



State, Democracy, Governance and Leadership

Dr. Saeed Shafqat

Professor and Founding Director,
Centre for Public Policy and
Governance

The Centre for Public Policy & Governance (CPPG) in collaboration with Church World Service-Pakistan/Afghanistan) (CWS-P/A) organized two thematic deliberative sessions titled **State & Democracy** and **Leadership & Governance** on 15 - 16 April 2014 respectively, for up to 25 participants each day. Both organizations had observed considerable ambiguity or lack of understanding of the above thematic areas among potential civil society stakeholders. Thus, the objective was to provide theoretical, conceptual and interpretive understanding about State and Democracy, and Leadership and Governance through interactive sessions with the participants. These sessions linked the theoretical constructs and international case studies of each topic to their current contextual understanding in Pakistan.

State and Democracy:

According to German sociologist, Max Weber, state 'monopolizes coercion' and thus no person or group has the right to challenge its 'legitimate authority'. Karl Marx treats state as an instrument of the 'dominant class', while the American Sociologist, C. Wright Mills reminds us that in order to understand the working of a state, one needs to understand its 'institutional landscape'. While one can take any one of the above stated positions and further elaborate its theoretical assumptions by falling back on Aristotle and Plato, five components can be considered as constituting a state.

Five Components of State

a) Territory – piece of land is a prerequisite. The size of this land, big, medium, small could become significant on what role it chooses to play in the world, but without possessing territory, a state is difficult to conceive.

b) Population – the size and make up of this population is important but not essential. People hold key to the formation and existence of a state. However, there can be people on a territory who may not have a state, for example, the Palestinians.

c) Sovereignty – speaking theoretically, the state must be sovereign. Today, however, this concept has developed a blurry penumbra. Due to technolog-

ical advances, international treaties and the evolution of multi-lateral organizations, the traditional concept of sovereignty has been destroyed; so absolute sovereignty is but a myth. An eminent Stanford University professor of International Relations, Stephen Krasner, labels it 'organized hypocrisy'.

d) Government – sovereignty is tied to the government. While borders are increasingly becoming porous, it is governments that demarcate the boundary of one state from another; it is a legal concept, where the legal writ of one government ends and that of the other begins. Ungovernable spaces are intolerable for the legitimacy of a state, yet they do exist and are increasing in a number of developing states.

e) Availability of resources (agriculture, minerals, livestock etc.) is important, but not imperative. If we talk about the first four components, i.e. population, territory, sovereignty and government – as long as some combination of these components is available - you can imagine a state.

There is considerable theoretical evidence to support the claim that states are imagined and constructed, just like nations. However, in the world state system, a state is recognized if it fulfills at least four components of the above mentioned criteria.

Origins of the Modern State

Foundations of modern state are rooted in Europe, as is the case with nation and democracy. Although the idea of state can be explained by falling back on Aristotle and Plato, the modern state and its emergence are traced from transformations in the 15th and 16th century Europe, when the king's divine right to rule was challenged and displaced. The notion that the king no longer possessed the divine right to rule formed the bedrock upon which territoriality, peoples' sovereignty and government guided the dynamics of the state. The king's 'divine right to rule', was increasingly displaced by the peoples' right to choose a government. In the subsequent periods, such questions acquired new meaning and salience; if the king has lost the divine right then who has the right to govern? What is the appropriate form of government? How people will choose their representatives? A quest to seek answers to these

questions led to the birth of democracy, which will be discussed in the next section.

The period between the 15th and 20th centuries can best be described as the evolutionary phase of the modern state. It is the interplay and changing dynamics of the aforementioned elements that shaped the formation of the state and the world state system. Thus, state has become pivotal to the contemporary global order such that one state cannot function without the other.

Post Colonial States

The rise of state system in Europe was accompanied by inter-state rivalries, wars and expansion of European power across the world. Europe's rise also entailed colonialism; most of Asia, Africa and Latin America came under European subjugation. The two World Wars broke the shackles of colonial rule, led to the emergence of nationalist movements in the colonized societies and paved the way for the creation of many states rising from the ashes of colonial rule.

