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Horyzonty Polityki 2022, Vol. 13, N° 44

A conceptual framework for assessing power and governance in contemporary democracy

Abstract

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: The objective of the article is to define the conceptual framework of the contemporary governmental system and its style of functionality to strengthen democratic values, norms, and the rule of law. The purpose of the article is to elaborate governance that shares state power to facilitate the democratic rights of the people in the contemporary world.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS: This article aims to analyse the power and governance in the current structure of democracy. The article evaluates the dynamics of contemporary democracy and how the government shapes the power for better governance. Future research highlights the conceptual framework of the qualitative approach and relies on discourse analysis to find out the outcomes of this study. The study uses a theoretical approach to examine contemporary governance, different approaches and how to build socio-political cooperation.

THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION: It discusses various aspects of modern democracy in the context of the governability of those who hold power. Furthermore, the article argues how the states are shaping modern democracy. How a new political order pioneers the norms of the state through its governance. What is the legitimate principle of the work for the new political order?

RESEARCH RESULTS: As a result, the article tries to find out that modern democracy is running under a populist government in various countries in the world. The emergence of ultra-right-wing power groups diminished the norms of liberal democracy.

Suggested cittation: Bharti, M.S. (2022). A conceptual framework for assessing power and governance in contemporary democracy. *Horizons of Politics*, *13*(44), 31–46. DOI: 10.35765/HP.2287.

CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS: The article highlights the points as a conclusion of democracy facing many challenges in the new populist governance worldwide. The contemporary global communities are trying to make governance for peace, prosperity, and respect for the humanities but and on the other hand, international communities are failed in some places i. e. Afghanistan. This discussion recommends about international communities to create an environment for cooperation among different nation-states to make an international partnership for the establishment of peace, cooperation for the well-being of the people, and stop conflicts and recurring wars.

Keywords:

Modern democracy, power and governance, government and politics, international organisation, populism

INTRODUCTION

This research tries to interrogate the approaches of modern democratic government for state welfare. There are several governments from all over the world directly elected by the popular vote. The people's participation is highly enthusiastic to elect their government through the power of the vote. The popular government to some extent understands the aspects of the people through governance. The purpose of this study is that real democracy does understand the people's welfare in the state. The strength of democracy fully depends on the role of the people's participation to elect their government. The research correlates the governments and people's cooperation. The research fills the gap between government initiatives and people's aspirations. To what extent does governance accelerate the concept of the welfare state? Does the functionality of the government establish the path of democracy? The following hypotheses are tested in this research. (1) The current democracy is capable of delivering the aspects of the people and its governance is shaping the concept of the welfare state. (2) The emergence of populist governments has negatively impacted people who are from other parts of the world.

Elections are the key indicators of any form of democracy where the people elect their leaders through the right to vote. In a country like India where people vote enthusiastically in elections to elect their leader. In many developing countries, people exercise the right to vote in elections to strengthen democracy. The democracy of several developing countries is still fragile and international organisations pushing them to adopt the norms of democracy. In many countries from the western democracies,' the voting percentage is declining. It has been happening for a long time in several western countries (Andeweg &. Irwin, 2005). It has been observed that the public demand is highly growing from their political representatives. Due to modernization, people have a multidimensional focus on the development of their region, that is why societies need a lot of political support to speed up development projects. And political leaders understand it is difficult to deal with the demand of the people. Political institutions in developing countries do not have adequate government funds to allocate to their societies. Due to the shortage of funds, political representatives do not have adequate contact with the societies in their constituency in the sense of relocation of politics. There is a gap between political representatives and people in societies. The article traces the proper contact gap between the political representatives and people. In democratic countries, people understand that their local parliamentarian is responsible for local development and public affairs (Bovens et al., 1995).

