Classical and new elite theory

According to Mills (1956: 363), understanding the middle classes it is not something much difficult, but understanding the very top of modern society requests discovery and description. This is very difficult task, because they are generally inaccessible, busy and reserved. It is always difficult to get information about their backgrounds, their characters and their activities.

Classical and New Elite Theory

Although the idea probably always has been present in some form, elitism emerged as a recognizable and clearly defined part of Western political thought in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's. The leading contributors to the theory wereGaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto, andRobert Michels. These writers attacked classical democratic thought and alsoAristotleand Karl Marx. Majority rule, they insisted, is impossible. Every society is divided into those who rule and those who are ruled; and the rulers constitute only a small minority of any society. Aristotle's classification, which divided political systems into three types (rule by one, rule by a few, and rule by the many), does not fit reality either, for no man is capable of ruling by himself, and the many, too, lack the ability to govern. It is the few, under any political system, who exercise effective control. And Marx, with his emphasis on a class struggle that in the end (following the victory of the working class) leads to social harmony in a classless society, was also wrong. History features a continuing struggle among elites. That struggle will never end, and a classless society cannot be created. Moreover, to the pioneers in the development of elitist theory, Marx placed too much emphasis on economics and not enough on politics, which could be autonomous.

Classical elitist theorydid not maintain merely that the active, socially recognizable people in a country made its important decisions-whether from within offices of government, from somewhere behind the scenes, or from completely outside the state apparatus. It emphatically asserted that the common man, however numerous within a society in absolute or relative terms, did not. Analysts of elites, who generally focus on the distribution of power rather than on the allocation of values, or on property and other wealth forms, differ somewhat over the degree of participation in government or, more generally, the political process that is necessary for a member of the elite accurately to be judged a member of what Mosca characterizes as " the ruling class." A society's elite is usually thought to be a stable entity, self-sustaining and constant over time. Yet the actual group that is in office can changemarkedlyand very quickly. The concept of an elite therefore may need to be understood as encompassing all those who might govern as well as those who in fact do govern.

Elite and pluralist

Pluralist is the belief thatpublic policydecisions should be the result of the struggle of forces exerted by large populations (workers, consumers, retirees, parents, etc.) directly or indirectly in the policy-making process. This is contrasted with elitism which is the belief that decisions should be made essentially according to the interests or ideas of elites. There is a difference, however, between the idea of being more able to fulfill a political task and the actual knowing of the specialization and specifications of each corporation or other group among the general population and its particular hopes and needs, which suggests a way of cooperation which has been

recently put into practice in some countries between politicians and groups of citizens which have some remote resemblances toCorporatism

Power elite:

The term " power elite" was minted byCharles Wright Millsin his book " the Power Elite" 1956. Inpoliticaland theory, power elite consider a small group of people who control a disproportionate amount of wealth, privilege, and access to decision-making of global consequence. Mills describes the relationship between political, military, and economic elite (people at the pinnacles of these three institutions).

- The power Elites shares a general consensus about the fundamental norms of the social system. They agree on the " rules of the game" and on the importance of preserving the system.
- Only those elites that share a consensus on these basic values of the social system can go up to power
- They compete with each other for preeminence, but this competition takes place within a narrow range of issues-disagreement usually occurs over means rather than ends.

Criticism of the theory

The Elite theory strengths explains group politics by bringing to attention the weaknesses of the people as a whole including minority group politics, that minorities are just the same as everyone else other then the elite. The Elite's give a few crumbs to the masses to keep the people hopeful of the future. The masses will always be just one diversified group with no means of really getting anything accomplished. There has been a sociological reasoning of

understanding the importance of social stratification that has allowed groups in positions to influence politics. As each and every position that group holds, puts some sort of implication that begins by distributing of power in the political system. Although the masses elect these officials, the officials are also bought by the elite, by giving them campaign contributions.

The weaknesses of the elite theory show an unclear system of how it reaches its goals. It's does not explain how it gathers and lumps all the minorities into the same group. It also doesn't consider the implications of a society that is not run by money but out of concern of future well being of its citizens.

Elite theory on input politics

Elite theory writers have less to say about input politics under polyarchy than pluralists or the new right. Their main theme concerns the limits of liberal democracy – the restricted influence and minimal role accorded to ordinary citizens. Instead of opening up politics to large-scale participation, elite theorists point out that elections, party competition and interest group politics have now spawned their own specialized elites. Mass media professionals, party leaders, leaders of large interest groups, public relations and marketing people now control these areas. Ordinary voters and citizens get to play only a bit part, responding to an agenda (set elsewhere) on the basis of a highly selective diet of information fed to them by elites. For radical elite theorists these developments spell the ' professionalization of politics', recreating a new version of the mass/elite dichotomy.

By contrast, democratic elite theorists (such as Joseph Schumpeter) ask how things could possibly be otherwise in the large nation states which are the

fundamental political units in the contemporary world. In their account, the classical democratic ideal of direct self-government by citizens is now unattainable. But by allowing voters to choose between two or more competing sets of political leaders, citizens can retain a powerful voice in how government is carried out in their name.