The states in post-colonial societies were born with certain inherent limitations, as colonial rule had deeply impacted social development in these societies, which affected their attitude, outlook and orientation towards the state. This demands some understanding about the functioning of colonial rule. Three diverging and complex manifestations of colonial rule gave impetus to nationalist movements. First, colonial rule was exploitative – the colonizer stole the resources of the colonized societies, created comprador classes within, expropriated raw materials, cheap labor while building their own manufacturing and industry. Second, colonial rule was modernizing - the colonizer provided a modern education system in tradition bound societies, built infrastructure of rail, road, and most importantly laid the foundations of institutions of judiciary, bureaucracy and the military. Thus colonial rule contributed to institution building and modernity. Third, colonial rule was humiliating – the colonizer destroyed indigenous cultures, and injured the pride and sense of dignity of those who were colonized. This had a deep psychological impact on the personality of the colonized.

The cumulative effect of these factors contributed to the rise of nationalist movements in colonized societies, and the demands for liberation and creation of new nation states intensified. The two World Wars had considerably weakened the power and will of the colonizer—militarily weakened and morally challenged to govern; the colonizers were unable to resist the rising waves of nationalist movements. Thus the end of Second World War witnessed the emergence of multiple new states in the world.

Emergence of Nation States

Post World War II, we see an entirely different map of the world; a map overwhelmed with newly constituted nation states. As narrated above, the emergence of state in Europe was in response to absolute rule and divine right of the king, while in developing societies, state emerged in response to colonial rule. In case of most of the developing world though – Africa, Asia and Latin America, where we see the bulk of nation states evolving, these states emerged in the aftermath of an extended colonial rule as an effort to replace it.

In case of colonial states, the legal edifice was already provided for by the colonial masters (French, Dutch, Spaniards or English). They had all introduced legal rational systems, which then informed the nationalist sentiments. More importantly, the postcolonial states emerged with an umbilical cord of a nation. Their idea and sentiment of nationhood was weak and in some cases vague and not imaginatively construed. The primary goal was to get rid of the colonizer while the complex issues of nation building would be resolved only after gaining independence. Conversely, issues of how to build a nation and how to consolidate a state remained peripheral.

Consequently, many of the newly emergent states continue to struggle, while some have been successful in maintaining balance between the two processes of state and nation building, hence have a stronger sense of nationhood and the state is stable and solidified. In case of Pakistan, the balance between the two processes was tenuous and consistently tilted towards state building. Thus nation building suffered and continues to be fragile.

Pakistan as a Nation State

In undivided India, the nationalist movement began to surface around 1880's but gained momentum in the 1920's and 1930's. However, it was the two World Wars that gave real boost to the nationalist sentiment. Muslims in undivided India had begun to band together in the later part of 1880s but became more vocal about Muslim nationhood in the 1930's. As it happened across most of the colonized world, the Muslim nationalist movement was also led, guided and supported by the educated urban middle classes. This was espoused in the form of two nation theory, claiming that the Muslims were different from Hindus, both in belief and cultural practices. The symbols and sources of inspiration for the two were different and that the interests of Muslims, a minority demanded that a separate state be carved out of undivided India. In this struggle and contestation, religion became a key identity marker and critical factor in the making of Pakistani nation-state.

Did the nationalist movement in any way contribute towards the emergence of democratic or authoritarian regimes in the developing states? Why some states like India and Indonesia have become democracies while Pakistan and Egypt continue to struggle? The answers are not simple and easy, but let us try addressing it. As aforementioned, no state is entirely sovereign in present times. All the treaties, legal instruments created under the UN Charter, various multi-national companies, indeed to a certain extent globalization indicate a degree of interdependence which creates a legal obligation to adhere.