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

The outline of modern democracy and its principles was initiated by Weber (Weber, 1947). The role of contemporary government is characterized in terms of governance that is relevant to development. The rules of modern government can speed up governance that has benefited in many ways from today's democracy (Hupe & Edwards, 2012, pp. 179–180). In modern times, there are several models of democracy analysed in political theory. It is able to distinguish itself in a variety of democratic models (Held, 2006; Lijphart, 1999). In deliberative democracy, participation is one of the central axes of representation. It is creating consistent problems of representation in deliberative democracy. Thus, traditional public institutions are providing new opportunities for participation. However, this kind of practice is mutually beneficial for political power and people (Held, 2006, p. 253). Associative democracy describes the concerning issues of societies. It draws the mechanism of self-governance which is responsible for societal development (Hirst, 1994).

This kind of democracy provides special roots for the functions of institutions for the betterment of society. The functions of the government bodies are reachable to different societies. The role of civil society is gaining the charm of a key indicator to show the mirror to the government for a better understanding of the development issues for societies (Hirst, 2000, p. 28). In a modern democracy, the role of civil society has been connecting public issues with governance. During the last two decades, the role of civil society gained importance, but it is converted into politicization itself. The association is functioning at the societal level as a form of representative democracy. It is also connected with direct democracy to deliver as much as possible. Furthermore, at the small level, the political association needs better connectivity between the government agency and local people (Bekkers & Homburg, 2002).

Deliberately democracy, several countries make a tracing body to observe the voting pattern. The participation of people during election time shows how people enthusiastically cast their votes. To assess it, the democracy established the proper citizen juries and round-table conferences. This kind of arrangement happens in the model of deliberative democracy. And people from different sections heavily participated i.e. stakeholders, people, and experts (Chambers, 2003; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2006). The concept of a traditional form of government is transforming into more complex and multi-purpose steering and coordination. Today, the governance aspects of the people are increasing considerably. And they want a multipurpose development program that the government has to initiate. Governance practically works in many ways and refers to a broader approach to phenomena, such as governing in states. The various kinds of literatures show that governance performed uses many such ways (Jessop, 1998; Pierre & Peters, 2000; Stoker, 2018). Since 1990, the nature of the traditional form of government has been greatly transformed into a new type of governance model in modern democracies around the world. Although, the empirical thought process assesses governance is ultimately used for deeper analysis that speaks to the new analytical framework (Björk et al., 2003; Pierre & Peters, 2000).

Pierre and Peters (2000) examine governance from different kinds of state perspectives and separate it into four basic governance structures, these are hierarchies, networks, markets and communities. Therefore, these structures differ in many aspects, for example, defining the role of the state, how to use power among institutional bodies and being aware of accountability (Pierre & Peters, 2000, pp.67–68). March and Olsen (1995) highlighted the useful approach that takes into account rules and regulations that are appropriately added to democratic governance in accordance with legitimate authority. In a modern democracy, constitution is necessary for proper governance. The constitutional framework is a solid rule of government that has been provided for leaders to work in accordance with the rule of law. It is a legitimate authority in modern democracy and strengthens the governance in the countries. In addition, the provision of constitutions highlights the political contracts and rules in the country in the context of political cooperation and multi-purpose governance. These are conceptual models for the structural governance in democratic countries (March & Olsen, 1995, pp. 22-23).

The modern state-coordinated model is appropriate for governance in democratic states. Thus, state-oriented democratic models are associated with many actors and match the approaches of conventional government. In this model, the government includes the people's representatives and the political elite of the society. In other words, the central government has vested with the supreme power holder legislative body and the local government and other political entities are agents. Moreover, the work process and implementation agenda contain top-down and rational management that shapes executives' jobs for social welfare in countries in a better way. The work process and welfare program of institutional bodies depend on government officials and national politicians. The role of local governments relates to the implementation of central government funds into developing programmes. The legal work is being carried out by the local government in many democratic countries in the world.

