

The Innate Nature of Governance: Historical Perspectives and Cultural Implications

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Abstract

This article examines the intrinsic nature of governance by analyzing the rise and fall of regimes, as well as the evolution of nations throughout history. The study considers the inherent capabilities of societies to accept changes and new social systems, with a focus on historical and cultural contexts in both Eastern and Western civilizations.

Introduction

The nature of governance and its relationship to the inherent qualities of societies is a complex and multifaceted topic. To understand whether governance is an innate aspect of human societies, it is essential to analyze historical trends, cultural contexts, and the impact of significant historical figures and events. This article will explore these dimensions by examining the history of governance, the specific cultural contexts of the Middle East and Western societies, and theoretical frameworks such as Zeno's paradox and practical polytheism.

Historical Analysis of Governance

To examine the innate nature of governance, one must study the rise and fall of regimes and the ups and downs of nations throughout history. Historically, the proportion of governance to revolutions is significantly higher, and the outcomes of revolutions are limited in their conclusiveness (Tilly, 1993). Revolutions often lead to the replacement of one regime with another, but the underlying structures of governance tend to persist. For example, the French

Revolution led to the overthrow of the monarchy, but it did not eliminate the centralized administrative system that characterized French governance (Furet, 1981).

Furthermore, the duration of regimes, social systems, and family relations indicate the inherent capability of nations to accept changes and new social systems (Hobsbawm, 1996). Long-lasting regimes often adapt to changing circumstances and incorporate new social norms. The longevity of the Chinese imperial system, which lasted for over two millennia, is a testament to the ability of a society to maintain stability while adapting to new ideologies and administrative practices (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006).

Cultural Contexts in the Middle East

In a previous article titled "God, the Teacher of the Nation," (Davoudpour, 2024) we depicted the pyramid of governance in the context of Middle Eastern civilizations. In this pyramid, God is at the apex, and the outcome is a king (as the shadow of God), a teacher (Muhammad), or both (Muhammad, Khomeini, etc.) (Lewis, 2002). This conceptual framework highlights the intertwining of religion and governance in the Middle East. Changes in the power pyramid within this civilization require significant transformations, often beyond the lifespan and influence of a single individual, as divinity is not a concept that easily evolves. The last significant transformation of divinity in the Middle East occurred over fourteen hundred years ago, establishing the apex of the power pyramid (Armstrong, 1993).

The political landscape of the Middle East has been shaped by the persistence of religious authority and its integration with political power. The Iranian Revolution of 1979, which resulted in the establishment of an Islamic Republic, is an example of how religious ideology can fundamentally reshape governance structures (Abrahamian, 1982). This revolution, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, combined religious leadership with political authority, reinforcing the concept of the ruler as the shadow of God.

Zeno's Paradox and Societal Change

If the hero of Zeno's paradox moves very swiftly, the societal tortoise has long been in motion before him (Eagle, 2016). This paradox illustrates the challenge of achieving significant societal change within a short period. The question here is not limited to changes in political governance but extends to the inherent ability of people to accept virtues outside the pyramid of power and governance. Such acceptance may appear possible superficially, but a reformer may not necessarily acquire new innate abilities (Berlin, 1990).

Societal change often requires a reconfiguration of deeply ingrained cultural norms and values. For instance, the abolition of slavery in the United States was a prolonged process that involved

not only legal changes but also a fundamental shift in societal attitudes towards race and human rights (Foner, 1988). This shift was not instantaneous and required continuous efforts from abolitionists, legislators, and civil rights activists.

Western Societies and Governance

This is also true for Western countries. Innate capabilities within the general population are influenced by a governance pyramid firmly established in society (Fukuyama, 2011). In Western societies, the governance pyramid can be depicted as God, Jesus, and the nation, reflecting the historical influence of Christianity on political structures. This configuration has shaped the development of Western political thought and institutions.

For example, the concept of the divine right of kings, which held that monarchs were appointed by God and thus held absolute authority, was a central tenet of European political theory during the medieval and early modern periods (Kantorowicz, 1957). This belief reinforced the legitimacy of monarchical rule and shaped the governance structures of many European states.

The Enlightenment period, however, introduced new ideas about individual rights and the separation of church and state, leading to significant changes in governance (Porter, 2000). The American and French Revolutions exemplify how these Enlightenment principles were implemented to establish new forms of government based on democratic ideals and the rule of law (Palmer, 1959).

Polytheism and Capitalism

The contrast between East and West (excluding capitalism) can be interpreted as practical polytheism (Weber, 1958). In capitalism, the pyramid of governance can be depicted as wealth, God, and the nation or money and nationality. This reflects the significant role of economic factors in shaping governance structures within capitalist societies. The importance of this article lies within the growing role of the Capitalism in human communications.

Max Weber's analysis of the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism highlights how religious values can influence economic behavior and, by extension, governance structures (Weber, 1958). The emphasis on hard work, thrift, and individual responsibility in Protestantism contributed to the development of capitalist economies in Western Europe and North America.

Drawing such pyramids may be useful for predicting the outcomes, understanding, and eventual interactions between nations. We can also refer to these depictions as the matrix of governance. The matrix approach allows for a comparative analysis of different governance structures and their

cultural and historical contexts. For instance, the varying responses to the global financial crisis of 2008 can be understood through the lens of different governance matrices, highlighting the interplay between economic policies, political institutions, and cultural values (Roubini & Mihm, 2010).

Conclusion

While not a conclusive pattern can be reached due to the size of the experience and the depth of the history, this study highlights the complexity of governance as an innate aspect of human societies, influenced by historical and cultural contexts. Understanding the pyramids of governance in different civilizations provides valuable insights into the inherent capabilities of societies to accept and adapt to changes. The interplay between religious authority, economic factors, and societal values shapes governance structures and their evolution over time.

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