Regulatory charters (*ustavnye gramoty*) strengthened central control over the provinces by defining very precisely how much a governor (*namestnik*) or county administrator (*volostel*, from *volost*, "county") could collect as taxes, fees, and customs, when he could do so, and how many people (who had to be housed and fed) could accompany him when he visited localities. Local representatives had to witness his court proceedings.[30]

However, the government continued to issue fiscal and judicial immunities. Judicial immunities exempted laymen or ecclesiastical institutions from the jurisdiction of governors by placing them under the direct jurisdiction of the grand prince and later of the tsar. Fiscal immunities exempted them from taxes, which depleted central revenue. One motive need not explain the issuance of all immunity charters. Administrative routine, soliciting political support, or, for immunities to monasteries, religious piety might all have inspired charters.[31] The central government had trouble just keeping track of what immunities it had already issued. In 1551 the government performed the most extensive review of immunity charters of any year of Ivan's reign. It renewed, modified, or issued 170 charters. Although judicial immunities underwent greater modification than fiscal immunities, on the whole immunities decreased. Moscow adjusted ecclesiastical judicial immunities to fit the provisions of the Council of One Hundred Chapters.

Moreover, Moscow had no monopoly on issuing immunity charters. Appanage princes could also issue them, and Moscow made no attempt to abolish the appanage system. The government abolished the Staritskii appanage more than once, but then restored it, until the cadet branch of the royal line died out naturally. Ivan gave an appanage to a refugee Wallachian voivode. Ivan offered appanages to any children he would sire with Englishwoman Mary Hastings. In his testament he left the throne to his elder son, Tsarevich Ivan, but an appanage to his younger son, Tsarevich Fedor.[32] Holders of such appanages could no longer issue coinage or conduct foreign policy, but they still retained administrative autonomy.[33] The perpetuation of the appanage system attests that either Moscow, or later Ivan himself, did not favor centralization, or that neither the government nor Ivan thought appanages threatened centralization. Inconsistently, however, Moscow did gradually abolish the regalian rights of serving princes, much as the Tudors treated English marcher lords.[34]

Despite what some contemporary foreigners wrote, Muscovy conspicuously lacked uniformity. Muscovy had multiple currencies (Novgorodian

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and Muscovite), systems of weights and measures (the "share" [*vyt*] or "units" [*obzhy*], the "plow" [*sokha*] or the "quarter" [*chetvert, chet*]), legal systems (state law, canon law, Shari'a), tax systems, faiths (Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, animism), and languages (Russian, Tatar, and many more). Such heterogeneity was endemic in contemporary states.[35] Muscovite heterogeneity set limits to Muscovite centralization.

Moscow, like London and Paris, did centralize political and administrative decision making. In 1553 the English had to wait on their ship on the White Sea while the local authorities sent to Moscow for instructions. Muscovy, England, and France, although they did not have identical political structures, differed in this respect from a federal state like the Holy Roman Empire, or composite states, in which previously separate polities retained their autonomous institutions and customs when they united, such as Spain or Poland-Lithuania.[36] Muscovy was not a composite state. Its annexed territories, whatever their regionalism, did not retain their political structures, princely lines, or legal systems and did not support separatism.

Therefore, the Muscovite government pursued centralization only partially. Centralization, in Muscovy and in some other countries, was a negotiated and inconsistent process. Moreover, the ostensibly centralized Muscovite state, like other supposedly centralized states, often utilized decentralized mechanisms, such as local self-government, to achieve its goals.

STATE AND SOCIETY

Traditional historiography argues that the Muscovite government dominated society, that all social groups lacked autonomy and meekly served the state; this is the hypertrophic school conception of the relationship of state and society.[37] Recent scholarship has contested that paradigm by arguing that the boyars ran the government collegially and by consensus; this is the consensus and collegial school perception of the relationship between the state and society.[38] The relationship between the state and society in Muscovy cannot be reduced to a single formula, however. Neither interpretation adequately explains all of Ivan's reign. We do not know who initiated, let alone who influenced, policy decisions.[39] Sometimes "autocracy," the theory of unlimited royal authority, was a facade, but at other times the consensus of the boyars was also a facade. In any event the significance of the theory of autocracy for Ivan's ideology has been exaggerated.[40] As elsewhere,