THE QUALITY AND LEGITIMACY OF GOVERNANCE UNDER A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM

Apparently, democratic government depends on the support of the people. According to elitist democracy, the people participate directly in the electoral process to compete for power in modern societies (Schumpeter, 1942). The elitist theory of democracy referred to the liberal or Lock vision of it. The citizens control their elected government by the process of competing among elites. The ordinary people are encouraged to participate in the electoral process at every appropriate time of elections (Habermas, 1996). In a modern democracy, citizens don't have a direct association with the state actor who decides the future course of state policy. The democratisation process improves the people's involvement in government policy and it can affect the central policy plan of the central stakeholder who shares the constitutional powers. Through democratic transformation, it implies increasing the elitist representation of the people in the institutional bodies of the State. In other words, representative democracy draws the provisions of its core ideas. The responsibility for accountability, with near and clean principal-agent cooperation, are core values in this approach of nowadays democracy. This notion of modern democracy is implicit in the discourse and practice of qualified or highly technical grassroots politics (Hanberger, 2001).

The characteristics of participatory democracy are the most important in the context of people's participation and its present wider approach to the quality of democracy. According to this approach of participatory democracy, the people use their power and exercise, when they have an opportunity to participate. If the participation of the people decreases in the electoral process, it means the greatest threat to modern democracy. Furthermore, participatory democracy characterises that it fosters democratic people. Participation defines itself to generate identity, develop responsibility, encouraging people to participate in common affairs, etc. According to this approach, through participation in democracy, the norms, rules of modern democracy can be realised (Pateman, 1970).

According to Habermas (1996), citizen participation in the electoral process with the extra effort and willingness creates a democratic community. In contrast to the theory of elitist democracy, citizens' cooperation and participation in elections shape the clean approach of modern democracy. The key elements of participatory democracy are gradually establishing a greater environment for the development of democratic awareness among the people. Apparently, the tilt toward participatory democracy that refers to a democracy expedites more participation rather than elitist approach. In the discourse notion, participatory democracy is getting a greater stance among the citizens which is described according to the qualitative requirements for people participation (Dryzek & Torgerson, 1993). In the terms of public policy, people are motivated to be a part of the policy process before a policy comes into force or is launched. Thus, at the primary level, the process of planning is initiated (Renn et al., 1993). Although there is participatory democracy, citizens enjoy full prosperity, when responsibility is abided and freedom of choice is delegated to societies. Participation is also well connected with the discourse theory of democracy. Moreover, discourse theory encourages one step ahead in its primary and basic requirements. The idea of democracy can discusses people's equal rights as citizens in democratic countries. The notion of discourse democracy also correlates with deliberative democracy (Dryzek, 2000; Elster, 1998).

Deliberative democracy does not accommodate various opinions for will and strength in the majority. The structure of democracy was founded to protect the fundamental rights of the citizens. There is a common commitment to a logical manner of public policy. The concept of discourse openly supported the affected people through the element of decisions (Dryzek, 1990, 2000; Elster, 1998; Habermas, 1996; House & Howe, 1999). Democratisation is creating a meeting place among the people where the communication gap does end and dominance extends forward from this point of analysis. Accordingly, there is no kind of parameter, where the election process is the only democratic practice by the people. Social problems are resolved with the coordination of power groups and the people, it is the norm of due democratic exercise by the government and the people. Governance information is an access to the state of the people called a democratic nation. The people's trust and belief are increased in the elected government, only governance will happen by doing the right thing in the states. Although the government seems to be aware of the social problems and governance, eliminating the problems immediately, the people feel that it is a real democracy that is being delivered in fast mode.

Democratic accountability indicates that citizens have guts to control their government. The traditional notion of accountability pushes the citizens to be aware of the fundamental rights of modernday democracy. The norms of traditional democratic accountability indicated the people's rights within democratic states in the world. According to Edward Weber (1999, p. 453), many meaningful points of accountability have shifted during the period. The conceptualisation indicates various institutions and authority's roles in the different sectors i. e. public, private, and intermediary (Weber, 1999). Accountability talks about fairness, finance and performance. Accountability and finance attach importance to performing adequately to win the people's belief. To what extent the political actors who have vested state power, have been involved in the proper development of concern areas (Behn, 2001, p. 7)? Decentralised governance is one of the common approaches for the state model in democratic states. This model represents the most important similarities between decentralised governance and the probability of distribution of power. This policy is related to the norms of refinement which focuses the implementation of government programmes and their possibility to act. Thus, the various policies of the government shape the model of development in municipality areas. The separation of power is vested in the local government in a healthy democracy. Then the local government itself is responsible for area development. Local government leaders are also elected by direct participation in elections, that's why local leaders come together between the central government and citizens (Lindvall & Rothstein, 2006, p. 50).

