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Democracy without Democratization

by

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Abstract

In light of the many examples of failed democratization experiments in the former Second and Third World during the post-Cold War era, the question arises: Why do these experiments fail? Is not the Western liberal democratic model the "final form" of government, best suited to bring peace and prosperity to the nations of the world and thus, constituting the "end of history"? This thesis argues that good governance is not the sole purview of Western nations and can be secured through various forms of government and constitution more relevant to the historical, cultural, geographic and material circumstances of the society in question. This can be observed through an examination of the historical record. Distilled from that, one can identify timeless pillars of good governance, redefined outside of the "Washington consensus". This thesis argues that democracy without democratization (alternative governance) can be imagined without adhering to any particular political ideological bias.

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Introduction

"It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government - except all the others that have been tried." – Sir Winston Churchill[2]

The 20th Century Legacy of Freedom over Tyranny

In, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Francis Fukuyama proclaimed that, "... liberal democracy may constitute the 'end point of mankind's ideological evolution', and the 'final form of human government'", thus constituting, in a sense, the "end of history" (Fukuyama, 1992, p. xi). This thesis takes the decided opposite stance. While the fates of human societies admittedly take different trajectories, history itself is far from over and in fact, may only be just beginning. History is not on a trajectory towards a particular destiny, nor is any nation.[3]

Rather, nations and human societies are shaped by history - and by a plethora of ideational and spiritual perspectives, as well as varying geographical, material, cultural, and social circumstances that together comprise an ever-shifting human condition. It is out of this condition - a struggle for survival and self-determination - that families become clans, clans become tribes, tribes become peoples, peoples become nations, and nations become members of global society. And as different peoples and nations

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[1] By "democracy without democratization", I mean to argue for substantive democracy arising from social foundations versus forcing Western-style, procedural and electoral democracy on non-Western nations.

[2] http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes/Sir_Winston_Churchill/

[3] See particularly, Chapter 5 on "An Idea for a Universal History" where Fukuyama discusses the Hegelian dialectic and the historical evolution of nations (Fukuyama, 1992, pp. 55-70).

experience different conditions, or the same, so will they construct their institutions - political, social, economic and religious - to govern themselves accordingly. It is only through the intervention of other nations and empires that these natural designs are unnaturally altered – for better or for worse.

Fukuyama is wrong in two senses. First, there are other forms of democracy - and the word itself can have different meanings for different societies and peoples. Second, democracy is an evolving concept even in the West itself - and thus, has not reached a "final form" in that social and historical context either.

Yet it easy to see why Fukuyama and other champions of liberal democracy have cause to be triumphant. The end of the Cold War brought about the collapse of communism, or perhaps it was the other way around. It seemed that democracy and capitalism had won. The focus shifted from a stalemate between two equal foes, carving up the world between them, to building a world of peaceful democracies.

Thus, the belief in the superiority of the liberal democratic system of government became even more unshakeable. After all, did not liberal democratic nations band together to defeat Hitler, the tyrant of all tyrants? Was it not those same allies who stared down the Soviet Union and its totalitarian regime for four decades and emerged victorious? Was it not the partnership of democracy and capitalism that produced the most advanced and wealthy nations history has ever known – even putting a man on the moon? Was it not now the task to bring the fruits of enlightenment, liberty, technological advancement and prosperity to the less fortunate nations of the earth, who by merely embracing the virtues of liberal democracy and the free market, and adopting its form of

government, could throw off the shackles of poverty and oppression? The answer to the latter question seemed to be an emphatic "yes!"

However, almost twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the wave of democracy seems to have broken on the beach, with many a well-intentioned experiment in democratization ending in failure – or resulting in an even a worse situation than before. Nonetheless, the desire for more political freedom in the form of democracy is still strong in many countries of the former Third World. As David Held notes, "There is a striking paradox to note regarding the contemporary era: from Africa to Eastern Europe, Asia to Latin America, more and more nations and groups are championing the idea of democracy; but they are doing so at just that moment when the very efficacy of democracy as a national form of political organization appears open to question." (Held, in Linklater, 2000, p. 2029) Even when faced with a growing unease about their *own* governments in established democracies themselves, given political apathy, corruption, and declining voter turnout in the strongholds of Western democracy like America and Canada[4], many remain undaunted.

With few real challengers left to liberal democracy, it is understandable why the norm of liberal democratic governance is still so entrenched. Thomas Franck states, "... one way to promote universal and perpetual non-aggression – probably the best and, perhaps, the only way – is to make democracy an entitlement of all peoples" (Franck, 1992, p.88). Franck concludes that democracy is emerging as a "global normative entitlement" and states that, "... the problems of underdevelopment can only be

[4] http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0781453.html, http://www.cbc.ca/canada/ontariovotes2007/story/2007/10/11/ov-turnout-071010.html, http://www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=pas&document=turnout&lang=e&textonly=false

addressed successfully in a world of stable, peaceable nations, which, in turn, also presupposes a world of open democracies" (Ibid, pp. 90-91). But what is meant by a liberal democracy? And just exactly how will a world of democracies bring about peace? John Owen defines a liberal democracy,

> "... as a state that instantiates liberal ideas [particularly the freedom of the individual][5], one where liberalism is the dominant ideology and citizens have leverage over war decisions. That is, liberal democracies are those states with a visible liberal presence, and that feature free speech and regular competitive elections of the officials empowered to declare war. I argue that liberal ideology and institutions work in tandem to bring about democratic peace." (Owen, in Linklater, 2000, p. 926)

This belief in the superiority of liberal democracy, economic liberalism, and their ability to bring about a peaceful prosperous world has virtually become an article of faith – with Western countries, the United Nations and the Bretton Woods Institutions (i.e., The World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization) turning their energies from reconstructing post-War Europe and playing Cold War power politics to building democracy around the world through global economic and development policy and peacebuilding initiatives (Boutros-Ghali, 1995).

Democratization Reaches the Former Second and Third Worlds

The so-called "Washington Consensus" emerged from a conference sponsored by the Institute for International Economics in Washington in 1990 between US officials and a group of Latin-American policy-makers, academics, and international agencies that focussed on adopting policy instruments of fiscal discipline that would, ostensibly, spur economic growth in the region and lower poverty and inequality rates following the

[5] My brackets

currency crises of the 1980s (Burki and Perry, 1999, p. 1). This, Burki and Perry point out, was successful in keeping inflation under control and did have some effect on poverty levels, but ultimately became a blueprint for economic and trade liberalization - with the role of institutions decidedly taking a backseat or even being ignored in favour of market solutions (Ibid. p. 1-2). The Washington consensus seems to have produced mixed economic results in some cases, but has been a clear political disaster in others, with a tendency to measure success in terms of the establishment of the structures, processes, and institutions of market democracy as opposed to actual "good governance" that benefits the well-being of the population in question, e.g., better education, public health, infrastructure, etc.

Politically speaking, some transitions to liberal democracy have been met with relative success, at least in the form of holding regular elections and mostly resolving disputes through democratic processes, for example, Hungary, the Ukraine, Slovakia and the Czech Republic (Graham and Lindahl et al, 2006). Schmitz points out that there have been some successful challenges to authoritarian rule in Africa, particularly in Kenya and Uganda. He identifies the mobilization of transnational human rights groups as playing a key role in the overthrow of the oppressive regimes of Idi Amin and Daniel arap Moi (Schmitz, 2006, p. 65).

Other attempts at establishing Western-style democracy have miserably failed, with tragic consequences, as has been witnessed most acutely in Sub-Saharan African states like Rwanda, Liberia, Angola, Somalia, Uganda, Cotê D'Ivoire, and others (Wiseman 1998, Wiseman et al, 1995) where the failure of these states, and the failure of reform attempts have often led to a re-establishment of "legitimate" authority that really

is just a return to autocratic or "strong-man" rule (Zartman et al, 1995).[6] Still others in Eastern Europe and Latin America show indeterminate results with democratic movements highly contested, complex and subject to criminalization of the political process at the same time that civil societal activism appears to be gaining a footing (May and Milton et al, 2005). For example, Russia in particular, seems to be in a transitory phase where the instability of political and economic reforms, and a weak civil society threaten to undermine the same, with a possible return to authoritarian or communist rule an ever-lingering worry for democracy promoters (Zuzowski, 1998, p.7, p.53). These examples cast doubt on both the effectiveness and the legitimacy of either promoting or foisting one particular system of government on other nations.

Democracy versus Good Governance

It is not my intent to disparage democracy, or to argue that it is a poor form of government. Rather, I argue that it is a system, like any other system, that arose in response to the historical and material conditions in which certain societies, in this case Western societies, found themselves. But the fact that there have been so many failed or partially failing democracies in transitional industrial societies like Eastern Europe, and post-colonial, "developing" nations over the last 50 years leads to the question: Why do these experiments in democracy in non-Western nations fail? And, could there not be

[6] Njuguna Ng'ethe defines the term *strongman* as, "... institutional power relationships in which power distribution is skewed in favour of the person(s) *who claims* to head the state/regime at that particular time. Whether such a person is actually perceived as having the power, and *accepted* as having acquired it *legitimately*, is a matter of very serious consequences on what he does with that power." (Ng'ethe, "Strongmen, State Formation, Collapse, and Reconstruction in Africa", in Zartman, 1995, p. 252-3)

other forms of political association that could be equally as effective for non-Western states as democracy has been for the West?

The answer that this thesis puts forward is that democracy is only one form of government that can bring about good governance. If it is assumed that the *raison d être* of government is to provide for the peace and prosperity of the political community then the normative focus should be on *good governance*, redefined outside of the "Washington consensus", as a normative concept itself, and its efficacy in managing the social, economic, and political affairs of the people. Therefore,

The central argument I will advance is that the western liberal democratic form of government does not necessarily and automatically result in 'good' governance. Rather, 'good governance' can be a normative model for governments, while individual regimes adopt different constitutional forms that are inherent and relevant to their cultural-historical context and the material and geographic circumstances of their societies.

This statement raises several questions that must be answered by this thesis. Most importantly, we must attempt to uncover what the essence of "good governance" is, if it is not Western liberal democracy itself. Naturally, this prompts the question, "what is *the good*?" which inevitably brings us back to Plato and the as-of-yet-unanswered question that lies at the heart of all philosophical inquiry. I am certainly not so presumptuous as to believe that I have the answer to that timeless question; however, the practical and material considerations inherent in the word "governance" should root the combined term "*good* governance" in the more tangible and definable world of social and political power relations and its activities.

The difficulty in defining *good* governance lies in the fact that values concerning what is good or bad, and what is right or wrong, are contested. Furthermore, the behaviour of institutions, as declared promoters and defenders of norms shared by

society, often conflict with societal and cultural values as those values evolve and are transformed due to changing social and historical circumstances. Therefore, to attain ideal *good* governance, values and institutions must be in perfect harmony, which may ultimately be unattainable. However, that harmony is something to which all political societies strive - perhaps at times approaching it - but never actually realizing it.

In the context of this thesis and its critique of forced democratization, the relationship between democracy and good governance is one of *procedural* institutional democracy versus *substantive* social democracy. It is the imposition of procedural Western-style democracy on non-Western nations (through an obsessive focus on elections and artificially constructing new, Western-inspired legal and political institutions) that should be rejected. Instead, what should be favoured is supporting and promoting the development of culturally and historically relevant institutions and practices that can form the social basis for *substantive* democracy in non-Western nations. In, *The Theory of Social Democracy*, Thomas Meyer and Lewis Hinchman state,

> "Inevitably, social democracy must maintain a delicate balance between these two objectives: making democracy both social and effective. Democracy must perforce be given a social foundation, since without that there is no civic equality. It is what makes democracy democratic. Yet the social groundwork must assume forms that simultaneously contribute to economic efficiency, social integration, and democratic stability, for those too are prerequisites for sustainable democratization." (Meyer and Hinchman, 2007, p. 229)

This thesis builds on this understanding of social democracy by adding that the social foundations Meyer and Hinchman speak of must also be developed within the historical, cultural, material and geographic circumstances of the society in question – as social foundations are no longer isolated within the borders of a particular country, but

are also shaped by their political, economic, and ideational relationship to a wider world in a new global era. Ultimately, *good* governance in this thesis means those conditions and activities of governing that support and develop the social foundation for substantive democracy in the unique context of an individual society that finds itself a member of the global community. This stands in opposition to merely constructing the procedural and institutional window-dressing of Western-style liberal market democracy in an attempt to re-fashion the world in the image of the West.

From this standpoint, further questions arise that will be explored by this thesis. First, what is the foundation of the assumption that Western liberal democracy is a superior form of government? Second, can good governance be observed in states, past or present, outside of the context of modern western democracy? If it is indeed a norm unto itself, and not the result of any particular form of government, then how do we re-imagine and redefine good governance without Western democratic ideology? Lastly, if the latter is possible, how can one construct a new model of governance that is as free of ideological bias as possible, yet which still embodies the *spirit* of democratic values (which are after all not to be eschewed) that can be found in different expressions throughout the many peoples of the world?

Thesis Structure and Methodology

With such a large topic, that entails looking broadly at governance throughout the ages, the nuanced debates over the meaning of democracy and the issues of democratization, and that examines the complex inter-connections between belief systems, ideology, material concerns, historical events, geography, culture, etc., the only methodological

approach that is suitable to this thesis is one of historical empirical and qualitative analysis. Thus, I will use a "classical" approach to international relations that largely concerns itself with the discourse of democracy and governance. Hedley Bull describes the classical approach as,

> "... the approach to theorizing that derives from philosophy, history, law, and that is characterized above all by explicit reliance upon the exercise of judgement and by the assumptions that if we confine ourselves to strict standards of verification and proof there is very little of significance that can be said about international relations, that general propositions about this subject must therefore derive from a scientifically imperfect process of perception or intuition, and that these general propositions cannot be accorded anything more than the tentative and inconclusive status appropriate to their doubtful origin." (Bull, in Linklater, 2000, p. 363)[7]

To advance this thesis, I will close the introduction by briefly reviewing key points of Aristotle's *Politics* as it relates to his discussion of the various forms of constitutions - specifically, rule by the one, the few, or the many - and how each can, in their own way, bring about good government. The usage of Aristotle is very selective and focussed but will form the essential theoretical foundation from which I will proceed - namely, that different constitutions, or forms of government, can be equally successful in bringing about good governance depending on the particular historical, cultural, geographic and material circumstances of the polity in question. Lastly, Aristotle's *Politics* also provides an excellent early critique of democracy that will serve as a useful discursive context from which this thesis will examine the concept of good governance over the *longue dureé.*

The structure of this thesis consists of two parts. Part One, including Chapters One and Two, examines democracy in more detail and in a modern context, focussing on

[7] "International Theory: The case for a classical approach", *World Politics,* vol. 18(3), 1966, pp. 361-377.

its various possible meanings, the assumption that liberal democracy is the "final" form of government that must be brought to all nations, the origins of this assumption, and the legacy of Western foreign policy decisions towards non-western states, (particularly Africa and the Middle East) in the 20th and 21st centuries that have resulted from this. Part One closes with a discussion of the fates of human societies and reveals that if we are to reject the assumption that the Western liberal democratic model is superior to all others, then the understanding of the nature of good governance must lie elsewhere. Therefore, in order to uncover the essence of what good governance *actually* may be, we are compelled to search for it in all its forms, past and present, so we may be able to imagine alternative forms of political association that can help lead us to a redefinition of good governance itself, free of any modern ideological bias. This is the task of Part Two.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter One looks at the modern definition of democracy and its meanings and demonstrates how narrow conceptualizations that focus on "free and fair" elections and the procedural nature of the liberal democratic process leave us with an impoverished understanding of what broad-based political association is and how it hampers our ability to view good governance in an alternative light. From this vantage point, the chapter will then address the current "Washington consensus" approach to good governance and peacebuilding by providing an empirical analysis of recent "good governance" and peacebuilding strategies that have failed in much of the former Third World, particularly Africa. Chapter One questions the wisdom of foisting a "one-size-fits-all" democratic model on "developing nations" and examines how the language surrounding the good

governance agenda really just creates a pretext for the expansion of neo-liberal economics and the political project of transforming non-Western nations into the image of the West's most powerful countries.