Democracy, Order and Authoritarianism: Differentiated Responses from Colonized Societies

Democracy has multiple meanings; it implies freedom of expression and association, representative government, adult franchise, peoples' participation in decision making, equality of rights and responsibilities, protection of minorities, respect for law and constitutional liberalism; all these combined or combination of some is equated with democracy. Theoretically, the literature on democracy could be classified in four set of categories. First, a set of scholars argue that democracy is a function of culture; second group argues that it's a function of level of literacy- higher the literacy lev-

els, greater the prospects of democracy; third school argues that democracy is a function of level of development- as societies develop economically, the prospects of democracy become brighter; finally, another school of scholars argues that democracy is a function of elites- it is the elite consensus on democratic values which livens up the prospects of democracy.

In developing societies, where institutions are relatively weak or fragmented, elite cohesion plays a pivotal role in the construction of democracy. In case of India, the elites, despite internal differences, have over the years demonstrated a broad consensus on values of crafting and sustaining democracy. Conversely in Pakistan, elites are still struggling to build a broad consensus on design and consolidation of democracy, and a representative form of government. However, elites with an authoritarian orientation, outlook and behavior can instead support an alternate system. China falls in this category. So, for constructing democracy we need to carefully look at each model - which has worked best, where and why, and charter course.

Let us examine the case of Muslim Societies, where many scholars observe that tradition and culture have constrained the development of democratic norms and values. Let me illustrate how a number of Muslim societies display three common problems: a) In parts of the Arab world as well as South Asia, tribal order is a way of life. This traditional order does not facilitate / encourage growth of democracy; b) In a number of Muslim societies, the debate ranges not simply on acceptance of universal rights, but on preservation of traditional order and belief system. The idea of sepa-

rating politics from religion is relatively weak; and c) in a number of the Muslim societies, the nationalist movements were spearheaded by western educated liberal minded elites, who gained independence (decolonized) on the basis of nationwide movement at times underplaying ethnicities(Nigeria, Malaysia), in other cases (Pakistan) religion emerged as a key factor driving the nationalist movement but after gaining independence the elites were unable to synthesize religion with modernity and democratic ideals. Hence the experience of Muslim societies with reference to promoting democracy is passing through a phase of struggle where countries like Pakistan, Malaysia, even Nigeria are struggling to dispel the perception that Muslim societies are reluctant to accept democracy.

Democracy or Political Order: A Tough Call?

In a number of developing societies—Nigeria, India, Pakistan, rapid urbanization combined with high population has led to greater social mobilization and also participation explosion. Resultantly, democracy's functioning in such societies is impaired, rousing fears about chaos, disorder and decay. Consequently, in a number of developing countries, the challenge has moved away from restoring and consolidating democracy to maintaining political order. Lawlessness, too many voices, too many grievances, coupled with forces of globalization has created a situation that many see as chaos and disorder. Yale's Chinese American Professor of Law, Amy Chua's phrase 'the world is on fire' captures it all. Therefore restoring political order rather than preserving democracy has become a key concern.

Governance and Leadership

Is Governance Different from Government?

Governance is a multifaceted venture generally defined as requiring an understanding of interrelationships among social, economic, political and cultural variables and all that within the institutional setting of the country. The meaning that these variables bring to the governance enterprise is profound. Governance can most effectively occur when there is a solid understanding and knowledge of local conditions. The principal components of governance are politico-cultural, institutional and to some degree technical (which increasingly involves imparting IT and others skills to bureaucracies) and revolve around distribution, exchange and regulation of authority and power sharing mechanisms between the state and citizens. The World Bank provides a definition which minimizes the politico-cultural variables but emphasizes the institutional and regulatory dimensions.

“Governance consists of the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.”¹

How can Pakistan Strengthen Institutional Framework for Good Governance?