The national and local governments mutually work together and share the powers called the multi-actor model. And this model represents the government workforce for the regional level of development. This governance model helps to eradicate recurring problems and major challenges. There are several obstacles created by the local bad element in the third world country. It is not easy to run any project and need to negotiate with these kinds of people. The national government policy is being accepted by the local government to apply projects in rural and semi-urban areas. This model added various power groups like NGOs, local private institutions, and other non-governmental actors to share the power between different actors for the real development of the nation-state in a modern democracy. Thus, this model of democracy extends their cooperation with the civil and private sphere as well. Professionals, local officials, and citizens make an environment a safer, cleaner, and more pleasant place to live. These are the real norms of modern democracy where people cooperate with various stakeholders to make a better neighbourhood. It is a noble example of participatory democracy where people to people contact makes better surrounding (Wagenaar, 2007, pp. 20–21).

The legitimization of various non-state actors that share the power to accelerate the development of the nation (Hanberger, 2009, p. 10). This legal approach to governance models is agreement and cooperation between the participating actors and other institutions. In addition, the legalisation of this mutual cooperation opens the door for future cooperation as well in advance. This initiative proves that participatory democracy has a better approach to work together and strengthen the norms of democracy. Through this participatory approach to the government brought a revolution in the society and people also happily accepted the government proposal. This kind of productive conceptual approach focuses on the scope and depth of governance. The act of participatory democracy easily binds in different directions. This kind of participatory democracy indicates elitist, participatory or discursive democracy in a nation-state.

There are two theories related to testing the governance of democracy. The first is Input legitimacy and the second is output legitimacy. Input legitimacy refers to those who agreed to the rule, and such democratic legitimacy strengthens the way of strong democratic states and to some extent underpins a system of legitimacy (Kjaer, 2004, p. 12). Output legitimacy is directly related to good governance and is demonstrated by considerable results. In contrast to the legitimacy of input, it is calculated that political processes and specific policies are the stories of success in input legitimacy (van Kersbergen & F. van Waarden, 2004, p. 158). Input legitimacy argues that increasing representative interest and deliberation can greatly influence the impact on the efficiency of output legitimacy (Smismans, 2004, pp. 459–460). The literature on comparative politics and public administration seeks to legitimise the efficiency and effectiveness of a given political process (Azmat, 2005; O'Dwyer & Ziblatt, 2006; Tomsic & Vehovar, 2006). The output legitimacy draws attention to its effectiveness and there is capacity to solve the traditional problem in the state. It has a bigger approach to check and balance governance. There is further analysis of input legitimacy, connecting the institutional bodies with interest representation and transparency (Bäckstrand, 2006, pp. 292–293).

According to the input-output theory, several governance-related problems are effectively solved by using tools from both theories. The underpinning of the institutional bodies mostly depends on these theories. Both theories make an initiative for the effectiveness of given institutions (Koenig-Archibugi, 2006, pp. 7–13). The principles of democracy are associated with efficiency and effectiveness and legitimacy determines it. Contemporary governance focuses on the diverse literature that it is necessary to consider legitimacy in broader sociological terms (Bernstein & Cashore, 2004, p. 41). The broader context of democracy can be found in the quality of governance. Thus, the high quality of democratic norms shapes easier ways for the socio-political connection between process and outcome, structure, and system to be more liberal in the sense of governability (Kooiman, 2000, p. 159).