While it is relatively easy to show *that* Western policy-makers and many academics believe in the superiority of western liberal democracy, it is much more difficult to singularly answer the question *why* they do so. Thus, Chapter Two will discuss the roots of this belief as it has emerged, spread and become manifest within the context of modernity, colonialism and now, the debate over "development". I will argue that the belief in the superiority of Western liberal democracy has its modern origins in Orientalism (Said, 2003),[8] which provided the historical narrative and ontological, contextual and discursive foundation for the eventual project of forced democratization.

My hope is that by refocusing the debate on the pitfalls of dogmatically "bringing democracy to the world", the political science community will be better able to recommend historically- and culturally-sensitive policies for Western and international involvement in "developing" countries, emerging polities, and post-conflict societies.

Chapter Three undertakes an empirical analysis of several historical states in order to demonstrate that the tradition of good governance, broadly conceived, can be found throughout historical record. The goal is to identify key elements, or pillars, of good governance that are timeless, and therefore useful for eventually constructing a new model for conceptualizing governance. To do this, I will focus on four specific case-

[8] While it could be argued that virtually all cultures throughout history have exhibited prejudice towards the practices, social behaviour, and governing systems of other cultures and/or civilizations, e.g., the Hellenic Greeks towards the ways of the [Persian] 'barbarians' (Villing, 2005, Brosius 2005), I am chiefly concerned with the modern context and how these beliefs have a direct impact on the foreign policy of Western states.

studies: Ancient Babylon (circa 1750 BCE), pre-Classical Persia in the 6th Century BCE, the Anglo-Saxon state prior to the Norman Conquest of 1066, and The Ashanti Kingdom of West Africa in the early modern period.

These case-studies will reveal effective and successful regimes whose forms of government was not that of liberal democracy yet nonetheless provided good governance for their people – at least as far as any state can claim to have done so. My review of the historical record will go beyond merely pointing out examples of benevolent dictators, or enlightened monarchs, but also describe inclusive and broad-based political governance arrangements that were able to *include* various social groupings, identities, aspirations and interests so that power was diffused throughout the state/society complex. This is perhaps the central pillar of - and chief pre-requisite for - good governance.

Chapter Four examines governance and defines its key constituent elements in more detail, focussing on what I term *essentialist governance*. For the time being, *essentialist governance* can be defined as the output (in the form of actual policies and political behaviour) of the dynamic relationship between social, economic, cultural and informal political steering mechanisms (found in society at large)[9] and the state and its system of government. Building on the discussions of Chapter Three, an attempt will be made to construct an exploratory model for imagining alternative governance, leading to a redefinition of good governance itself that is not derived from any particular ideological predisposition. The goal of sketching out this model is to understand the cyclical dynamics of a properly functioning governance system and to propose new terms for understanding how governance works, and ultimately, how good governance can be

[9] I call this sphere of informal governance the *governance milieu* (see Chapter Four).

delivered through various different mechanisms and in a variety of historical, social and political contexts.

Aristotle's *Politics* as a Theoretical Foundation for Good Governance

Etymologically speaking, the origins of the term *democracy* rest with Classical Greek thought. There were at least two words that Plato and Aristotle used in reference to the state and its citizens, *demos* and *polis*.[10] The *polis* was thought of as the ethically virtuous citizenry (forming the state itself) associating politically *in the interests of the state* as a whole towards the realization of justice (Sinclair, 1992, pp.59-61, 209). The end of the *polis*, therefore, was to satisfy the natural impulse of individuals to live and associate together and to pursue *common interest* - not individual interest - of which physical and economic well being apply. This is referred to by Aristotle as "the *good* life" – which, in our contemporary world, is frequently misused and misinterpreted as meaning "a life of material wealth and pleasure". In fact, it meant a life secured by the state so that its members could live a life of *virtue*, through which they would, as political "animals", eventually perfect the state itself (Sinclair, p.59). Here we have the etymological foundation of the term, *politics*.

By contrast, *democracy* means, literally, "rule by the people". This is the simple, unfiltered translation where the ancient Greek word *demos* means "the people" and *cracy* grammatically denotes "rule by". However, as will be discussed in further detail, there is more to the term *demos* than simply "the people". For now, the *demos* could be thought

[10] There was also the word *autarkeia*, which meant "political and/or economic independence". This was considered the point at which the state was formed, becoming self-sufficient and able to then secure its economic and political interests (Sinclair, 1992, p.59). It is ostensibly also the root term from which *autonomy*, *autarky*, and *autocracy* derive.

of, according to Sinclair, as *the mob* - which exercised its political will in the direction of satisfying its own appetitive impulses (Ibid, p.191). In this light, *democracy* can actually be interpreted as "mob rule".

My dealings with Aristotle in this thesis are almost exclusively limited to his forms of government and the central premise that the essence of good governance is that those who rule must do so in the interest of the common good.[11] To many this would seem self-evident, and indeed, much lip service is paid to that effect - yet good governance continues to elude us in many places. One of the reasons for this, apart from simple corruption, is undoubtedly the difficulty in agreeing on what the "common good" actually is for any given polity in the first place. Inspired by Aristotle's philosophy, I argue that the best form of government for any given polity may differ depending on its needs, geography, size, ethno-linguistic composition, and so on. As such, the common good does not have a specific set of guarantors that can be applied universally. This becomes even more problematic when one tries to extend the same definition of the common good across political, economic and cultural borders, particularly when an unequal material or political relationship exists between two or more states.

However, despite the fact that what may be good for the goose is not necessarily good for the gander, we need not let this encumber or obscure our natural (or cultivated) ability to know what is "good" and what is not. Obviously, a ruler who starves his own people, brutalizes them and hordes wealth for himself is a bad ruler and one who does his

[11] While the "common good" is difficult to define, it can be thought of as condition whereby all orders of society and its various groups share in the wealth of the state - which in turn, defends their interests, follows a fair and just application of laws, and creates the social, economic and political conditions whereby as many people as possible can live in peace and prosperity.

best to provide for his people, protect their physical well-being and ensure an equitable (if not equal) distribution of wealth is a good one.[12]

In his *Politics*, Aristotle proposes that there are six basic forms of government: three good ones and three bad ones – with the bad forms being perversions of the good forms (Sinclair, p.190). Essentially, Aristotle describes three modes of just government: rule by the one (*monarchy*), rule by the few (*aristocracy*), and rule by the many (*polity*). In each case, those who rule do so in the greater common interest of the state – regardless of the particular constitution. These good forms of government become perverted, in turn, when the rulers begin to rule in their own individual interest and utilize fear, rhetoric,[13] and misinformation to further their selfish goals. Thus, a monarch who rules in such a way becomes a *tyrant*, an aristocracy becomes an *oligarchy*, and a polity becomes, interestingly, a *democracy*. Although our modern historical context differs greatly today compared with that of Greece in the 4th century BCE, this definition of democracy as "the rule of the many" in their own *individual* self-interest is as applicable today as it was in Aristotle's time. In this sense, we could say that in the Western world, we essentially live in Aristotelian democracies.

The usefulness of *The Politics* in this regard is twofold. First, it offers a timeless critique of the nature of democratic politics. Unwittingly foreshadowing Churchill's famous quote, Aristotle considered *democracy* to be not the worst of the perverted forms

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[12] It is my opinion that wealth does not need to be *equally* distributed throughout society in order for that society to be just. This puts me at odds with classical Marxist thinking. Rather, I subscribe to an organic conception of society (which, conversely, puts me at odds with certain pillars of modernity) where socio-economic hierarchy is acceptable as long as the lower orders have a reasonable standard of living and can enjoy a satisfying and peaceful existence. Furthermore, the onus is upon the privileged classes to ensure that those less fortunate than they are treated fairly – be that through charity or through the influence they wield with the rulers themselves. Thus, the term *equity* best represents such an arrangement – fair distribution but not necessarily equal distribution.

[13] 'Sophistry' in Aristotle's time.

of government but essentially less bad than the others, those being *oligarchy* and particularly *tyranny* – which he deemed the worst because it was a perversion of the most 'divine' form, kingship (Sinclair, p.239-40). It is easy to misread Aristotle when he explains that democracy is said to exist when the free poor (who are practically always a majority) are sovereign. While to the modern democrat, it might appear that this is a good thing because it empowers the lower orders, Aristotle was actually sceptical of such an arrangement because it placed power in the hands of those without means who naturally, would rule in their own selfish interests due to their material situation. They would use their political power to improve the latter, without due regard to the other segments of society. Sinclair notes that the term *demos* thus had a brutal and blunt connotation to the Greeks, meaning literally "power to the people" or in modern terms, "mob rule" – which was not considered to be a particularly desirable state of affairs (Ibid, pp.191, 250, 254).

Furthermore, those democratic leaders (*demagogues*) who came to power were generally oriented towards the overthrow of the wealthier (elite) classes. However, this would often, according to Aristotle, result in the eventual establishment of either oligarchies (as a back-lash against democratic rule) or tyranny as the democratic revolution would usually bring to power someone who was, true to his origins, inclined to rule in his own personal interest and not in that of the larger state as a whole – which included the wealthy classes (Ibid, p.250). As this demagogue's position becomes increasingly untenable and subject to revolt from all sides, the state lapses into tyranny as he vainly tries to hold on to power. When one thinks of modern examples of such leaders, like Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, the relevance of this critique to today's world is striking - particularly in the context of observing democratization efforts in countries that

have had little or no experience with democracy. It is thus one of history's great and tragic over-simplifications to assign democracy the emotively pleasing definition "rule by the people" – a notoriously fluffy and nebulous concept that has served to keep as many tyrants in power as in obscurity.

Second, Aristotle demonstrates (through a more practical political theory than his mentor Plato) that good governance can be delivered by various constitutions and need not be tied to a particular model of an ideal state as was envisioned in *The Republic*. This prompts the question, "Does it matter *who* rules for the state to be considered just?[14] And is the delivery of good governance also dependent upon this?" Throughout his *Politics*, Aristotle refers to the suitability of various constitutions to the particular needs of a state/polis and surmises that perhaps a mixture of different types of government may be best in the end. While he does favour particular types as being more desirable than others on a grand scale of virtue, he clearly allows that some constitutions are better suited to a particular state/polis given their specific nature, geographical location, interests, and so on. For example, an ethnically homogeneous state made up largely of fishermen and merchant classes concerned almost exclusively with maritime commerce and trade may require one type of constitution and a large land-based state encompassing multiple regions, multiple frontiers, and an ethnically and culturally diverse society would require another type to adequately manage its varied and complex concerns. It is upon this theoretical premise that the essential argument of this thesis is based.

Despite the contextual and historical gap between our modern societies and those of the distant past, the strength of an essentially timeless philosophical argument holds no

[14] The one, the few, or the many – or classes, specific groups, etc.

less currency or purchase in today's world. This is particularly the case with politics – an ever-turbulent sea of upheaval and change that conceals enduring patterns of behaviour, custom and ritual - some of which are unique to individual societies, others of which are shared across cultural, linguistic, religious and even historical boundaries.[15] It is the task of the student of politics and civilization to make sense of these patterns so that he or she may better understand the human condition and the abiding issues of power, wealth and justice that determine it.

In this light, it becomes critical to examine democracy carefully as a system among many systems and not as some form of divine political providence. We must be more conscious and cognizant of what we mean when we say it, its various nuances, and how others may conceive of it differently. This becomes particularly important if it is either being "promoted" or foisted upon others in one fashion or another. Indeed, as noted above, the superficial translation of "rule by the people" is unhelpful and prone to misuse and sabotage from all political camps. A similar problem arises with the adjective "democratic". The literal meaning is actually quite vague as it merely implies some sort of governing activity involving "the people" and thus, we face a further problem with yet another ill-defined and assumptive term; just exactly who are "the people"?

In our modern context, "the people" has a definite plebiscitary connotation to it as well as a proletarian sensibility. But *how* exactly do the people rule? Do they actually rule at all? Could not modern Western liberal democracy be viewed as a system whereby the state is actually governed by political elites *claiming* to represent the people but not necessarily doing so? Could not this system be described as one where the masses engage

[15] See *Rationalism in Politics and other Essays, by* Michael Oakeshott, (Liberty Press: Indiana, 1991).

in a plebiscitary exercise to select legislators then immediately following the elections hand over actual sovereignty to officials whom they will never meet?[16] These questions have not been satisfactorily answered as they relate to the debate on good governance and require more rigorous scrutiny to shed light on the nature of social power relations within society and how those relations are shaped by the various forces acting on the state and from within in it - everything from the spiritual to the geographic.[17]

We need to distil from the broad, Western-centric, and often uncritical conceptualization of democracy the important values of freedom, social justice and equity and acknowledge that these values can vary from society to society and/or be expressed in different ways. We also need to understand that they can be secured, protected and promoted through various mechanisms of governance and social reconciliation that vary across different cultural, geographic and historical contexts. The chief ontological task of this thesis will be to separate modern Western liberal democracy conceptually from "good governance" and see how the latter has been observable throughout history and can take many constitutional and institutional forms. From this new conceptual vantage point, we may begin to imagine alternative forms of governance.

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[16] These questions are somewhat Weberian in nature where plebiscitary democracy assumes a purely functional and instrumental role in preventing authoritarian rule without espousing any metaphysical or normative values more commonly assigned to democracy in our times (Eliaeson, 1998, p.47-59).

[17] Hence the superior explanative value of theories (in my opinion) like those of Antonio Gramsci and his critical theory successors, i.e., Robert W. Cox, that properly locate the source of political power in different segments of society, examine their interrelationships and thus explain how order and power is maintained in both domestic and international contexts.

Part One

Chapter One: The Legacy of Forced Democratization

"We defend and we build a way of life, not for America alone, but for all mankind." – Franklin Delano Roosevelt[18]

Democracy in the Modern Context

Democracy is, ultimately, a contested term. It can mean different things to different people, yet at the same time, carries with it tremendous emotive power, regardless of the context in which it is being used or the ideology of the individual who invokes it. For Westerners, (apathetic citizens aside) it is an essential, personal, and intrinsic element of our very social, economic, and political lives. For others, it may carry a less comprehensive and more focussed meaning, such as local control over resources, noted in the example of India (Empire and Democracy Panel, 2003, p. 12). Of particular importance to this thesis is understanding the way in which democracy has become entrenched in the Western mind to the point where it has more or less ceased to be a contested political concept – as it has been for most of its history (Andrews and Chapman, eds., 1995, Bensel, 2004) – or a particular system of government among a range of many systems (as will be explored in Chapter Three), but rather, an article of faith – almost a fetish, if you will, that is so enchanting that Western policy makers and leaders seem unable to imagine any other system.

This fetish drives the foreign policy engine of the Western world – both from the top down (in the form of policy), and the bottom up (in the form of political opinion) –

[18] http://en.proverbia.net/citasautor.asp?autor=16231&page=3

and seems impervious to change, even when faced with repeated examples of failed democracy experiments. The reasons why this is so will be explored in Chapter Two of this thesis. For now, it is important to define democracy, not from the standpoint of its philosophical, historical or etymological origins, but as it stands today.