If the concept of governance is understood, then the challenge is how can we promote good governance? For good governance, consensus among the leadership, policy makers and ownership and compliance by the citizens is a prerequisite. Consensus does not mean uniformity; it demands consultation, deliberation and a minimal agreement among all the stakeholders. For that, an institutional framework is absolutely essential. In our case, invariably consensus is compromised by highly personalized decision-making. For instance, look at the case of Metro Bus in Lahore. Who was consulted? Was there public debate on its costs and ben-

efits? How long will it be subsidized? What would be its impact on the ecology of the city? These are difficult questions but they are critical for devising a sound transport policy for a city. And the only way they can be answered, or at least addressed is, if there is an institutional framework in place, owned and accepted by the people, and supported by sound professional intake and credible research. This clearly implies that institution building holds the key to good governance. In most societies, good governance is thought to be intrinsically tied to institutionalization. If the state institutions are strong - a) they protect their interests b) they do not indulge in overstretching / overlapping, indeed, each tries to preserve the domain of its own entity and abide by rules and procedures. The result is that institutions become stronger than individuals. With the passage of time, powerful and mighty also succumb to the power of the institutions. In Pakistani society, the prevalent trend is personalization of decision making and institutions. This must be arrested and reversed. Our leaders behave like what Weber calls “The Sultans”; decisions taken in official capacity are based on individual whims as opposed to complying with institutional procedures. As a result thereof, institutions in our society have become so politicized that disassociating person from institution becomes difficult. Hence, there is a need to depersonalize institutions, restore the respect for and autonomy of the governmental institutions in order to promote good governance.

It is equally important to recognize that the edifice of democracy is built on modern and professionally competent bureaucracy and that plays a critical role in defining the parameters of politician-bureaucracy relationship. Fundamental task of the bureaucracy is to implement what the elected public officials promised to the electorate in terms of their policies and program when they assumed power. In case of Pakistan, this line is very thin. From the time of the country’s inception, the bureaucracy has assumed the role of political patron with politicians as its clients. With the restoration of electoral process, particularly after 1970, this relationship has become even fuzzier. Now the very

¹ info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp. Worldwide Governance Indicators Project (WGI), 2013

dynamics and nature of relationship is changing where the politicians are trying to establish super ordinate-subordinate relationship without improving the skills, attitude and competence of political parties.

Foundations of a democratic and representative form of government are laid on broad based and democratized political parties, where the processes of recruitment, selection of leaders and internal party elections are clearly spelled out and have wider acceptability amongst the members as well as the electorate. In case of Pakistan, most political parties are struggling despite the existence of various laws regulating them. Whereas in India, the Congress Party leadership was conscious of the election process, and therefore relied

on encouraging democracy within the party, thereby supporting it across India. For Pakistan, electoral reforms, democratization of political parties, faith in constitutional liberalism, and independent judiciary and media hold the key to sustaining democracy and representative form of government.

** I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Ms Rabia Chauhdry, Associate Researcher of the CPPG in preparing this policy brief. I am equally thankful to two of my colleagues Dr. Sikandar Hayat and Raheem ul Haque for some insightful comments and suggested revisions.

About Thematic Deliberation Sessions:

Background:

CWS-P/A in collaboration with CPPG undertook this initiative because both organizations observed that there was considerable ambiguity and lack of understanding among the potential stakeholders (civil society managers, analysts, social activists, media persons, etc.) about the concept and working of the state, the notions of democracy, challenges of governance and role of leadership – their meaning and interpretation. Thus, it was agreed that a CPPG instructor would offer theoretical and conceptual clarification of the concepts from an academic perspective.

As expected, participants were from NGOs, academia, civil society and few students. Participant's level of education and understanding varied considerably with context to the chosen themes. Therefore, the instructor made a conscious effort to remain bilingual and communicate the assumptions, theories and conceptual interpretations in a simple manner. During the first session, the instructor realized that theoretical and abstract concepts were difficult for the group to grasp. Thus, he gave examples from within Pakistan and across the region in reference to the concepts. Furthermore, it was sensed that participants were more enthused to look at issues and problems from the perspective of 'person and personality' rather than institution, procedures, norms and behavior. The instructor thus communicated the need to have a better understanding of theories, concepts and assumptions surrounding the themes.