Conclusion

Elite theory emphasizes, in several different streams, that society always has been and always will be controlled by a small group called the elite. This group is composed of those individuals who are superior performers in society. Eventually these superior performers rise to positions of power, authority, and control; and the masses of people are content to have these superior performers 'run the show.' Some elite theorists, such as Pareto, argued that there was a biological reason for elite superiority, while others, such as Michels, looked for an organizational basis to support the emergence of elites.

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Introduction

In general, good governanceis perceived as a normative principle of administrative law, which obliges the State to perform its functions in a manner that promotes the values of efficiency, no corruptibility, and responsiveness to civil society. It is therefore a principle that is largely associated with statecraft. While the government is not obliged to substantively deliver any public goods, it must ensure that the processes for the identification and delivery of such goods are concrete in terms of i) being responsive to public demands; ii) being transparent in the allocation of resources and; iii) being equitable in the distribution of goods. The principle of good governance has also been espoused in the context of the internal operations of private sector organizations. In this way, corporate decision-making strategies integrate the principle of good governance and ensure that shareholder interests (i. e. public limited companies) and employees are taken into account.

The legal meaning of the principle of good governance

The concept of good governance as developed by the World Bank is essentially a touchstone upon which the prevailing administrative structure of a given country can be measured. Consequently, it provides ample evidence of the robustness of the structural suitability of donors as efficient vehicles of multilateral aid investment to developing countries. Good governance is therefore chiefly envisaged as a set of procedural tools to guarantee the efficacious improvement of the donor identified subject. Politically, however, the principle of good governance has not been very well received. For instance, governments may be reluctant to be held accountable to donor agencies, and they may sometimes display widespread hostility against such agencies (or other bodies) that is construed to be interfering in their (sovereign) domestic affairs. The real or imagined fears have stemmed mainly from the fact that the term " good governance" has largely been identified with " liberalism" and " laissez-faire" policies common in most developed countries. Further, the usage of the term " good" derives primarily from subjective interpretations especially in the context of large multicultural and diverse economies that characterize the developing world.

The characteristics of good governance

Good governance has 8 major characteristics: it is based on participation, consensus, is
accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and respects the rule of law. " Good governance seems distant

ideal unattainable. But whether idealistic or realistic, something is certain: good governance is essential for sustainable development.

1-Participation

Participation by both men and women is a key cornerstone of good governance. Participation could be either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives. It is important to point out that representative democracy does not necessarily mean that the concerns of the most vulnerable in society would be taken into consideration in decision making. Participation needs to be informed and organized. This means freedom of association and expression on the one hand and an organized civil society on the other hand.

2-Rule of law

It is necessary to establish legal systems adequate to ensure stability and predictability, essential elements for creating an economic environment in which business risks can be assessed rationally. Impartial enforcement of laws requires an independent judiciary and an impartial and incorruptible police force.

3-Transparency

Transparency means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. The themes of transparency and information are ubiquitous in good governance and strengthen accountability.

Accessing information by various market players is essential to an economy competitive

4-Responsiveness

Governments and their officials must be accountable toward their actions, it requires institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe.

5- Consensus oriented

Good governance plays an intermediary role between different interests to reach a broad consensus on what best serves the interests group and, where appropriate, on policies and procedures. It also requires a broad and long-term perspective on what is needed for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goals of such development. This can only result from an understanding of the historical, cultural and social contexts of a given society or community.

6-Equity and inclusiveness

All men and all women have the opportunity to improve or maintain their living conditions. This requires all groups, but particularly the most vulnerable, have opportunities to improve or maintain their well being.

7-Effectiveness and efficiency

Processes and institutions produce results based on needs while making best use of resources. The concept of efficiency in the context of good

governance also covers the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment.

8-Accountability

Accountability At the macroeconomic level, this includes in particular the transparency financial accounting system which requires effective and transparent to the expenditure control and cash management, with the obligation to account the public, and a system of external audit. It also means budget choices rational, operated in a transparent and gives priority to social program productive such as basic health services and primary education

How to achieve good governance

Good governance, to be effective and sustainable, must be anchored in a vigorous working democracy which respects the rule of law, a free press, energetic civil society organizations and effective and independent public bodies such as the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance, Prevention of Corruption Bureau and the Fair Trade Commission. The Commission is important in ensuring the promotion and protection of human rights, but also in ensuring both transparency and accountability on the part of the government. Good governance requires transparency and efficiency also in different government agencies.

At the political level democratic practices, including transparency in policy making and administration, are important aspects of good governance. This is signified by a pluralistic political system that allows the existence of

diversity in political and ideological opinions. No wonder that good governance is said to be more easily achieved and guaranteed in a multi-party system than in a mono-party system. It also means the holding of regular elections applying the principle of universal franchise. In order to qualify as democratic, elections must be free and fair.

Good governance deals with the nature and limits of state power. The doctrine of the separation of powers is therefore relevant in the establishment of whether or not a country has a political system that is responsive to good governance. The doctrine of the separation of powers is based on the acceptance that there are three main categories of government functions: legislative, executive, and judicial. Corresponding to these are the three main organs of government in a state - the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary. The doctrine insists that these three powers and functions of government in a free democracy must be kept separate and exercised by separate organs of the state.

Conclusion

From the above discussion it should be clear that good governance is an ideal which is difficult to achieve in its totality. Very few countries and societies have come close to achieving good governance in its totality. However, to ensure sustainable human development, actions must be taken to work towards this ideal with the aim of making it a reality.

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