Seymour Martin Lipset defines democracy as, "An institutional arrangement in which all adult individuals have the power to vote, through free and fair competitive elections, for their chief executive and national legislature" (Lipset, 2004, p. 19). This minimalist definition is proposed primarily for the purposes of quantitatively evaluating the degree to which democracy is or is not present in any given society and thus, its state of democratization (Ibid, p. 27). This empirical evidence can later be used, he argues, to evaluate the moral and qualitative prospects of democracy. For that purpose, his definition may be useful. However, the problem with such a narrow conceptual definition is twofold.

First, it assumes the eminent superiority of the competitive model and places too much faith in the actual positive transformative power of voting.[19] Second, when used as the conceptual basis for implementing foreign policy in the area of democracy promotion, "development" and peacebuilding, or evaluating "progress", a minimalist definition that is ostensibly suitable for policy leaders to comprehend often removes important theoretical depth and nuances and thus can be very misleading and even damaging.

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[19] I have always felt that critical discussion about the assumed virtue of vote-casting as an effective means for deciding on a course of action has been sorely lacking, if not non-existent. I have never been convinced that simply tallying up people's opinions (which may be ill-informed or misguided) and then going with "whatever the majority says" is the best means of determining policy for the whole of society. In the case of most established democracies, voting is usually a vehicle only for changing masters in a house that has already been ordered through some form of social hegemony (see Robert W. Cox on Gramsci, 1994). Thus, only a relatively minor shift in ideological preference (substituting for actual political change) is often the result. I also reject the common rebuttal to this state of affairs that "there simply isn't any better way" as unsatisfying.

Stephen Walt points out that certain simple "theories" used by policy makers, for example, the "domino effect" theory regarding the spread of communism in Third World countries during the Cold War and Admiral Von Tirpitz's "risk theory" in the prelude to World War I, actually led to poor policy choices based on skeletal theories of international relations (Walt, 2005, pp.28-29).

As will be seen, this model of competitive electoral democracy often serves to actually destabilize society and can be the prelude to internal conflict and violence, particularly in the case of post-conflict societies – the very target of many supposed democratization efforts. It also ignores other alternative models of participation and consultation that could be based on other criteria, for example, consensus. By contrast, I feel that it is important to capture the qualitative meaning(s) first, in order to give proper context to any later quantitative and empirical study. Limiting democracy to a narrow definition based on competitive elections shackles our understanding of it, predetermines the parameters in which democracy will be studied, and misleads us in evaluating the progress of political reform. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, it impedes and discourages the development of alternative conceptualizations of people-based participation.

By broadening our understanding of democracy, we can better evaluate the *actual* success of democratization efforts in bringing about a more just, prosperous and secure state of affairs for people in the non-Western world in general, and post-conflict societies in particular. In this light, I identify five ways in which democracy has qualitative meaning in our general modern, and not exclusively Western, context – not listed in any particular order of importance or usage.

First, democracy is a broad notion that means *a political state of social and/or economic justice.* This justice does not have to be linked to any particular ideology or economic system. Rather, if that system is seen as legitimate by the population at large, and serves the broad interests of the people, then it is in essence "democratic".

Second, democracy is a *competitive electoral system of government* whereby the population governs ostensibly through *representation* and thus, competing interests, ideas, and values vie for supremacy through formal institutions and political parties.

A third conceptualization is democracy as *empowerment* or *freedom.* This could mean empowerment of the lower orders of society, emancipation of the oppressed, etc., but is not necessarily limited to this. It could mean a broad-based popular state of freedom, local control over resources and affairs, or it could even refer to the empowerment of elites. For example, a capitalist may see the democratic system as an essentially social-economic contract with the state that provides the means for the individual to realize his or her own material goals, with little importance placed on normative precepts, ethical considerations, or issues of social and political justice.

Fourth, following the etymological definition of "rule by the people", democracy means *a government made up of citizens* - with varying degrees of involvement from simply voting through to administration, through to actual holding of political office. This concept of democracy stands in contrast to a despotism or monarchy where the sovereign rules over subjects.

And fifth, there is *direct democracy* whereby all citizens take part in the actual administration of the state through, alternatively, participation and the holding of public

offices. Ancient Athens during the Hellenic period is of course the most salient example of this concept of democracy.

The value of sketching out the various conceptualizations of democracy (and I concede that there are undoubtedly others I have not envisioned here) is twofold. First, by identifying and distinguishing those terms, modes, and expressions of democratic thought, we can come closer to revealing the common norms and constituent elements of legitimate participatory governance without shackling it to particular behavioural processes (like elections) that in reality, are not universally valid but rather, emerge from specific historical, cultural, geographic and material circumstances – i.e., the rise of Western liberal market democracy in a Western liberal industrial setting. In Chapter Three, I will employ this theoretical base in a review of the historical record, through which I will identify the broader constituent elements and timeless components of "good" governance and hopefully arrive at a new definition of it through which we can imagine alternative governance models.

Second, these broader conceptualizations are useful because they can be observed to varying degrees, and with significant overlap, in the democratization discourse - for they contribute to the ideological and rhetorical context for both democracy promoters and for human agency within non-Western nations that seek to reform their political system from within. It is important, therefore, to examine the Western "fetish" of democracy and critique the way in which it has impacted on political and historical developments in the non-Western world at the same time that their people clamour for more open political systems, defined in their *own* terms. It will become clear that promoting, implementing, imposing, and evaluating democracy through a narrow

conceptual lens leads, in almost every case, to a worsening of the plight of the "target" country – while, at the same time, broader qualitative norms of freedom, justice, and emancipation, as well as alternative concepts of people-based participation can be found to exist simultaneously and sometimes, in opposition to, the conventional Western understanding of democracy and its benefits.

The Advent of Forced Democratization

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the ending of the Cold War had a profound effect on both Western foreign policy and the spread of democracy in the former "second" and "third" worlds. The euphoria over the apparent demise of communism and the ending of the tense political stalemate between East and West soon gave way to Western triumphalism about the victory and by extension, superiority of the Western liberal democratic model. Focus shifted from containing communism to spreading the economic and governmental model of the victorious bloc to the rest of the world - who presumably would then enjoy the fruits of economic liberalization and democracy (Paris 1997, Abrahamsen 2000). This shift was evident not only in the policies of Western governments, but also at the international organizational level where global governance bodies like the United Nations, and soon after, The Bretton Woods institutions took up the banner of democratization. Roland Paris explains,

> "Within the United Nations during the Cold War, for instance, the very definition of democracy served as a lightening rod for ideological conflict between the Soviet and Western blocs, which effectively prevented the organization from taking sides. Only after the demise of Soviet communism did the organization begin to promote the Western or liberal conception of democracy, with its emphasis on free and fair elections." (Paris, 2002, p. 641)

There certainly were strategic motives behind this new project of democratization, probably based on the traditional belief that if a power creates a compatible regime in a nearby or strategically important country, it will have an easier time of coercing and/or cooperating with that country (Doyle, Empire and Democracy Panel, 2003, p.37). Or, another motivating factor could be that, "... powers believe in these systems and seek to legitimate themselves at home by exporting their system abroad" (Ibid).

In the "developing" world, this push towards democratization was also fuelled by the sudden reversal of fortunes of those states who had been previously aligned with the Communist bloc and who now found their heavy-state oriented form of authoritarianism to be out of vogue and without a super-power backer (Abrahamsen, 2000, p.4-5). This new post-Cold War environment provided the ideal conditions and seemingly ironclad logic for the diffusion, promoting and exporting of Western liberal democratic capitalism as the West was clearly in a position to exert full hegemony over the third world (Ibid, p.42).

Further lending strength to the argument for mass democratization was a revival of liberal peace theory - which was given new life after the demise of communism. Simply put, liberal peace theory hypothesizes that liberal democracies tend not go to war with one another. This belief, though never properly tested, has its foundations in the political philosophy of Immanuel Kant (Paris, 1997, p.59). This usefulness of Kant for this thesis is twofold. First, an analysis of his philosophy can help to understand both the origins of liberal peace theory and the foundations of the belief in the superiority of republican constitutions based on liberal values. However, a closer examination of his ideas on republicanism also reveals a theoretical basis for arguing that different forms of

government can secure the rights of humankind, the rights of nations, self-determination and ultimately, just governance.

In *Perpetual Peace*, Kant theorizes that a *republican* constitution is the only true kind of civil constitution because it is based on the principles of *freedom, representation, self-determination* and is governed ultimately by *reason*...

> "The sole established constitution that follows from the idea [*Idee*] of an original contract, the one on which all of a nation's just [*rechtliche*] legislation must be based, is republican. For, first, it accords with the principles of *freedom* of the members of society (as men), second, it accords with the principles of the *dependence* of everyone on a single, common [source of] legislation (as subjects), and third, it accords with the law of the equality of them all (as citizens)." (Kant, 1983, p.112)

He argues that nations adopting this type of rule would tend to be more pacific in nature because the consent of the citizenry is required for the state to engage in war and thus, citizens would be more likely to "... consider all its calamities before committing to so risky a game" (Ibid, p.113). According to Kant, this pacific tendency extends from the nature of man[20] himself, who, if allowed to govern over his own interests, would likely pursue the path of commercial well being and other non-violent human exploits over belligerent behaviour to press one's "rights" through force (Ibid, p.125). Thus, relations between nations sharing a republican constitution and exercising their right as nations – not for war based on 'might makes right', but for mutual interest - would also tend to be more peaceful, their decision–making processes determined by reason and not by whim...

> "The concept of the right of nations as a right to go to war is meaningless (for it would then be the right to determine the right not by independent, universally valid laws that restrict the freedom of everyone, but by one-

[20] I am using the male gender here because Kant does.

> sided maxims backed by force). Consequently, the concept of the right of nations must be understood as follows: that it serves justly those men who are disposed to seek one another's destruction and thus to find perpetual peace in the grave that covers all the horrors of violence and its perpetrators. Reason can provide related nations with no other means for emerging from the state of lawlessness, which consists solely of war, than that they give up their savage (lawless) freedom, just as individual persons do, and, by accommodating themselves to the constraints of common law, establish a *nation of peoples* (civitas gentium) that (continually growing) will finally include all the people of the earth." (Ibid, p.117)

It is difficult to say if Kant actually inspired the development of later global governance institutions like the Concert of Europe, the League of Nations, and the United Nations, or merely foreshadowed their emergence as a necessary means of mitigating war and its ever more costly burdens. Whatever the case, he clearly envisioned a growing league of like-minded republican nation states bound together in a cosmopolitan world governed by reason, the spread of liberty, and the right of nations to determine their destiny through just laws and representative government (Ibid). It is equally clear that this Kantian vision of perpetual peace has deeply influenced Western political thought through to the present day and laid the foundation for modern liberal theories of peace and its critics, including democratization and peacebuilding (Doyle, Owen, Layne, in Linklater, 2000, Franck, 1992, p. 88).

While the evidence to support Kant's argument for perpetual peace emerging from a global federation of republican states is actually scant,[21] and its premises based on somewhat idealistic reasoning, there is promise in his concept of republicanism. Namely, it offers an essentialist description of a constitutional system whereby representation and

[21] Kant's thesis has tremendous argumentative power but has never been truly tested as one can argue that democratic/republican states have been too busy fighting other common non-republican enemies during the last 200 years to have come into conflict with one another yet. Sound realist critique might suggest that given a world of only democratic/republican states, war would likely still occur over competing interests as dictated by other contexts.

participation are key elements of a social contract oriented towards the liberation of the human spirit, free association of equal citizens, self-determination, and rule of law through reason. However, this constitution is defined separately from the actual *form of government*, with democracy a particular form not rated very highly in Kant's opinion, as it turns out.[22]

Therefore, to extrapolate from Kant: presumably, government (as opposed to constitution) could take different forms best suited to the needs and specificities of the (republican) nation in question. To illustrate this, Canada is a constitutional monarchy, but its form of government is parliamentary democracy adapted from the British to the Canadian federal context. Similarly, the United States of America is a republic based on classical Western ideas but with a populist mass democracy as its form of government. Both countries have essentially *republican* constitutions because they are both representative, ruled by reason and law, etc, yet their mode or style of governance is quite different from one another.

This conceptual separation between constitution and form of government is useful in two ways. First, it provides a universal set of contractual principles to which all nations could aspire (freedom of association, rule of law, representation, etc.) while leaving the actual mode of governance up to local, regional or cultural determining factors that would best suit the society in question. Second, and perhaps most importantly for this thesis, it

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[22] Kant distinguished between *republicanism* and *despotism* as being the essential two types of constitutions with *democracy* identified as a particular *form* of government. Somewhat like Aristotle, he considered democracy to actually be a type of despotism because it was founded on the desire for every person to want to rule according to his own interests, similar to a despot's rule by whim, and thus is presumably not based on reason. By comparison, representation is considered by Kant to be a true indicator of a republican (and therefore just) constitution largely because the act of legislating and the execution of *will* by the citizens themselves are separated (Kant, p.114).

helps to conceptually de-link Western liberal market democracy from good governance, allowing us to imagine alternative governance models that while potentially unfamiliar in form to Western eyes, still uphold those central liberal values that are universally desirable but expressed in different ways. This issue will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter Four.

The impact of Kant's writing (and those who followed in his wake) is pervasive and deep-seated to the point where it has become commonplace for Western nations to include the objective of democratization and the spread of liberal values in their stated foreign policy. On Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade website for example, the government states, "Democracy promotion is a key foreign policy priority for Canada. Building on Canada's long history of promoting democracy abroad, the Government of Canada is looking to identify ways in which Canada can play a more active role on the world stage in promoting democratic principles."[23] Similarly, "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America", released in September 2002, identifies the need to "expand the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy" (White House, 2002, p.2). While these statements are emotively pleasing to the ear, the question remains how effective the strategies have been in actually bringing about a more peaceful and prosperous world.

[23] http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/library/democratie-en.aspx

The "Good Governance Agenda" and its Impact

In her book, *Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa*, Rita Abrahamsen very clearly demonstrates the link between good governance discourse and democracy…

> "Used for the first time by the World Bank in 1989, the term 'good governance' became the buzzword of development in the 1990s. Known as the good governance agenda, the new development doctrine identified 'poor governance' as the root cause of Africa's development predicament, and the prescribed remedy was of course good governance, or democracy. Democracy, the new development wisdom proclaimed, was not only desirable from a human rights perspective, but a necessary precondition for sustainable economic growth and prosperity." (Abrahamsen, p.25)

This new agenda had three key interrelated components to its strategy: democratization (primarily through the holding of competitive elections), economic liberalization (in the form of imposed structural adjustment programs) and the reduction of the size of the state through austerity measures. In addition, Roland Paris demonstrates that peacebuilding, as a broader concept within both the development and post-conflict contexts, has also been a vehicle for essentially transforming "developing" and conflict-ridden nations into western liberal market democracies (Paris, 2002). This activity takes place under the broader normative rubric of "good governance" - a term that is pleasing to the ear, but ultimately masks neo-colonial attitudes and behaviour on the part of the West. As will be seen, the results of this massive experiment in social, economic and political engineering have largely been abysmal failures. The remainder of this chapter briefly examines how and why this has happened, demonstrating the need for alternative approaches.

