainly ignores positive principles of government and governance of both approaches.

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