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centralization and negotiated contractual modes of rule might go hand in hand. Ivan's minority fits neither paradigm.[41]

In practice the state knew that its administrative reach exceeded its grasp. The government acknowledged that its ability to control its dispersed population was limited. It delegated authority to its officials and local social groups and admitted its own lack of omniscience. Ivan, like other contemporary rulers, had great difficulty getting his officials to carry out his orders.[42] The ruler called his boyars his "slaves," and boyars called themselves "slaves" of the ruler, but a boyar who petitioned Ivan as his "slave" enhanced, not demeaned, his own status.[43] Boyars knew that they could sell their slaves, but the tsar could not sell his boyars. Ivan considered Muscovy his patrimony (*votchina*), which he could bequeath to his heir, but he could not sell it as a boyar could sell his patrimony.

The ideal that the ruler should consult (*sovetovati*) his advisors, shared even by Niccolò Machiavelli,[44] should not be confused with reality. During his minority, Ivan "consulted" his mother; as an adult, he "consulted" his brother, Prince Iurii, considered by many historians to have been a deaf-mute, although the matter is not so simple.[45] The appearance of consultation had genuine meaning to the Muscovite court, but it should not automatically be taken literally. It is impossible to correlate Ivan's proclivity for "consultation" and his supposedly "autocratic" aspirations.[46]

Muscovites distinguished the ruler from both society and the state. Narratives and documents refer to "the land's and the sovereign's business" (*zemkoe i gosudarskoe delo*), separating the affairs of the "land" (*zemlia*) from those of the ruler.[47] The "land" could be society or the state in this passage. In 1536 Muscovite negotiators informed Lithuanian representatives that although Ivan was young, his *gosudarstvo* was "mature." Usually "gosudarstvo" meant "reign," how long a ruler had been "sovereign" (*gosudar*), but this reference indicates duration from before Ivan's time, an abstraction, the "state."[48] State secretary Fedor Karpov, who was familiar with some of Aristotle's works, wrote of the "general good" and the "common good" (*delo narodnoe, obshchee chelovecheskoe delo*), but no other writer used these concepts. One could compare these phrases to the Latin res publica/publicae or Polish Rzeczpospolita (the name of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth).[49]

Historians cite Ivan's increasing reliance upon political surety (loyalty) oaths by boyars as evidence of state domination of society.[50] Whether

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contemporary states employed similar oaths to prevent defection seems unclear.[51] Such sureties reflect the increasing political tension between Ivan and his elite. However, we do not know if the guarantors supported the man for whom they stood surety, and therefore opposed Ivan's policies, or, to the contrary, whether they served the government loyally as unpaid surveillance officers.[52] After Ivan's reign, sureties for princes and boyars disappeared, but late in Ivan's reign the surety practice spread throughout the Muscovite administrative apparatus as a means of insuring job performance. The need for political sureties may attest to the weakness of the social bond between the state and its subjects rather than the strength of state domination over society. The Muscovite government apparently used collective responsibility, a group guarantee of service performance or obligation fulfillment, like surety, more often and at higher levels of society than contemporary states because of Muscovy's underadministration.[53]

Muscovy's customary political structure and culture underwent considerable change during the sixteenth century. Muscovites camouflaged innovation as a return to custom. The ruler and his elite either consulted or pretended to consult each other as the political situation warranted. Territorial expansion produced centralized political decision making in Moscow, but the locus of authority within the city of Moscow varied because of accidental factors such as the presence of a boy ruler. The personal relationship between the ruler and his subjects, especially the members of the elite, did not prevent the growth of institutional affiliations or consciousness within the administrative apparatus. The state did not unilaterally dominate society, because it lacked the resources to do so, and acknowledged that constraint upon its activity by delegating operational policy implementation to its officials on the scene outside Moscow or to local institutions. In conclusion the hypertrophic and consensual or collegial models of the relationship between the state and society are both partially correct and partially incorrect. Muscovites did not confuse unambiguous political or social ideals with ambiguous, and certainly malleable, political and social reality.

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