A critical point made by Abrahamsen is that the current good governance agenda and debate is essentially a discursive formation, "... that is, as a historically contingent form of knowledge connected to prevailing structures and relations of power at the time of its formation" (Ibid, p.143). The origins and continuing impact of this discursive formation will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter. For now, suffice to say that "Third World" nations emerged from colonization and decolonization to find their states in a relationship that, while equal in terms of state sovereignty, was clearly subordinate economically and technologically to the dominant powers that controlled the institutions of global governance and the global economy. Initially, these fledgling states got caught up in the tug-of-war between the two superpowers – often being used as pawns in a grander chess game. But the demise of the Soviet Union only resulted in the complete hegemony of the Western world over the poor non-Western world (Abrahamsen, p.42) – a hegemony consolidated and managed through key institutions of global governance like the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. The development discourse, Abrahamsen argues, "... produced and constructed the third world as underdeveloped, placing it in a hierarchical and unequal relationship to the first world... ...this discourse continues to justify and legitimize the right of the North to intervene in, control and develop the South." (Ibid, p.1)

Unfettered by both the post-WW II construction agenda[24] and the Cold War, this intervention has been primarily directed through the aforementioned institutions, which turned their sights after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc to the spreading of market democracy by demanding "free and fair" elections as conditions for foreign assistance and by imposing neo-liberal austerity measures on developing nations through "structural adjustment". However, as Abrahamsen and others have pointed out, the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) of the 1980s failed to bring about the economic prosperity they were supposed to and it was in this context that the new discourse of "good governance" in the 1990s came into being (Abrahamsen, p.40).

While framed in new language to attempt to separate this strategy from the failures of the past, this agenda of adjustment, and later, good governance, differed little from the "modernization" theory of the 1950s and 1960s where...

> "... all the essential features of modernity were expected to spring from economic prosperity. As societies developed, their various economic, social cultural and political properties were expected to adjust to each other and eventually fit together like pieces in a jigsaw. Accordingly, liberal democracy was regarded as the almost inevitable outcome of the process of modernization." (Ibid, p.26)

Of particular note to this thesis is the continuing assumption that one model, the one favoured by the powerful, is the model that all others, regardless of historical, cultural, geographic and material circumstance, are expected to follow. In this light, the

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[24] I.e., The Marshall Plan. The original role of the World Bank was as a lending institution for the post-war rebuilding of Europe while the IMF's original mandate was to provide for international currency stability in the hopes of avoiding political turmoil brought about by collapsing currencies, e.g., the German Mark prior to the fall of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Hitler (Eichengreen, 2007). It was only after the rebuilding had been accomplished and the members of the United Nations ballooned from 50 to 150+ that these institutions took on a new role concerned with development and poverty alleviation – one that unfortunately did not come with matching democratic reforms in the way policy was generated (ul Haq, Jolly, Streeten, and Haq, eds., 1995). This has lead to a revisiting of the role of the Bretton Woods Institutions and how they may be reformed. See also, *The IMF and its Critics: Reform of Global Financial Architecture*, edited by David Vines and Christopher Gilbert, 2004.

good governance agenda can be seen as a continuation of the theme of "civilization over savagery" with the West still shouldering the white man's burden to bring civilization to the dark places of the world (Ibid, p.36). Roland Paris echoes this sentiment in the context of post-conflict peacebuilding...

> "... the contemporary practice of peacebuilding may be viewed as a modern rendering of the *mission civilisatrice* – the colonial era belief that the European imperial powers had a duty to "civilize" their overseas possessions. Although modern peacebuilders have largely abandoned the archaic language of civilized versus uncivilized, they nevertheless appear to act upon the belief that one model of domestic governance – liberal market democracy – is superior to all others." (Paris, 2002, p.638)

But how successful has this modern day *mission civilisatrice* been? An examination of the historical record clearly shows that attempts at establishing democracy, bringing about prosperity through economic liberalization and improving governance through reducing the size and role of the state have almost entirely failed, with few exceptions. It also must be noted that these three policies are related to one another and form the components of an overall strategy. Particularly, the introduction of democracy and economic liberalization have gone hand-in-hand...

> "This demand for simultaneous economic and political liberalization is a key characteristic of contemporary development theory and practice, an insistence that is fuelled by the fact that more or less all fully fledged democracies are also capitalist economies. The notion of a close affinity between capitalism and democracy is almost as old as liberal theory itself, and it is a commonplace of Western political discourse to regard democracy as the characteristic political form of capitalism." (Abrahamsen, p.76)

However, problems arise with introducing democracy and capitalism in several ways. First, both Abrahamsen and Paris point out that capitalism is an economic system that invariably creates inequalities and concentrations of wealth in elite classes. This can

have a destabilizing effect on societies where the economic situation is already dire and where many people are already poor and lack access to basic commodities and services. This in turn, fuels social unrest and animosity amongst the population - which may already have social cleavages based on tribal identity, urban versus rural economics or past historical grievance. This environment makes it difficult for a political culture of tolerance and participation to take hold. Paris explains,

> "If it is true that democracies rarely go to war against each other, and that they are less likely than non-democracies to experience internal unrest, then democratization would seem, at first glance, to be a sensible solution for states suffering from civil strife. Similarly, if capitalism has generated the highest levels of wealth and economic growth in history, and if capitalism and democracy are mutually reinforcing systems of organizing political and economic life – as many Western observers contend – then market democracy should be a promising formula for managing domestic conflict and creating prosperity in war-shattered states. The problem with this reasoning is that it overlooks another feature of market democracy: both democracy and capitalism encourage conflict and competition – indeed, they thrive on it... ...In other words, democracy paradoxically encourages the public expression of conflicting interests in order to limit the intensity of such conflicts by channelling them through peaceful political institutions before they turn violent... ... Problems arise, however, when political activity generates demands that cannot be channelled through existing institutions... ... The point is not that democracy is inherently violent, as some commentators have argued,[25] but that the adversarial politics of democracy can sharpen confrontations and conflicts in divided societies, rather than fostering greater tolerance for different interests and opinions. Like democracy, capitalism also encourages conflict, not only because it presupposes a society of acquisitive competitors vying for a larger share of the national wealth, but because it creates economic inequalities that have historically fuelled resentment and confrontation." (Paris, 1997, p.75)

For example, in Cambodia, despite the positive annual growth statistic from 1991-1995 of 6.1% under the country's economic liberalization plan, "...the benefits of this growth were felt primarily in the cities, thus widening the already large gap in living

[25] Paris is referring to Francois Furet, Antoine Liniers, and Philippe Raynaud, *Terrorisme et democracie* (Artheme Fayard: Paris, 1985).

standards between cities and rural areas, where most Cambodians live. These inequalities are breeding discontent in the countryside and anger against the government" (Ibid, p.65). Furthermore, the animosity between the two parties that form a shaky coalition government has led to a situation where Cambodia has *de facto* parallel administrations, each vying for power and influence within the country. Therefore, while international assistance and intervention played an important role in bringing about an end to the civil war, the following plan of political and economic liberalization could very well undermine the fragile peace that has been won (Ibid).

El Salvador offers another case-in-point about the questionable effect of imposing economic liberalization on post-conflict societies in the name of building peace and prosperity. Following the relatively peaceful elections of 1994, the IMF and the World Bank imposed austerity measures on the Salvadoran government ostensibly to, "seek to restore balance to [the] government's domestic and international accounts, and thereby put development on a sustainable footing..." (Ibid, p.66). However, Paris points out that these measures have actually impaired the peace process in three ways...

> "First, limitations on public expenditure have prevented the government of El Salvador from fully funding its peacebuilding programs, such as efforts to reintegrate former combatants into civil life and to rebuild war-damaged infrastructure. Second, spending cuts have undone painstaking efforts to re-establish social services, including public health and schooling, and have apparently contributed to an increase in El Salvador's poverty rate, which many observers link to the spread of violent crime and insecurity. Third, the government's fiscal austerity policies, combined with a tailing off of foreign assistance since the formal end of the peacebuilding operation, appear to have induced an economic recession." (Ibid, p.67)

Political liberalization has had obvious negative impacts for many situations on the African continent, in particular, Angola and one of the most memorable examples of

failed democratization for all the wrong reasons, Rwanda. In both cases, attempts at bringing about peace through the holding of "free and fair" elections actually contributed to the re-igniting of violence (Ibid, p.70-71, Paris, 2002, p.650). In Angola, the election between the two warring parties, MPLA and UNITA, resulted in a 49.6% to 40.1% split favouring MPLA presidential candidate Jose Eduardo dos Santos over UNITA's Jonas Savimbi. Since neither gained the requisite 50% support to claim a first ballot victory, Savimbi rejected the results and a full-scale bloody civil conflict began anew (Ibid). A further bitter irony is that Savimbi, originally backed by the United States against Soviet interests during the Cold War and once lauded by then-President Ronald Reagan as, "one of the few authentic heroes of our time," who, with US backing, would win a "... victory that electrifies the world and brings great sympathy and assistance from other nations to those struggling for freedom," was responsible for some of the most brutal atrocities of that war in which 750,000 Angolans were killed and a further 4.1 million were displaced (Easterly, p.329).

In Rwanda, the peace agreement of 1993 that ended three years of civil war between the Hutu-led government and the Tutsi opposition group, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) was essentially forced on the Rwandan government under "...pressure from international mediators and aid donors" (Paris, 2002, p.643). This agreement "... initiated a peacebuilding process that involved power-sharing arrangements, integration of the two armies, the return of refugees, and a transition to democracy culminating in multiparty elections scheduled for 1995, all of which were to be supervised by the United Nations" (Paris, 1997, p.71). However, this agreement collapsed due to the refusal of Hutu officials to share power with their adversaries and full-scale genocide was launched, some of the

most barbaric the modern world has seen, and when it was over three months later, at least 800,000 to one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus had been butchered (Ibid).

Clearly, attempts at introducing Western-style democracy in order to build peace had actually contributed to the descent into violence, including the opening up of the media - which initially was expected to allow for dissenting voices to be heard, yet was ultimately instrumental in intensifying the civil violence as the radical leaders of the genocide exploited this press freedom to propagate their message of hate and violence (Ibid, p.72, Thompson, 2007, pp. 41-54). In the face of such abysmal failures, it leaves one wondering why Western governments continue to develop and implement the same policies through formal committees, agencies and institutions – all designed to spread liberal democracy.

For example, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met in the spring of 2007 with members of the Advisory Committee on Democracy Promotion and regurgitated the same tired rhetoric about democracy and development…

> ""If you're really only talking about job growth, trade, investment, you're not making the connection to the next level of development," she said. That "micro level of development," Rice explained, "is making sure that there's an educated population, making sure that there's a healthy population, making certain that the benefits of democracy are translating downward into the population so that when the next term for accountability comes, which is the next election, those young democracies are able to point to something that they have delivered.""

> And…

> "It's extremely important to recognize that our most important poverty reduction tool is to open up markets for the good of those countries that are trying to rise out of poverty," she said. "All of the foreign assistance

that we give is going to be augmented and amplified many times over by strong free trading polices as well.'"'[26]

These passages are revealing in that they demonstrate how deeply rooted the assumptions of the apparently obvious benefits of democracy are in the minds of Western policy-makers. Presumably third world nations who are currently immature and childlike are expected to incrementally "develop" into more "mature" democracies. Certainly, education and health care are vital to any society - democratic or not - but the connection between these services and democracy is extremely obscure and totally assumptive in Rice's comments – as if "top-down" democracy is the only system that can deliver on education and health care and that the mere holding of elections (whereby all domestic policy will somehow be magically held accountable) will suffice in taking any given country (as if they are all the same) to the next stage of development - from their current 'uncivilized' condition to one of being more civilized (see Chapter Two).

Furthermore, it is merely assumed, despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, that the "opening up of markets" (which sounds like a good idea on the surface) will lead to economy prosperity and poverty-alleviation. However, economic liberalization and the imposition of austerity measures through SAPs can often lead to the laying bare of vulnerable economies - whose governments are then stripped of their ability to control domestic economic policy. This makes them suitable for exploitation by the powerful economies of the developed world. This amounts to nothing short of an erosion of state sovereignty in the face of Western-led intervention and nation building for the purposes of building global capitalism via the institutions of global governance.

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[26] Excerpts from the US State Department website, April 18, 2007 http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=April&x=20070418151651ajesrom0.2533838

The actual effectiveness of these Western-crafted policies seem to be subordinate to the mantra of democracy, development and globalization, which according to Paris, is "... not a globalization of goods and services, nor of cultural products like films and television shows, but rather a globalization of the very idea of what a state should look like and how it should act" (Paris, 2002, p.639).

This bias is not merely evident in democratization and economic development rhetoric but is built into the very mechanisms of peacebuilding whereby former third world countries are more or less taught how to be good liberal democrats. Paris states,

> "Peacebuilders have also developed programmes to teach police forces in war-shattered states how to conduct themselves in a liberal democratic society, and have provided advice on the legalities and logistics surrounding the holding of free and fair elections in every peacebuilding mission, assisting in such tasks as the drafting of electoral laws and other preparations for voting. Teaching ordinary electors how to cast their ballots, and overseeing the elections themselves." (Ibid, p.644)

Despite the progressive sounding language about the "growth of democracy" and the "rise from poverty" employed by leading Western policy-makers of the day, this "top-down" good governance agenda ultimately preserves the essential nature of the unequal relations of power between North and South and developed and underdeveloped. But why is this so? How do the same – or similar – mistakes continue being made despite the repeated failures? Rita Abrahamsen explains how the development discourse has a seductive quality to it that reproduces the belief in the idea of development itself...

> "The promise to eradicate poverty is so seductive that although the history of development is littered with failures, the *belief* in development survives. Past failures merely give rise to new theories, each claiming to have discovered the real solutions to the problems of development. The good governance agenda is simply the latest in a long series of such theories, the latest reproduction of the dream of development." (Abrahamsen, p.47)

The current good governance canon can be traced to documents produced by the World Bank in the wake of the structural adjustment failures of the 1980s[27] and is largely based on a rejection of past approaches to development that encouraged the 'dash for modernization' and state-led industrialization (Ibid, p.48). A key criticism of these documents was concerning the imposition of a top-down Weberian bureaucratic state on African societies without any regard for the incompatibility issues that naturally arose (Ibid). Abrahamsen points out that the World Bank did recognize that the failures of development theory were often the result of discarding the traditional in favour of the modern and that the new good governance agenda claimed, "... to have a greater degree of cultural awareness and appropriateness" (Ibid).

However, by disassociating itself from past failures, claiming to have found the "real answer" to the problems of development, "... the development apparatus and the World Bank can remain untainted by previous mistakes and retain the moral right to continue the development effort" (Ibid, p.49). Furthermore, Abrahamsen argues that by casting the Weberian state as alien to Africa, the World Bank can delegitimize state-led development – opting instead for small state, open market (read neo-liberal) based solutions...

> "In this representation the prevailing developmental or interventionist state becomes the enemy of the people, the reason for Africa's underdevelopment and misery. The good governance agenda, on the other hand, emerges as the liberator that will allow not only for development, but also for the release of society's true, indigenous values. At this point the good governance discourse takes an astonishing twist. While the state and *state-capitalism* are regarded as imported artefacts, *capitalism* is represented as an integral part of Africa's indigenous culture, perfectly

[27] These documents are the 1989 report *Sub-Saharan Africa: From crisis to Sustainable Growth*, the 1992 study *Governance and Development*, and the 1994 report by senior members of the World Bank staff, *Governance: The World Bank's Experience* (Abrahamsen, p.48).