The methodology adopted was to provide a conceptual framework of the themes including various perspectives followed by their understanding, practice and related issues in the Pakistani context. The sessions were structured such that the initial 45 minutes were spent exploring the topics by defining them and articulating their various conceptual perspectives with examples. The instructor conducted the initial presentation by putting up a set of questions to the participants. The next 60 minutes were spent in engaging and encouraging the participants; first, by getting participants' position on the questions; second by inviting follow-up questions from the participants; and finally, discussing some of the raised questions in detail.

Next Steps:

There was a wide spectrum of questions and a considerable degree of difference in the understanding of different participants. Some were very quick to grasp while others took a little time. It helped to remove the language bias by switching the medium of communication from English to Urdu. Still, our impression is that the main challenge for future instructors will be to cater to the specific needs of the selected group, language being the foremost concern. Looking back at the questions and answers raised, it became evident to us that the participants felt confident and assured that they had a better understanding of all the four concepts as they could openly debate inter se and illustrate from their own experiences. This shows that conceptual clarity and deeper understanding about democracy, state; governance and leadership remain relevant and potent topics and could resonate well with several types of civil society groups.

Dialogue Reports

US Withdrawal from Afghanistan & Pakistan's Strategy	Raheem ul Haque & Saeed Shafqat, 2011
Agriculture Policy Implementation Dialogue: Deliberations and Discussions	Raheem ul Haque & Saeed Shafqat & Kausar Abdulla Malik, 2010
Institutional Arrangements for Post Disaster Recovery: Way Forward	Raheem ul Haque & Saeed Shafqat, 2010

Research Reports

The Criminal Justice System as a Tool of Anti Terrorist Efforts in Punjab	Rabia Chaudhry, 2014
A Study of Khai Mohalla: Towards a Social Protection Policy Framework for the Informal Sector	Khalida Ahson & Mughees Bhalli, 2014
Reforming Pakistan's Energy Sector: Energy Market, Institutional Framework and Governance	Mohammad Imran & Shahram Rana, 2014
Training Needs Assessment of Master's Level Policy Programs in Pakistan	Raheem ul Haque, 2010

Monographs

Policing, Torture and Human Rights: Designing a Policy Framework for Pakistan	Rabia Chaudhry, 2013
Industrial Policy in Punjab: A Case Study of Sundar Industrial Estate	Hajra Zafar, 2012
Pakistan, Afghanistan & US Relations: Implications and Future Directions	Saeed Shafqat & Raheem ul Haque, 2011
Rickshaw & Environmental Pollution: Assessing Punjab Government's Rickshaw Policy	Raheem ul Haque, 2009

Position Papers

Water, Sanitation & Solid Waste Management Governance and Management of Lahore	Atif Hasan, forthcoming
Making Trade Friendly Institutions	Khalida Ahson & Mughees Tahir Bhalli, forthcoming
Real Estate Markets in Lahore including Land Use, Building Control and Zoning in Lahore	Dr. Imdad Hussain, forthcoming
Transport in Lahore, Challenges and the Way Forward	Dr. Sania Chaudhry, forthcoming
	Sarah Mushir & Shahmir Hamid, forthcoming

Quarterly Special Issues

Number 21-23: Special Issue on Energy Crises & Policy	2013
Number 16-18: Special Issue – 5 Years of CPPG	2012
Number 11-13: Special Issue on Pakistan & Afghanistan	2011
Number 4 – Special Issue on Population	2009

Publications are available at the CPPG Office

Centre for Public Policy & Governance (CPPG)

E – 017 & 018, F.C. College (A Chartered University)
Feroz pur road, Lahore – 54600, Phone: 042. 9923 1581 – 88 Ext. 388
Email: cppg@fccollege.edu.pk, <http://cppg.fccollege.edu.pk>



CENTRE FOR PUBLIC POLICY
AND GOVERNANCE

Copyright © Centre for Public Policy and Governance. All rights reserved.



Forman Christian College
(A Chartered University)