

## Concepts of Information 11: The Modern State

Reading:

- Oettinger, Anthony G. 1980. "Information Resources: Knowledge and Power and the 21st Century," *Science* 209 (4452): 191-198.
- Scott, James C., John Tehranian, & Jeremy Mathias. 2002. "The Production of Legal identities Proper to States: The Case of the Permanent Family Surname" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44(1): 4-44.

prime movers:

- business (Chandler, Beniger, Yates, Kline)

or

the state (Oettinger, Scott)

"without information, nothing has meaning" --Oettinger

commerce or the state?

information technology: telegraph, railways, IBM ...

information management: supply chains:

critical dates *supply chain* in NYT/WSJ: 1917, 1942, 1950, 1966 ...

political vs commercial concepts of information, contrast

"the public cannot have too much information" --*Times*, 1882

vs

"it was not wise to give too much information with regard to the business they had in hand, as it might not be to the advantage of the company" --*Times*, 1867

**statistics & state making** -- *Staatkunde* [1660] - *Statistical Account of Scotland* [1791-99]

borders, language

taxes: rolls, polls, and farmers

cadastra

laws

customs and excise

bills of mortality  
trade figures  
maps  
conscription  
standards & "market revolution" (Kula)  
population & census  
records and registers: b,m, d; patents, copyrights, trademarks  
passports, driving licenses ...

*government intelligence*

1785 [in re Indian Affairs]: *Mr Burke* reprobated the Ministry for having refused to lay before the House the papers which had been required; and objected to Major Scott, a gentleman in the army, giving any official information to that House, which, he thought, would have been more proper for the Chairman of the Committee, or from some of the Directors themselves

blue books

*Information, information technology, cybernetics, government*

Haldane, Report on the Machinery of Government [*cp* Body Politic, vs levers of power]

- civil service debates, another middle management battle

*the uses of registration*

- the poor, Speenhamland
- the population bomb - Malthus - Burgerdörfer, "department of demographic welfare"
- human value - Zahn & the statistical value of the human being

**civil society -- facts, counterfactuals & counterfrictions**

"If the injustice is part of the necessary friction of the machine of govt ... Let your life be a counterfriction to stop the machine" --Thoreau

"the tragic episodes of state development ... originate in ... a weakened or prostrate civil society" -- Scott, *Seeing Like a State*

press

SDUK - SPCK

the statistical societies - quelling unrest

"A more general diffusion of accurate knowledge regarding the state of public affairs would tend to check that excitement and party spirit which has often been created by misrepresentation or exaggeration, and has produced an annoyance to the government and at least a temporary disaffection of the public mind." --William Jacob, 1832

"the first and most essential rule of its conduct to exclude all *opinions*" --  
Richard Jones, 1833

"moral statistics"

"the government of our Fürher ... is statistics friendly" --Zahn

Social Science Association

blue book writers and readers

"Leonard Horner was one of the Factory Inquiry Commissioners in 1833, and Inspector, or rather Censor of Factories till 1859. He rendered undying service to the English working class. He carried on a life-long contest, not only with the embittered manufacturers, but also with the Cabinet, to whom the number of votes given by the masters in the Lower House, was a matter of far greater importance than the number of hours worked by the 'hands' in the mills."

"freedom of information"