> attuned to local, traditional values. The governance discourse portrays African societies as bursting with suppressed capitalist energy." (Ibid, p.49-50)

Of course in addition to this, democracy (being the natural partner to capitalism according to the discourse) plays a vital role in a mutually reinforcing process…

> "Economic liberalization is expected to decentralize decision-making away from the state and multiply the centres of power. This in turn is assumed to lead to the development of a civil society capable of limiting the power of the state and providing the basis for liberal democratic politics. Democratic rights on the other hand, are seen to safeguard property rights, which in turn creates the security and incentives necessary for economic growth… … In the good governance discourse, democracy emerges as the necessary political framework for successful economic development, and within the discourse democracy and economic liberalism are conceptually linked: bad governance equals state intervention, good governance equals democracy and economic liberalism." (Ibid, p.51)

Thus the debate is returned to its fundamental theme – economic liberalization coupled with democratization. The approach is not one of building the social bases for substantive democracy, but forcibly re-fashioning countries into liberal-capitalist states. Empowerment is not seen as a grass-roots bottom-up phenomenon with self-defining features and goals, or a movement that challenges prevailing authority and structures, but is simply reduced to an economic equation. Despite the fact that a "liberated" civil society could take many forms, not all of them necessarily progressive and participatory, it is still assumed that this ill-defined civil society will somehow act as an adequate check on state power with an emergent bourgeoisie portrayed as the source of hope for economic growth - regardless of the dire situation of rest of the population and the animosity that is stoked by that class divide. Furthermore, cultural sensitivity is only

considered within the context of its compatibility with capitalism and its natural ally, liberal democracy (Ibid, p.65). As a result, this situation…

> "… has presented elected governments with complex and intractable dilemmas, where economic and political logic have often appeared contradictory and conflicting. On the one hand is the demand for further economic adjustment, on the other the expectation that social improvements will follow in the wake of democracy. While one choice invites popular discontent and electoral rejection, the other spells the reduction of international financial assistance. As we have seen, the first casualty of this dilemma is democracy itself, as elected leaders in country after country have returned to the authoritarian practices of the past in order to suppress political criticism and economically motivated unrest." Ibid, p.140)

Lastly, the unchallenged status of the 'Washington consensus' that political and economic liberalization are the key to development presents developing nations with no other alternative, and because they must comply with the conditions laid out by the Bretton Woods institutions, it amounts to little more than coercion and a *de facto* neo-colonial agenda misleadingly shrouded in the pleasing term "good governance". Abrahamsen states,

> "This is a form of democracy characterised by external control and local political emasculation, where fined-tuning of externally directed policies is the best that can be hoped for and where the voices of the poor majority are persistently overruled by governments' accountability to financial sponsors and the need to attain continued assistance." (Ibid, p.145)

The net effect of this is to ultimately preserve the global order as it is currently constructed – an order that is essentially undemocratic and coercive (Ibid, p.147).

Yet in spite of the pointed criticism of Abrahamsen and Paris, the debate over governance, peacebuilding and democratization has yet to go beyond discrediting political and economic liberalization, development discourse and the good governance agenda. In fact, both Paris and Abrahamsen see liberal democracy as essentially the best

system available to the world's societies – they are just critical of the way in which it is being promoted, exported or imposed, and sceptical of flawed theoretical frameworks and discursive formations like "development" and "good governance".

It is therefore necessary for this thesis to go even further than these critics, and not just simply question the manner in which the world is being democratized, or critique the discursive formations and language of "development" and so on, but to understand *where* these formations come from and *why* this fetish of democracy is seemingly so unshakeable. Its origins must be explored.

The next chapter will attempt to do this mostly by looking at Edward Said's *Orientalism* - and partly by linking the genesis of Western attitudes and thinking about the non-Western "other" nations of the world that he revealed, to the actual foreign policy output of a contemporary Western nation. I feel it is necessary to carefully - and respectfully - poke at the soft underbelly of the long-held beliefs and assumptions of the modern Western democratic mind, in order to attempt to step outside of our own democratic selves and view human political societies and their complexities from as unfettered and untainted a perspective as our minds will allow. This is admittedly not an easy task. But once it is done, it may be possible to begin to imagine governance from the vantage point of the "other". Only by doing this, will the exercise of redefining good governance in terms of substantive democracy bear any fruit.

Chapter Two: The Myth of Western Superiority

"We are in Egypt not merely for the sake of the Egyptians, though we are there for their sake; we are also there for the sake of Europe at large." – Arthur James Balfour, 1910

The Continuing Language of Orientalism

So far, I have dealt with the definitional problems of democracy, discussed the legacy of forced democratization, critiqued the good governance agenda, the language surrounding it, and how this agenda has affected the outcome of global politics by being synonymous with the spread of neo-liberal economics – often to the detriment of the countries it is supposed to benefit. Yet the mantra of holding "free and fair" elections reigns supreme with little or no consideration as to whether or not democratization in the western fashion will actually be beneficial to the country in question. In a recent speech following the retirement of Fidel Castro as the head of state for Cuba, US President George W. Bush said, "What needs to change is not the United States; what needs to change is Cuba. Cuba's government must begin a process as peaceful democratic change."[28]

This chapter addresses the following questions: What accounts for the strong belief that Western liberal democracy is a superior form of governance above all others and why has it become so entrenched? What is the intellectual and ontological history behind this assumption? Finally, how is it still manifest in the foreign policy of Western democratic nations? If we are to break the mirror of democracy that seemingly still enchants us, so that we may begin to imagine alternative governance, we must get at the source of the enchantment so as to dispel its potentially harmful effects and leave the good ones intact.

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[28] http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080308/ap_on_go_pr_wh/bush_cuba

In his seminal work, *Orientalism*, first published in 1979, Edward W. Said masterfully charts the development of not the *Orient*[29] itself, but of western ideas, attitudes, clichés, and fantasies *about* the Orient, and the emergent language, intellectual tradition and academic industry concerning it, from the late Middle Ages through to the 20th century (Said, 2003). It was this academic, intellectual and literary tradition that became the source of prevailing attitudes about the non-Western world and provided the ontological, scientific and even political foundation for how the West viewed the non-Western world it had colonized. Referring primarily to academic and intellectual developments of the 18th – 20th centuries, Said describes Orientalism as…

> "… a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience. The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European *material* civilization and culture." (Ibid, p.1-2)

It is this last sentence that is of particular importance here. The Orient is more than just a mystical outland of exotic and sensual exploits, legendary battles and semi-mythical heroes, strange languages and customs, or seemingly endless fodder for travel writing and imaginative fantasies. Rather, the Orient is bound to the West in a special relationship defined in terms of *power* – particularly, but not exclusively, with reference to the colonial relationship. The Orient, as well as the New World, and later, Africa, became the material source of European commercial wealth and industrial power. It thus

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[29] The Orient can be defined as a term originally referring to the world of the Biblical Lands (the Middle East) and which was later applied to India and Asia. Ultimately, The Orient came to be, in the Western mind, not merely a geographical place, but also the mental representation of "the other" – with all its exoticism, danger, and sensuality.

became gradually more necessary to justify this continuing unequal relationship - and the means of doing this, through descriptive language, fallacious images, and erroneous prejudicial theories of race, became proportionally more sophisticated and authoritative. Thus, what eventually emerged was a deeply embedded but skewed vision of "the other" that Westerners at large saw to be based on self-evident truths and clear factual observation. Today, it is this place – once called "The Orient" – as well as virtually every other part of the globe that we see the project of bringing Western liberal market democracy to the people of the world.

In February 2007, the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence for the Canadian government issued an Interim Report titled, "Canadian Troops in Afghanistan: Taking a Hard Look at a Hard Mission". In it, the committee reviews the "success" Canada had made in achieving its objectives and the problems it faced up to that point. The report is revealing in that it contains paradoxical beliefs, contradictory attitudes, and conflicting ideas on the part of senior government officials about Canada's role in Afghanistan. It does this by at once appearing to be progressive-minded and non-colonial yet also unwittingly revealing that certain Orientalist attitudes still prevail in early 21st century nations such as Canada - despite its self-proclaimed multilateral and multicultural values.

The report is, at times, refreshingly cautionary and critical of the wisdom of a western, technologically advanced nation embroiling itself in a distant Middle East conflict to bring democracy to a country with a radically different culture, geography and historical experience. However, at the same time, it often replicates common and misguided assumptions about the nature of conflict-prone societies, the desirability for

them to "be more like us" and it employs familiar rhetoric about the backwardness of Afghans and the need for them to emerge from a state of "medievalism". Thus we can see the connection between certain colonial mentalities of the past, and the (possibly neo-colonial) assumptions underlying the foreign policy of the present. In this light, it is useful to compare the Senate committee's report to attitudes expressed by legislators of the past, specifically, in Britain at the outset of the 20th century, in order to see just how far we actually have come in shedding our colonialist impulses and language.

In the opening to Chapter One of *Orientalism,* Said recounts a heated debate in 1910 between Arthur James Balfour, a man of esteemed political pedigree and former Prime Minister, and members of the British House of Commons who were questioning Britain's "once-profitable occupation" of Egypt "... now that Egyptian nationalism was on the rise and the continuing British presence... ... [was] no longer easy to defend" (Said, p. 31). Balfour's response favoured continued occupation - ostensibly 'for everyone's sake' – and demonstrated, according to Said, how the language of Orientalism had attained, by the dawn of the 20th century, an almost canonical authority about all things Oriental – to the point where the cultural "superiority" of the West seemed a matter of fact, and where even the word "Oriental" itself required no explanation. Said states,

> "It designated Asia or the East, geographically, morally, culturally. One could speak of an Oriental personality, an Oriental atmosphere, an Oriental tale, Oriental despotism, or an Oriental mode of production, and be understood. Marx had used the word, and now Balfour was using it; his choice was understandable and called for no comment whatsoever." (Ibid, p. 31-32)

This type of authoritative language is analogous to the entrenched language of democracy in the contemporary Western mind. When we use the word, it immediately conjures specific images and meanings that are self-explanatory: Democracy means freedom, it means social and political justice, it means elections – it means good governance. As in Orientalist attitudes, the language of democracy has a long tradition behind it that has given it a canonical authority. This authority derives from, in part, the West's relative position of power *vis á vis* the rest of the world. The West is the dominant "civilization" in the world. Therefore, the assumption goes, its system of governance must be superior as well. The nature of imperialism presupposes that those who are in the weaker position in the power relationship are not able to govern themselves properly – therefore, they must be shown how. [30] Thus, the internal agency of forces and individuals within the "underdeveloped" society is either downplayed or ignored altogether. Rita Abrahamsen echoes this in her critique of development discourse...

> "American political scientists in the 1950s and 1960s studied 'emerging areas' and emerging peoples'. This terminology indicates a people with no history, no civilization, simply 'emerging' from nothingness to a future assigned to them by Western scientists. While the study of 'emerging areas' has since mutated into 'area studies', 'third world studies', 'development studies' and so on, the denial of effective agency to these countries has continued more or less unabated. Seemingly unable to escape the legacy of imperialism and coloured by Euro-centrism, various discourses have perceived the third world primarily as an object of intervention and study, not an autonomous subject possessing political will." (Abrahamsen, 200, p.6)

Balfour's clever response to his fellow members' claim that he was adopting an attitude of superiority over the Egyptian civilization reveals how the knowledge accrued about the Orient, from the Enlightenment to the High Colonial era, could be used to

[30] Interviews with Dr. Rob Aitken, University of Alberta, April, 2007.

designate non-Western cultures as secondary and subservient to the more advanced West, regardless of the supposedly "enlightened" acknowledgement that these cultures were at one time, great civilizations and empires themselves. Here is an excerpt from Balfour's speech as quoted by Said,

> "I take up no attitude of superiority. But I ask ... ... who has even the most superficial knowledge of history, if they will look in the face the facts with which a British statesman has to deal when he is put in a position of supremacy over great races like the inhabitants of Egypt and countries in the East. We know the civilization of Egypt better than we know the civilization of any other country. We know it further back; we know it more intimately; we know more about it. It goes far beyond the petty span of our race, which is lost in the prehistoric period at a time when the Egyptian civilization had already passed its prime. Look at all the Oriental countries. Do not talk about superiority or inferiority." (Ibid, p. 32)

Drawing upon Foucaultian discourse analysis, Said explains that two main themes are at work in Balfour's speech - *power* and *knowledge* (Ibid). According to Foucault, "... there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations" (Foucault, 1991, p.27). Western academia had, over the previous two centuries, built up a vast amount of knowledge about the regions of the world they had conquered. This knowledge – everything from languages, myths, geography, cultural habits, hereditary traits, social structures, to literature, art and architecture – became increasingly relevant, pertinent, and ultimately necessary (in a utilitarian fashion) for the colonial powers - Britain in particular - to govern and control the territories they had colonized.

Thus, in addition to providing moral justification for continuing the occupation of Oriental nations – because according to Balfour, they had never had self-government at

any time throughout their history and thus fared much better by being ruled by the more 'civilized' Europeans (Ibid, p. 33) - the *knowledge* the Western powers had gained from controlling the Orient was then used to rule it and maintain the unequal relationship of *power* between strong and weak partner that in reality, suited the interests of the occupiers. Said states,

> "Many terms were used to express the relation: Balfour and Cromer, typically, used several. The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, "different"; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, "normal"... ... Knowledge of the Orient, because generated out of strength, in a sense *creates* the Orient, the Oriental, and his world." (Ibid, p. 40)

This special knowledge the "civilizationally superior" West had attained overrode and overruled even the Oriental nations' knowledge about their own societies, customs, and history. Apparently, the West knew the Orient better than the Orientals themselves and so, had a legitimate moral authority to rule over them because they knew what was in their best interest – something to which the Orientals (according to Balfour's logic) readily agreed - even demanded (Ibid, p. 34-5). The parallels between the debate over Britain's continuing rule over Egypt at the outset of the 20th century and in contemporary times, the West's involvement in Afghanistan and elsewhere are striking. The message intended for Western audiences is not one of intervention or global-strategic interest, but one of coming to the aid of a poor nation who can't help themselves. Despite the fact that Afghanistan was *invaded*, the impression that is given five years after the fact is that they asked us to come help them. This sympathetic image is reinforced by appeals from "President" Karzai[31] to the Canadian people to continue, "helping the poor Afghans".[32]

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[31] In the opinion of Dr. Saleem Qureshi, Karzai was essentially installed by the United States as a figure who would look and sound pleasing to the Western viewer. He is well-spoken, humble, dresses like a

In his book, *The White Man's Burden*, William Easterly examines the myriad problems of Western involvement in the non-Western world and the reasons why the West's efforts to improve the lives of "the rest" have largely failed. His analysis is helpful in understanding the transition from purely racist and colonial beliefs to more nuanced contemporary views about "development". At the Berlin Conference in 1885, Africa was divided up between the various European colonial powers which signed on to "... 'aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilization'" (Easterly, 2006, p.23). While this type of language and thinking eventually grew out of vogue, the essential belief in the superiority of Western civilization and its ways remained...

> "A shift in language (and also in thought) occurred after Word War II. Verbiage about racial superiority, the tutelage of backward peoples, and people not ready to rule themselves went into the wastebasket. Self-rule and decolonization became universal principles. The West exchanged the old racist coinage for a new currency. "Uncivilized" became "underdeveloped." "Savage peoples" became the "third world." There was a genuine change of heart away from racism and toward respect for equality, but a paternalistic and coercive strain remained." (Ibid, p.24)

This paternalism can still be observed in the language of Canadian foreign policy and leaves one wondering how far the West has actually come in doing away with its colonial past, despite a half-century of 'decolonization'. The Canadian Senate Committee's report states at the outset,

> "Canada is deeply involved in attempting to stabilize Afghanistan, for very good reasons. Firstly, looking at Canada' involvement in Afghanistan from a humanitarian point of view, only a very callous person would deny that the Afghan people need help. Secondly, looking at Canada's

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Westerner would expect a "good" non-radical Afghan to dress and is fully supportive of Western intervention in his country – despite the fact that his actual influence extends little beyond the city limits of the capital, Kabul (Interview with Dr. Qureshi, April 26, 2007).