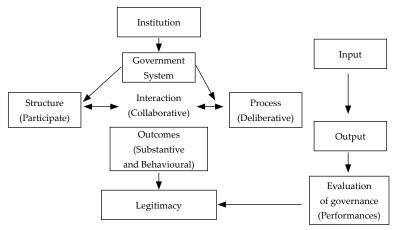


Figure 1: The Conceptual Model of Contemporary Governance

Source: Cadman (2011a: 5, adapted)

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH ANALYSIS

At the global level, governance is reaching out toward the adoption of the development model. The procedural arrangements operate under the common rule and practices that they agreed to focus on these issues (Keohane, 2003, p. 139). Governance itself is eager to promote the concept of multilevel cooperation and focuses on straightening democratic values (Held, 2003, p. 174). It expands their approach toward more inclusive society and better understanding between government and citizens. Thus, the government policy adopts wider theoretical democratic values by which people will be vocal about their democratic rights (Susskind, 2004, p. 61; Zovko, 2006, p. 128). Modern-day democracy has included the non-state actors in the policy of proportional development of the nation-state. And people will believe that the government reached their door and that it means the roots of democracy are increasing at all levels. As a result, without honesty, accountability, responsibility and transparency in governance, institutional bodies are unable to achieve the ultimate goal of people's welfare and strengthen the state. Many political leaders have long been dismissed from their constitutional office because of charges of corruption in many countries. Developing countries have bad inspiration for democratic practices. Even basic human rights are not provided by the governance in many countries in Asia, Africa, Latina America, and the Caribbean countries.

The contemporary government is working on transformation from the government to governance to strengthen contemporary democracy. This governmental transformation into governance is neither unconventional nor straightforward. The sovereignty of the democratic state is relevant despite the emergence of alternative institutions and the government has many corporations with those organisations. These institutions don't curtail the constitutional rights of the government and it complements and cooperates with national interests. The sharing of powers stands for civil society and other national or international organisations to boost the sustainable development of the nation-state. In the era of globalisation, there are international boundaries broken for the economic development of the global community. Global governance becomes easy to share problems and work on several key national and international issues. In the context of globalization, the practise of democracy is relevant to the traditional way of governing.

CONCLUSION

Democracy brought institutional reformation for the development of the nation-state. The contemporary political institutions focus on the better settlement of development approach and gradual reform of society. In the context of social rapprochement, the government can accelerate the proper development of a developing society. Western countries have developed their societies a long time ago and are also involved in supporting the developing countries from Asia, Africa, Latina America, the Caribbean countries, and oceanic countries. Many countries are suffering from different dimensions of populist ideology basically on the issues of immigration. Despite some degree of barriers, Western countries are continuously working for the welfare of people from war and conflict zones. In recent years, because of regional conflicts and civil war, the issue of refugees emerged as the subject of international communities to seek problems. The international organisation started the peace process under the UN flag in many countries, but issues are solved according to the UN charter.

The research finds that contemporary democracy also backslides to some extent in many countries. In this contemporary world where the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) are key global actors to lead the norms of democratisation at the international level. Despite efforts from these international institutions, there are many countries from the world which are continuously being ruled under authoritarian, military-led proxy democratic rule, single party orthodox regimes, and new populist governments. There is a need for more governance for the betterment of global communities that should be under democratic and constitutional values. To some extent, international organisations minimise the recurring conflicts in the north and eastern African countries. Thus, the middle-east countries have several issues with each other with neighbouring countries. There is also an endless conflict between Israel and Palestine that disturbs the peace process and regional cooperation. The global countries need to organise under one umbrella, then to eradicate the inner conflict among the countries. Then, through global diplomacy, to accelerate democratic values among people, society, and to set the path of democratisation for international peace and prosperity. The research investigation concludes that the only way is democracy and its tool can bring peace, stability, adequate regional and international development.

Finally, the article highlights that contemporary democracy needs to provide the state facilities to all people without any discrimination. The people's involvement is necessary for work and proper job assurance for all common citizens. If people will be engaged in their proper work, this kind of move will protect them from negativity. With the probability of employment, people can become a tool of terrorist organisations. That is why democratic nations need to manage and generate maximum work for the people. In a modern democracy, the various state governments must work together on broader issues to fulfil the democratic rights of people around the world.

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