[32] http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2006/09/22/karzai-hill.html

> involvement from a strategic point of view, only a very naïve person would deny that western countries are threatened by religious extremists – some of the most venomous of whom currently make their home in Afghanistan – and that neither Canada nor its allies should acquiesce to that threat. Members of our Committee are neither callous nor naïve. We have been studying Canada's overall military capacity, and the Afghanistan situation in particular, for more than five years now. We believe that we understand both the humanitarian and strategic motives behind Canada's military deployment in Afghanistan, and associated efforts to improve the life of Afghans through development projects and diplomatic initiatives." (SSCNDS, 2007, p. 2)

The obvious issue of why Afghanistan is a 'problem' in the first place notwithstanding,[33] several key points emerge from an analysis of this passage. First, and perhaps foremost, lost in the "debate" (both in the report and among broader Canadian society) is whether or not Canada has any business to be in Afghanistan in the first place. The over-arching assumption here is that Canada has some kind of moral right to intervene, presumably because it knows how to stabilize countries better than those countries themselves. The Afghans obviously do not know what is best for themselves, or are unable to know due to repeated invasion, and so, must be shown how to order their society the "proper" or "normal" (read Western) way. We in the West are democratic. We know what democracy is. We understand its virtues. We are free and they are not. Thus the resulting doctrine is that we have a *duty* to bring democracy and "development" to them – to make the world a better place. This is very close to the colonial mentality of Balfour's era.

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[33] The purpose of this chapter is not to engage in a post-colonial or anti-imperialist criticism of Western foreign policy towards conflict-ridden and developing societies by seeking to establish historical causality and/or laying blame for the situation. Nor am I particularly interested in discussing the recent history, issues, and dynamics of global power politics, oil, and the "War on Terror". Rather, I am trying at this juncture to simply establish the continuity between the Orientalist tradition and current Western thinking (perhaps subconsciously expressed through language) towards those societies who find themselves presently occupied or dominated by Western powers and their allies.

The authoritative tone used by the Canadian Senators is reminiscent of Balfour and the invoking of certain "obvious" knowledge and self-evident (but uncritical) "truths" about extremists, their nature, capacity, and strategy precludes any debate and justifies any action. If you disagree, then you are quite clearly naïve and your opinions can be dismissed out of hand. The much more germane debate about why Canada is in Afghanistan *at all* is thus circumvented and superseded by the self-evident moral authority of intervention and accordingly, the debate deals only with other challenges or "problems" within a framework that has already been established (that being the framework of democratization and economic liberalization); its parameters are set – much in the way the parameters of the Oriental discourse and therefore, the colonial relationship between Britain and Egypt were set in the minds of Balfour and others.

To be fair, the report does raise issues of Canada's legitimacy in general terms but the problem for the Senate Committee is not whether Canada has the moral authority to influence or shape the outcome of Afghanistan's future *in principle*, but whether or not the mission will be a "success" – success meaning, presumably, that Afghanistan reform itself more or less in the image of a "civilized" Western nation, with "proper" values. Furthermore, the problem of being *perceived* by the Afghans as imperial conquerors takes precedence over the question of whether or not we actually *are* imperial conquerors. Thus, success is judged on whether or not we are "winning the hearts and minds" of Afghans regarding goals of "democratization" that are apparently self-evident.

Of particular salience to this thesis is the fact that the Senate Committee's "Hard Look at a Hard Mission", while well intentioned on an emotive level, is not looking at the hard question of whether a nation with a radically different cultural, historical and

geographic context than our own such as Afghanistan ought to adopt Western-style democracy (this is of course, self-evident) but whether or not that happenstance is feasible. The report states,

> "There are all kinds pressure from home to provide the kind of aid that Canadians believe in because they would reflect the kind of society we treasure: no corruption, free and fair elections, girls being treated equally with boys in terms of education and other matters. Afghanistan is considerably more backward than other difficult areas like Iraq, Iran and Palestine. Whatever changes are made here are going to take many generations to effect, and any early reforms are unlikely to present Canadians with the kinds of successes that might easily seen to justify our involvement in Afghanistan." (Ibid, p. 11)

Clearly, the message here is that Canadians are supportive of aid to poor, developing, or conflict-prone societies so long as those societies adopt our values, institutions, behaviour and modes of government – without any critical debate surrounding whether or not the country in question agrees or not. Once again, the simple usage of the word "backward" implies an assumption of the superiority of Western society, which of course is by contrast, "forward". It is but small praise for the nations of Iraq, Iran, and Palestine to be dubbed only slightly less backward than Afghanistan because obviously, all are backward and constitute "difficult areas" - difficult because they are "other", resistant to Western domination, and so are problems that need to be dealt with, a burden shouldered by modern aid-giving nations like Canada much in the same way the colonial powers of the 19th and 20th centuries felt they had a responsibility to govern subject races on their behalf and for their own good (Said, p. 33).

Lastly, the above excerpt clearly demonstrates the dubious connection between quick and easy success and justification for intervention. The message seems to be here that if "we" can bring about change in a country quickly and relatively painlessly, then

that justifies our actions - not an ethical or moral argument (or even a strategic political realist one), but expediency in bringing about a world that is recognizable, comforting, and 'secure' for "us" and our value system. If this cannot be done, or if it will take too long or cost too much in money spent and lives lost, then it's not worth the trouble.

However, at least the Senate Committee recognizes that given the difficulties of establishing Western-style democracy in Afghanistan, the Canadian mission "... needs to help improve the **governance** of Afghanistan without expecting that we will recreate this country's institutions and behaviour in anything like a Canadian image" (SSCNDS, p. 11). Unfortunately, there is no attempt to even raise the issue of what that governance might look like, on what model it would be inspired, or whether or not it would be an Afghan solution - leading one to assume that recreating the country in a Canadian image would be a desirable outcome, just not feasible given the difficult situation.

The Origin and Fates of Human Societies

It seems that the popular debate over Western involvement in countries like Afghanistan has reached an impasse, in that, a good many people acknowledge that there is something unsavoury about imposing our values – however dear we hold them – on an unwilling nation. Yet at the same time, most everyone is united in a desire to see the world become freer, more just, and ultimately, more "democratic" – however it is defined. This thesis has attempted thus far to point out the folly in assuming that a particular system of government (that has suited the most powerful nations in the world reasonably well) can be universally applied to all polities, regardless of historical, material, cultural and geographical circumstances.

Yet despite the growing literature critical of global neo-liberal economic liberalization, democratization and good governance (and much if the critique is excellent), the time has come to go one step further: we must now try to imagine governance *outside* of any prevailing ideological framework, discourse or conventional theoretical perspective. We must, essentially, get back to the drawing board and – without engaging in grand or meta-theory - identify what the key pillars of redefined good governance might look like. The most effective means of doing this is by taking a historical empirical approach and understanding that the fate of human societies and the origins of their institutions lies in their different historical and environmental circumstances.

To do this, one must first discard any notion of a linear historical progression of a particular society from "primitive" to "civilized". This idea of the "evolution of societies" became a cornerstone of Enlightenment thinking and, later, informed Orientalist attitudes towards non-western cultures, which appeared to be civilizationally inferior. However, one cannot deny that societies do advance from simpler states of organization to more complex ones, and it is clearly observable that societies and cultures (under certain conditions) will advance technologically. Yet, the West was not always technologically superior to the rest of the world, nor did it always possess the most wealth or enjoy the most cultural influence.

In *Europe and the People without History*, Eric Wolf demonstrates that the world in 1400 was a relatively balanced one between the globe's major civilizations (Wolf, 1997, pp. 24-72). Europe, while indeed a vibrant and growing part of the world nonetheless shared the stage with other prominent civilizations like China, the Islamic

Empire, The African Kingdoms, and the great civilizations of the Americas. Wolf's study turns to explaining how the impact of the spread of the capitalist mode of production came to transform the world and how it achieved its current dominance. For Wolf, the rise of the Western powers grew out of specific historical events that took place in a context of ever-increasing interaction between cultures. This interaction eventually became dominated by the capitalist mode of production and those who were best positioned materially and geographically to exploit it (Ibid, p.76). It was not the result of cultural "superiority" or civilizational destiny.

When observing the different fates of societies throughout the ages, how some cultures developed, say, capitalism, farming or centralized bureaucracy, earlier or later than others while some did not at all, it prompts the question, "what accounts for these different historical trajectories?" In his book, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, Jared Diamond takes the decided stance that, "History followed different courses for different peoples because of differences among peoples' environments, not because of biological differences among peoples themselves." (Diamond, 1999, p. 25) This is the position this thesis also takes. However, it is not the only theory that attempts to explain how human societies and their histories develop. Foley explains that there are two primary models of the evolution of human social institutions…

> "One such model would see the origin of any institution as resting in the nature of the human mind and cultural capacity, and therefore having a history that would run parallel to the evolution of the human mind in general. This would imply, on the whole, a relatively long evolutionary history, certainly as long as that of the human species. The other potential model would place the emphasis not on the innate capacities of the human species, but on the specific context in which humans find themselves.

> Social institutions would arise and disappear in response to specific conditions. This model is much more flexible and context-specific, and would posit a rather shorter and more variable history for social institutions." (Foley, in Runciman, ed., 2001, p. 171)

Foley points out that these two models form opposite extremes in relation to one another and that any meaningful study of the origins of social institutions should include both (Ibid). While certainly the evolution of the human mind and its capacities is relevant to the understanding of the origins of governance, this thesis does not specifically attempt to discover those origins but rather seeks to understand the mechanics of governance and to demonstrate that good governance can be achieved through a variety of constitutional forms. Furthermore, governance occurs to some degree through all social institutions found in any particular society - relevant, and in relation to, the conditions in which the society finds itself.

This thesis is concerned with understanding how social institutions and mechanisms have manifested themselves in the activities of governance. To do this, it is useful to examine the 'recent' historical record[34] and identifying some pillars of good governance that have existed throughout the ages and in diverse contexts, not subject to a particular ideological bias, and reveal patterns of governance behaviour that are consistent throughout humanity and its history. Thus, it is the second model that Foley describes that is of relevance here. Given the fact that there is no country currently on this Earth that has not had its political system altered, imposed, or influenced by the dominant Western powers either through direct subjugation, colonization, or voluntary adoption, one must look at historical polities that existed either prior to the era of European colonial

[34] Approximately the last 5,000 years

expansion (even if they are European themselves) or whose political systems were largely internally generated.

It must also be held in mind that Europe was not always more advanced technologically than other parts of the world and, in fact, was for the many millennia leading up to the early modern period, decidedly more "backwards" and much less sophisticated in a political organizational sense than those cultures, the Near East in particular, that they later conquered. Alexander Whittle points out that, "... there is no convincing case to be made for state formation, nor even necessarily for the formation of elaborate or large-scale chiefdoms, in temperate Europe before the arrival of the Romans." (Whittle, in Runciman, ed., 2001, p. 42) Of course, other parts of the world, later dubbed "The Orient" had highly advanced political organization, impressive levels of technological advancement, and sophisticated (even cosmopolitan) cultures for thousands of years previous to the expansion of the Roman Empire into northwestern Europe.

Furthermore, ancient historical states have usually displayed some form of "contract" between the rulers and the ruled, whereby the eminent authority of the sovereign was not questioned but at the same time, he or she was not free to rule at whim. The people expected and demanded fair governance and the ruler, in effect, ruled by the sanction of the people at large. This leads us to the question of whether or not a ruler can be considered to be "elected" by the people, even if there is no system of balloting, as modern democrats would argue is a fundamental requisite for claiming and maintaining legitimacy. An example of this would be the concept of the "Great Elect" in ancient Buddhist theory whereby the King ruled through the consent of the people, and support was expressed through other mechanisms than "going to the polls". In return for securing

the interests of the state and the prosperity of the people, he received his due in the form of taxation and tribute. This was an early form of social contract (Thapar, 1998, p.147).

Regardless, the Orientalist mantra concluded that while this may have admittedly been the case, those great cultures of the ancient world had passed their prime and were, by the 18th century, being surpassed by the more vigorous West, whose fate and destiny lay in eventually reigning supreme over all nations and lifting them back up to levels of civilization that they clearly could not achieve on their own. Yet, the fact did not seem to strike the colonial mind that that if the Africans and other indigenous peoples were so inept at governing themselves, European monarchs would not have had to spend such huge amounts of men, effort, and resources to conquer these "new" continents in the first place. Lastly, if democracy - which has been a form of government familiar to most all societies for the last two millennia - was such a universally appealing form of government, then why was it not chosen by every state throughout history?

But if we reject the Orientalist perspective, it becomes incumbent upon us to formulate an un-biased view of governance in a broad sense and then to examine its dynamics in a more detailed manner and to understand that what makes a people civilized is not their form of government, or their level of "development" as defined by technology, or their social and cultural behaviour. Robert W. Cox defines 'civilization' as, "... a very fluid and imprecise concept. It refers both to a process of becoming civilized and to a condition of being civilized. Used in the singular, it contains an implicit exclusive, hierarchical meaning distinguishing the civilized from the uncivilized or barbaric. Used in the plural, its acquires a pluralistic, inclusive meaning – that there are different ways of becoming civilized." (Cox, 2002, p. 142)

Furthermore, to be "civilized" is to be governed by laws that bring order to society; to allow for the reconciliation of social, economic and political interests without incurring a state of constant violence and anarchy; to exploit resources found in nature for the general improvement of the material conditions that give rise to the flourishing of culture, art, and intellectual and spiritual endeavours.

These facets of civilization can be found in any society, past or present, in any historical or geographical context, and at any level of political organization from a loose confederation of tribal chieftaincies in remote antiquity to fully-industrialized technologically advanced polities. In this sense, the aboriginal societies of North America during the 16th to 19th centuries, for example, were just as "civilized" as the modern-day United States or Canada.[35] Conversely, modern technologically advanced nations can be just as barbarous, or worse, in their behaviour as any, more "primitive" society. One need only look at the horrible atrocities committed during the Second World War by Nazi Germany - a western industrially advanced country - as evidence of this. It is ironic that the nation that figured so prominently in the birth of the Enlightenment came to embody the exact opposite of the civility the movement was supposed to champion. Nazi Germany is an extreme example, but an important one, of how the "blessings" of science, instrumental rationality, the demystification of the natural world, and "progress", can ultimately serve to wage war on civilization and nature itself. The myths that are expelled

[35] In fact, it could be argued that the modern form of constitutional federalism, adopted by Canada, the United States, was inspired by the Iroquois Confederacy, which recognized the autonomy of individually distinct chieftaincies and their geographical territories, yet had a central system of government that represented the larger identity and interests of the Iroquois Nation. It also allowed for military and political mobilization on a larger scale than any single tribe could manage on their own. This form of centralization was not like European feudalism that held provinces of a kingdom in fealty to the monarch in a hierarchical relationship of military servitude and economic tribute, but a true federalist state where no one Chief ruled directly over another. For a comprehensive study of the Iroquois Confederacy and its institutions, see *The Great Law and the Longhouse*, by William N. Fenton, 1998.

through the rational intellect in turn, give rise to new myths based on a new ontology of science, rationalism and progress. As Adorno and Horkheimer state, "The curse of irresistible progress is irresistible regression" (Noerr, ed., 2002, p. 28)

Ultimately, we must redefine good governance as a new norm that is not a one-size-fits-all solution to the world's woes, guaranteed by a particular set of social, economic, and governmental practices like "free and fair" elections, liberal economics and individualism, but rather an alternative conceptual approach to merely selecting a particular model based on either theoretical concepts or prejudicial beliefs – no matter how well intended they may be. The challenge is to conceptualize an *essentialist governance* model that is universal in scope, yet balances the dynamic between top-down political authority, outside influence and local, bottom-up participatory political culture and practice. It is this issue that Part Two of this thesis will attempt to address.

Part Two

Chapter Three: Good Governance throughout History

"...To make justice come true in the land, to destroy the evil and wicked, so that the strong does not oppress the weak." - Hammurabi

"Democracy" in the Past

Consider the following scene: the Grand Council of a small Mediterranean republic devotes most of its time to electing officials and ensuring that power is distributed equitably throughout the state apparatus. It deliberates for days on end about who should be elected to key governmental posts, ensuring that their balloting is private, fair and accepted by all concerned. In fact, most of the Council and Senate's activities centre on elections and the just allocation of offices. At stake is the well-being of the state; that its interests, primarily trade-related, are secured through effective and balanced governance.

At first glance, not knowing the identity of this country, one might assume that it is a modern day republic with a liberal democratic form of government. It is not! The above scenario is a thumbnail of the government of the Republic of Ragusa, now the city of Dubrovnik, circa 1450 CE.[36] This is in contrast to the usual image of medieval city-states being ruled by absolute monarchs governing by decree and caring little for the interests of the larger whole. The Republic of Ragusa, indeed somewhat of a peculiarity of the time, had essentially a democratically-styled system of governance some three or four hundred years before the writing of the American Constitution.

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[36] For a very interesting study of Ragusa's political system and its ruling patrician class, see *Age, Marriage, and Politics in Fifteenth-Century Ragusa* (2000) by David Rheubottom.

Its political philosophy was based on Aristotelian precepts of mixed government, similar to contemporary Venice where, "The Doge represented principles of monarchy, The Great Council represented popular consultation, while the patricians represented aristocracy" (Rheubottom, 2000, p. 31).

Ragusa, a small but influential maritime trading nation on the coast of modern-day Croatia, was similar to its Italian city-state neighbours in many ways, but also quite different. It had a Rector, elected by the Grand Council, and not a Doge. It had many more rules limiting terms of office (the Rector only ruled for a one-month period) and prohibiting repeat incumbency. Voting was more extensive than in other states, and foremost, its government was a mixture of constitutional ideas in which "... the doctrine of popular sovereignty was most prominent" (Ibid.). However, this does not mean that Ragusa had a democratic society in the way a modern Western observer might envision.[37] Simply, it developed a system of governance (which *happened* to involve a complex electoral balloting system) that suited its needs according to its particular historical, material and geographic circumstances. This fascinating society survived amid the turmoil of the late Middle Ages through to the Early Modern period until the republic came to an end thanks to an invasion by Napoleon's armies.

As challenging as it may be to separate conceptually modern democracy, with all its emotive power (particularly for westerners), from good governance, the two concepts must be de-linked. This is not to say, of course, that they are mutually exclusive, but

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[37] Ragusan society was divided into citizens and non-citizens. The non-citizens included slaves and peasants, the latter making up the vast majority of non-citizens and were "unfree", in that they owed service to their patrician lords. However, most of the city's population itself consisted of the *populo*: artisans merchants, seamen, tradesmen, etc., and the ruling patricians. While no socio-economic distinction was made between patricians and the rest of the *populo*, only the patricians could sit on the Grand Council, vote and hold office. (Rheubottom, p. 28)

rather, that they form two all together different things. A central point of this thesis is that democracy should be seen objectively as a system; responsive to, and ultimately originating from, a *particular* set of social, economic, geographical, cultural and historical circumstances. Good governance, on the other hand, is the end result of the proper functioning and administration of a governance system oriented and structured toward the needs of a specific polity and where mechanisms of social, economic and political reconciliation are self-originating, not imposed from outside (see Chapter Four). Ragusa is one example of this in action, but there are many others. This prompts the question, what makes good governance different from democratic systems? Particularly when dealing with a well-functioning, effective democratic system?

The democratic form of government, in this thesis, is identified by *particular* mechanisms and institutions originating from European and North American societies. Despite many permutations depending on the polity in question, they all include popular assemblies, some form of elected representation though balloting, an executive, a constitution founded in English Common Law or Continental Civil Law, and have formal mechanisms for balancing power within the government, ensuring oversight and providing accountability. These systems arose from specific European and North American historical experiences, legal concepts and practices that evolved from medieval society and which were subsequently transformed by Enlightenment thinking towards the increased liberty of the individual from the state.

Good governance, on the other hand, is the *product* of any political system that provides, as much as possible, for the security and prosperity of the polity and guarantees a just application of its laws. These laws are defined through the social, political, and

cultural norms held in common and found manifest in that society's institutions of social, political, and economic governance. These institutions may take various forms depending on the culture, social organization, history and geography of the society in question and need not belong to one *particular* form, i.e., elected representation, responsible government, or codified charters of individual liberties.

Therefore, is it proper to assume that there is – and has ever only been – one way to deliver good governance? And furthermore, that it (democracy) was *always* the best form of government – as if it were lying in stasis waiting to be revived from its ancient origins by the leaders of enlightenment? Either scenario seems more based on Western myth and shallow, assumptive, readings of history as opposed to critical and empirical historical analysis.

In fact, it would be both unreasonable and inaccurate to make the claim that good governance did not exist prior to the development of modern liberal democracy. Yet this is an underlying assumption of our popular political culture – that the peoples of antiquity (especially the non-western peoples) were backwards, ignorant and brutish, and that it was the Enlightenment which brought us out of those dark times in an evolutionary path from barbarism to civilized society – and that those societies today which appear welded to "archaic" governance structures must therefore also be backwards. However, one need only look at world events today, to see that barbarism is not exclusive to the past, or to any one society or civilization. It is indeed alive and well and is, in fact, seemingly making resurgence in ways we could not have imagined.[38]

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[38] The horrors of many modern conflicts, particularly civil wars in the former third world have been well documented (Huband, 2001, Knight and Keating et al, 2004). These horrors run the gamut of atrocities including rape, mutilation, summary executions, slaughtering of civilians, even forced cannibalism. One

By the same token, good governance and enlightened rulership is not the exclusive property of the present day "civilized" world nor is it necessarily found in abundance there. It is thus important in any discussion of good governance to examine the earliest examples of it that are available to us through the historical record. By so doing, I hope to establish good governance as a timeless norm that has taken many different constitutional forms in many different historical and cultural contexts.

Hopefully, by discovering good governance in different forms, we can identify the enduring patterns of what distinguishes "good" from "bad" governance and later, arrive at a new concept of what I will call *essentialist* governance, that for now, can be described as not married to a particular form of government or constitution but rather encompasses the myriad of responsibilities and activities undertaken in the governing of the state – which can either be done "well" or "poorly".

To this end, I have selected four examples of "well-run" states from the historical record, which will help us to identify some elements of good governance and lead us to an understanding of what *essentialist governance* is. They are: Ancient Babylon, The Persian Empire of classical times, the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of England prior to the Norman Conquest of 1066 AD, and the Ashanti Kingdom in Africa around the time of European contact and expansion in the Early Modern period.

I chose these examples carefully and after much contemplation, as indeed, there are many other examples that I could have selected, and surely, there are some very good

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wonders what factors contribute to such an utter breakdown of not only governance, but also of basic human principles, when military leaders actually consciously plan such evil acts and there exists neither the capacity nor even the will from the international community to stop them.

ones I have left out.[39] I am not suggesting that these historical states form pristine examples of good governance or that the leaders themselves of were paragons of virtue. Rather, I am arguing that they each contained elements of good governance practice that, while located in different geographical areas and historical periods, nonetheless have a timeless wisdom and universal appeal. Furthermore, these historical examples each reveal a number of different components that we can identify as being tenets of good governance throughout the ages. Some of them overlap while others are more case-specific.

Briefly, the key ones are: administering just laws[40] (Babylon), religious and cultural accommodation (Babylon/Persia), political autonomy and/or tolerance granted to conquered or minority peoples (Persia), broad-based participation of the populace (Anglo-Saxon England), and diffusion of power through different social and cultural mechanisms (Ashanti/Anglo-Saxon England). Of course, these components are not to be found *only* in the given examples. The polities I have selected are merely a sample through which I hope to build my model in the next chapter. Furthermore, the components mentioned above are by no means exhaustive. Others could be included, such as, effective administration and provision of services, building of infrastructure, sound trade practices, wise counsel, values of freedom and prosperity, and of course, embracing the responsibility to govern in the interests of <u>all</u> orders of society. While vital

[39] I am particularly thinking here of indigenous governance systems in North and South America. I chose these four examples in order to accomplish several analytical tasks with the fewest number of examples.

[40] Certainly, the debate over "just laws" and what constitutes a just law is ancient and all-encompassing. I am not interested here in searching for a definition of universal justice, formal justice, or distributive justice as Plato did in *The Republic* (Cairns and Hamilton, 1961, pp. 575-844). Rather, at the risk of taking a moral relativist position, I am simply saying that just laws – whatever they may be - are vital for the practice of good governance, and that those laws will of course vary depending on the society in question. What makes them just is not their metaphysical quality or ideological appeal, but their ability to support the conditions of good governance.

to the delivery of good governance, these elements are often characteristics of a particular ruler's (or group of rulers') approach to governance and are not necessarily *structurally* part of the governance system itself, with the possible exception of liberal values enshrined in a constitution – which is a modern western phenomenon. As such, and in the context of reviewing the historical record, they are widely scattered, inconsistent and often fleeting.

Thus I have focussed on the five elements mentioned above because they exhibit *structural* components of good governance and are not behavioural facets of rule subject to the particular skills - or inversely, foibles - of a particular ruler or rulers.[41] However, neither is each component found in all of my case studies. Religious tolerance was an important ingredient in the success of both Ancient Babylon and Persia, for example, but not Anglo-Saxon England. Conversely, the participatory, bottom-up character of 11th century English governance is not to be found in the political systems of the ancient Middle East, nor is extensive electoral voting found in late medieval or early-modern Europe outside of a few examples like Ragusa and other Mediterranean city-states. However, as will be seen, the common thread that binds all good governance systems is the *limitation on the accumulation of power*. The methods, processes, institutions and mechanisms to achieve this may vary from state to state, society to society, and from historical context to context, but the essential *raison d'être* of the system itself is to

[41] For example, while a particular ruler could decide to grant political autonomy to a conquered people (or minority), or to revoke it, it seems that once autonomy has been given, the practice is often repeated by successive rulers (i.e. the Persian Kings following Cyrus II). This continuation of policy thus consolidates the practice to the point where it eventually takes on a structural character (e.g. Quebec within Canada) and is repeated over time, regardless of the possible desire of a particular ruler of the day to order things otherwise; while if the autonomous arrangement is revoked, it is rarely, if ever, without great political cost and turmoil, possibly even threatening the state itself.

prevent one person, or one group of persons, from having too much power (resulting in some form of tyranny) and to mediate and reconcile social, economic, and political interests.

Therefore, if we can identify some of the key components of "good" governance as they can be found scattered throughout the historical record, we can accomplish several things: first, we can see that different political systems can deliver good governance based on the society's particular needs; second, we can demonstrate that good governance practices are not the sole purview of a particular culture, civilization and/or time period; third, by doing so, we can provide evidence and shape to the existence of a long-standing *norm of good governance*, and argue that this concept should be the guiding principle for evaluating and promoting political systems – instead of favouring one *particular* system, be it democracy or something else; and lastly, we will be able to better understand the activities of governing as *essentialist governance* and thus be able to evaluate the "goodness" of a particular regime's performance based on other criteria than how close they mimic the Western liberal democratic form of government.

Hammurabi and Ancient Babylon

What better place to begin a discussion of the timeless norm of good governance than with King Hammurabi, ruler of ancient Babylon from 1792-1750 BCE?[42] While those with a casual interest in history may remember him as "the first King of kings" and as the

[42] In his very informative book, *King Hammurabi of Babylon*, Marc Van de Mieroop notes that there is some debate as to the proper interpretation of the Babylonian calendar as it relates to the Gregorian and that as a result, some scholars place Hammurabi's reign 70 years earlier or later. However, he gives the dates most commonly accepted by scholars. (Van de Mieroop, p. X)

first ruler of antiquity to establish a written code of laws, the study of his rule and the creation of the vast state of Babylon, stretching from Syria to the Persian Gulf, reveals much more about the timeless essence of good governance and the nature of international relations than one might initially consider. In addition to his reputation as a lawgiver, Hammurabi was also a shrewd and clever manipulator of diplomatic affairs, a sound administrator and a warrior, skilfully building alliances and pitting rivals against one another to his eventual benefit (Van de Mieroop, 2005, p. viii).

When he ascended to the throne, Babylon was only one city-state among many in Mesopotamia and covered an area only 60 by 160 km in size (Ibid, p. 3). The large number of petty states dotting the region resulted in frequent conflict during this historical period with no state lasting as supreme ruler for any significant period of time. The only power that could be considered a regional hegemon in those days was the Kingdom of Elam to the east, from the Tigris River 700 km southeast to what is now south-western Iran (Ibid, p. 15).

Interestingly, if one wants to don the lenses of a modern day student of international relations, Elam could be thought of as a more or less benign hegemon; its power was indisputable, as its wealth allowed it to field large armies capable of putting down any challenges to its dominant position. Yet it chose to largely avoid direct imposition of its authority on the neighbouring states of Mesopotamia, who for the most part acknowledged the ruler of Elam as overlord (Ibid, p. 16). However, when the ruler of Elam, Siwe-palar-huppak, decided to conquer and occupy parts of Mesopotamia in 1767 BCE, the political landscape and thus the relationship between Elam and the city-states changed, with Hammurabi seizing the initiative (Ibid.).

However fascinating, the details of the resulting next several years of regional conflict, alliance building, battles, and inter-court diplomacy between the key actors are too numerous to describe here. Suffice to say that Hammurabi, who had already ruled for two-thirds of his eventual 43 year reign, was most likely prompted to pursue an expansionist policy by Elam's decision to occupy the state of Eshnunna, a Mesopotamian state north of Babylon (Ibid, p. 78). Once his campaign had begun, Hammurabi did not stop until he had pacified most of Mesopotamia and established his direct rule over the southern region, which became known as the Kingdom of Babylonia, stretching from the location of modern-day Baghdad to the Gulf.

While it is admittedly delicate and often problematic to stretch modern academic frameworks of analysis and theoretical perspectives backwards almost four millennia, the nature of Hammurabi's rule and the way in which he implemented his post-conquest policy can be very illuminating for our modern time. Specifically, Hammurabi could be thought of as recorded history's first post-conflict peacebuilder, and as it turned out, a remarkably good one. Van de Mieroop states,

> "The creation of his new kingdom may have been the accidental result of a defensive reaction against Elam, but Hammurabi did not scorn the new responsibilities placed upon him. He took it upon himself to guarantee its peace and prosperity, and the final years of his reign show him to have been an able administrator and just king." (Ibid.)

Following his four-year campaign to pacify the region, Hammurabi set about building his realm, and he saw as his duty to bring about prosperity for the general population. While this was always expected of a Babylonian ruler in those days, many did not take it to heart and instead, chose to rule in their own selfish interests – more interested in personal glory and political success than building a prosperous realm. This

is, of course, a failing that we have observed throughout history and is as recognizable today as it has ever been.

In contrast to many despots of both the past and the present, Hammurabi pursued an ambitious programme of reconstruction and development following the consolidation of his power. He built walls and fortresses to defend his cities from outside invaders. He built large canal systems opening up whole new tracts of land for cultivation, and was dutiful in ensuring that those canals were properly dredged and maintained. He also restored the damage brought about by warfare that saw his northern neighbours deprived of water for several years and so, he redirected the water so that these once barren fields could become fertile again (Ibid, p. 83).

Hammurabi also created a large corps of administrators tasked with ensuring that projects went smoothly and disputes over land title and other economic and agricultural issues of the day were dealt with properly and fairly. The system was large and complicated, relying on high volumes of correspondence and often direct oversight by administrators appointed by Hammurabi himself, but it worked - and it ensured the promulgation of consistent social, agricultural, financial and administrative policies throughout the empire. A very similar administrative organization in a different historical context was also seen later in India under the legendary Emperor Asoka, who ruled over a socially progressive and very successful empire in the third century BCE that ultimately laid the foundation for the modern Indian nation.[43] From the perspective of governance, both Hammurabi and Asoka were interested in building prosperous realms for their

[43] For a fascinating look at Asoka and the Mauryan Empire, see, *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas* (1998) by Romila Thapar.

people instead of simply furthering their own glory – which was secured anyway, by virtue of their effective rule and just policies.

In Hammurabi's case, these policies were ostensibly derived from and administered through his code of laws, reproduced on *stelae* and erected in every city of the kingdom,[44] which provided rules for everyone to follow, proper regulations for the settling of disputes, and laws by which every subject could expect their fair share of justice. It must be pointed out that while Hammurabi's laws were quite comprehensive, and covered virtually every facet of Babylonian life at the time, they were not a true code as in the way we would view, say, the Napoleonic Code for example. While the exact purpose of the *stelae* is not entirely clear, the laws they depict were evidently not a theoretically derived guide to rights, duties, responsibilities, or legal proceedings as one might assume (Ibid, p.99). Rather, it can be surmised that they were a collection of more-or-less arbitrary rules that spelled out what should happen in any given situation, e.g., "if A does X to B, then B can do Y to A" – following an "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" type of logic also found in the Hebrew Bible (Ibid, p. 102-104).

Nonetheless, for the purposes of our discussion, the point is that Hammurabi had a solid sense of what was socially, morally and legally "right" for his cultural and historical time-period and therefore sought to ensure that his realm was governed justly and evenly administered. In fact, it was not uncommon for Hammurabi himself to grant an audience to a common landowner to hear disputes and adjudicate accordingly – an

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[44] A stela is a kind of obelisk carved from stone that depicts important events or displays important inscriptions. Hammurabi's Code of Laws was reproduced in such a way, the most famous being the one held in the Louvre in Paris. In addition to its preamble, introducing Hammurabi as a king selected by the gods to rule justly over the land, etc., it contains approximately 275-300 laws. Evidently there were more; but a later ruler erased a set of columns at the bottom in the 12th century BCE (Ibid, p. 101).

impressive feat of governance considering his valuable time and the vastness of his empire.

Another key element of his good rule was the fact that he did not seek to impose a particular god of his favour upon those cities he conquered but instead promoted local cults (the temple to the local deity being a very important focal point of a community) and allowed local identities to flourish (Ibid, p.80). Of course, this was made easier by the fact that most people in the region worshipped the same pantheon of gods, were familiar with Babylonian culture and its languages (Akkadian and Amorite) and so, were close enough, culturally, to Babylon for few problems to arise. However the point is that he could have attempted to re-engineer the cultural and political-religious structure of the defeated people in a way that was specific to his particular beliefs and interests, or those of his own ethno-religious background. Instead, he allowed local culture and religious expression to flourish relatively unfettered, so long as his authority as ruler of the land was respected. But one can safely say that he earned that respect through sound and just governance and that the people under his rule gave him their allegiance gladly.

Classical Persia and Greece (and the origin of the "civilization over savagery" myth)

One of the most enduring historical discourses in Western civilization has been that of the free citizens of the west repelling and/or subduing the savage, uncivilized (or sometimes merely mislead people) from the East. While due to geo-political and other reasons, history has indeed often seen the West pitted against its neighbours to the east, the above-mentioned discourse is essentially a myth whose origins are founded in the 5th century BCE wars between Greece and the Persian Empire that directly preceded the birth of

Classical Greece and its Helleno-centric outlook on world history. Alexandra Villing explains…

> "The Greek victory against all odds is the background against which Classical Greece entered its greatest period: the 'Greek miracle', the moment of the birth of modern western civilization. Ever since, we have tended to think of the Greek spirit as being in fundamental opposition to Eastern culture: western democracy versus eastern monarchy; freedom and accountability versus oppression and absolute rule; the free-spirited art of the Parthenon versus the rigid, monotonous processions of Persepolis.
>
> This is the Classical view, an 'ideology of difference', that for a long time dominated the western, European perception of Persia, having been first constructed by the fifth-century-BC Greeks themselves." (Villing, 2005, p. 236)

This theme of an 'ideology of difference' is still evident today, gaining prominence in the international political discourse in the 1990s, largely through Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis. Huntington defines civilizations primarily on the basis of cultural difference…

> "The most important conflicts of the future will occur along the cultural fault lines separating these civilizations from one another.[45] First, differences among civilizations are not only real; they are basic. Civilizations are differentiated from each other by history, language, culture, tradition and, most important, religion… … These differences are the product of centuries. They will not soon disappear. They are far more fundamental than differences among political ideologies and political regimes." (Huntington, 1993, p. 25)

While it is true that there are very distinct cultural differences between human societies, the unfortunate aspect of Huntington's definition is that it fails to account for those parts of the human experience that *bind* us, and not merely divide us. It also ignores the complex and dynamic relationship between these civilizations that have all influenced each other in many ways. The assumption on Huntington's part is that these civilizations

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[45] Huntington identifies the major civilizations as Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and "possibly African civilization" (Huntington, 1993, p. 25).

are homogeneous and atomistic, like billiard balls bound to collide with one another; disregarding the fact, for example, that not all Westerners are Christians, not all Chinese are Confucian, and not all Muslims hate America. It also places the most significant differentiating factor on culture and de-emphasizes the historical, geographic, and material circumstances in which these civilizations arose and the mutually transformative relationships between them that these circumstances have caused. Unfortunately, his view seems to have had a profound impact on many Western policy-makers and has undoubtedly shaped, to perhaps a large extent, the mindset of the proponents of the "War on Terror". This "clash" thesis plays very well into the myth of the free West versus the threatening horde from the East and can also be found throughout modern popular literature and film in the form of comic books and movies like Frank Miller's *300* and much more memorable epics like J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, which tend to reinforce this myth either consciously or otherwise.

Contrary to commonly held belief, Tolkien did not create an entirely independent fantasy world nor did he invent the various races and beings found in it. In actuality, the world of Middle Earth is a synthesis of several western mythological traditions with many names, place names, and even some events either inspired by or drawn directly from existing myth. It is curious and interesting that the narrative he set in Middle Earth at the end of the Third Age was essentially a classic struggle between good and evil pitting the free peoples of the declining West, the noble elves, valiant humans, and brave hobbits versus the evil horde of orcs, "Easterlings" and "swarthy men" enthralled by the Dark Lord Sauron. Tolkien was careful not to suggest that these eastern men and "Southrons" were *by nature* evil but rather were "stirred up", corrupted, and mislead by

Sauron, whose proximity and power were too great to effectively resist (Tolkien, 1997, p. 1024). This is an interesting analogy to the way the people of the Middle East – and their rulers – have often been depicted throughout history and now, in contemporary times, by proponents of the "War on Terror".

However, in reality, the peoples of antiquity who ruled the Middle East were far from enslaved minions. The first Persian Empire, established by Cyrus the Great, from 559 to 330 BCE was one of the most sophisticated and developed civilizations of the ancient world and was known for its advanced culture and habit of allowing the realms it had conquered a large degree of political, religious and cultural autonomy. Marcia Brosius states,

> "No attempt was made to impose Persian language and religion on other people. Instead, the kings emphasised a policy which was, to use a modern phrase, all-inclusive. This does not mean to say there were no repercussions in case of rebellious activities, but in the principle the political and religious tolerance of the Achaemenid kings toward their subject peoples was adhered to, and was, by all accounts, overwhelmingly successful." (Brosius, 2006, p. 1-2)

This policy of tolerance is also noted by Villing as being extended even to those Greek cities themselves in Asia Minor who had been conquered by the Persians – quite a different picture from the one painted by the heavily Greek-influenced rendering of history…

> "The Persian Empire was characterized by a relatively tolerant rule, which usually did not interfere unduly in matters of local religion or custom, though obviously a firm hold was maintained on politics and administration, if necessary with merciless force. Greeks could hold posts of importance and their cities generally prospered." (Villing, p. 237)

This model of empire was characterized by central rule by the Persian king who exercised direct sovereignty over his regions (known as *satrapies*) through the local

satrap or governor who was tasked with administering the *satrapy*, collecting tribute, and was usually appointed from the ranks of the Persian nobility (Cook, 1983, p. 77). At the time that Darius took the throne in 522 BCE, there were no fewer than 23 satrapies in the Persian Empire, constituting what is often called history's first "world empire", stretching from the Aegean to the west, Scythia (modern day Ukraine) to the north, and the Indus Valley to the east (Ibid, p. 78).

A key component of the success of this empire was the establishment of a royal road system (and the known world's first postal system) to facilitate the system of trade, tribute, and military deployment largely sufficed in keeping the empire together – with of course, the figure of the Persian King at the political centre. It was this arrangement that allowed both a coherent empire and a large degree of autonomy for the ruled people. While the governors of the satraps were usually Persians, the cities and regions enjoyed, in addition to a tolerant policy from the King regarding religion and custom, a large degree of autonomy in matters of governance.

Interestingly, this hands-off approach employed by the Persians has been noted by scholars as being both an inherent strength of the empire and a factor that probably contributed to its eventual downfall, with much of the reigns of the successors of Cyrus being taken up with putting down rebellions in the satraps (Cook, 1983, Brosius 2006, Wiesehöfer, 1996). Nonetheless, these revolts rarely threatened the internal cohesion of the state itself and the Persian Empire can - and should - be remembered as a remarkably successful political entity and a key contributor to world culture, art, and history in the pre-Classical time period.

The Late Anglo-Saxon State (1019-1066)

From personal observation, I have noted the general tendency for modern Anglo-American people to look back upon the origins of their societies with either quaint romantic idealism, or with contempt. On the one hand, medieval times are often viewed in an idyllic way - an age of mystery, magic, castles in the distance, pastoral pleasures, country festivals, chivalrous knights and fair ladies, and of course, unmatched courage, honour and sacrifice. On the other hand, medieval times are also seen as brutal, backwards, oppressive and full of despair – an age of ignorance and suffering where disease was rampant, repressive kings ruled mercilessly with an iron fist, and people grovelled at their feet in a state of perpetual fear and servitude.

Of course, neither impression is correct. All of these qualities were either present or absent in varying degrees depending on the particular place in history (the medieval era actually being an incredibly diverse time of growth, change and discovery), the specific kingdom in question, what corner of the world you happened to find yourself in, your lot in life as assigned by God or the fates, and the general state of the human condition at any given moment. In that sense, it was really no different than today. But despite all of the particularities and historical details required for understanding this fascinating period of history, we are not prevented from examining a specific case in order to reveal knowledge about the practice of governance, such as it relates to our discussion. And a very useful case in this regard is Anglo-Saxon England, just prior to the Norman Conquest of 1066.

The events of that famous year, including the Battle of Hastings, are well documented and the impact of the Norman Conquest on England and the implications of

it for later European history, and indeed by extension, world history are not to be underestimated.[46] In fact, when we imagine England in the Middle Ages and ponder the system of government in use then (for those of us who do such things), we have a tendency to think of classical continental feudalism, which Eberhard describes as a top-down aristocratic system held together by the institution of vassalage (Eberhard, Wolfram, in Meskill, ed., 1966, p. 60). European nobility, in return for being granted sovereignty over a defined territory within the realm and thus rights to tribute within their zone of decentralization, were bound to their King in a special moral-religious relationship of fealty, loyalty, and most importantly, military service (Eisenstadt, 1978, p.229).

However, the system of governance practiced by the Anglo-Saxons was very different and can best be described as "bottom-up" and participatory to a large extent. Certainly, there existed an aristocracy which was bound to the King (primarily in the form of the six earldoms of England) but it was not merely a hierarchical system of fiefdoms. In his book, *1066: The Year of the Conquest*, David Howarth offers us a very illuminating and useful glimpse at the organization of the Anglo-Saxon state as it had emerged from centuries of repeated Viking invasion and continual warfare for the consolidation of all-England...

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[46] While a definite disaster at the time for England and the English people, who saw their way of life and prosperity destroyed by the invading Norman French (Howarth, 1977, pp. 197-201) the conquest is usually seen as being better for England in the long run (Ibid., p. 198). The transplanted continental culture, architecture, language and political organization blended with the host Anglo-Germanic culture to eventually produce a strong *European* nation that was more socially and politically connected with its continental cousins, while remaining distinctively English in character and cultural detail. However, the adoption of continental feudalism with its top-down, autocratic system of vassalage, was in marked contrast to the more broad-based participatory system of the pre-Conquest Anglo-Saxon state and can scarcely be described as benefiting anyone other than the new aristocracy itself.

> "In the course of time, almost every man in the country had attached himself by mutual promises to somebody more powerful, who could help to protect him and his family in times of stress. Small landowners had surrendered the nominal ownership of their land to their protectors – who in turn held the land in duty to somebody higher. This evolution has often been called a loss of freedom, and so it was; but absolute personal freedom had come to be, as perhaps it has always been, a dangerous illusion. Its loss was really a gain: the acceptance of the duties and mutual support of a social system, the end of anarchy." (Howarth, 1977, p. 14)

This system gradually developed in response to a specific set of social relations and obligations which themselves emerged from particular historical circumstances. It was an interesting mixture of traditional tribute-taking and a *subsidiarity* style of governance that fused the social realm, economic interests (almost exclusively agricultural in those days) and political organization in a stratified manner in which each level had responsibilities to the next level above or below and where decision-making occurred at every stratum.[47] Howarth explains,

> "By 1066, the system was elaborate and stable. There were many social strata. At the bottom were serves or slaves; next cottagers or cottars; then villeins, who farmed as much perhaps as fifty acres; then thanes, who drew rent in kind from the villeins; then earls, each ruling one of the six great earldoms that covered the country; and above all, the King. And in parallel to this secular social ladder was the hierarchy of the church, from village priests to archbishops. None of these people could claim absolute ownership of land. The villeins, to use the old phrase, 'held their land of' the thanes, the thanes held it of an earl or the church or the King, and the King held it all of God's grace. And each of them, without exception, owed duties to the others above and below him. Of course, the system and

[47] W. Andy Knight defines subsidiarity as such: "The original subsidiarity concept was extended to envelop political authorities and institutions in German constitutional law. In this usage, subsidiarity assumed a presumption which favoured the lower realm of authorities and jurisdictions within the state's political hierarchy. Certain local areas of decision making needed to be protected from the interference of central authorities, according to this version of subsidiarity. Central governing institutions were expected to exercise only those powers that could not be discharged by the provincial or local political units, although nothing precluded the central body from transferring some of its authority to lower echelons in the governance hierarchy." (Knight, 1996, p. 44) While Knight is discussing subsidiarity in the context of the European Union and global governance, the principle is promising from the perspective of fostering local bottom-up governance systems and could be applied to many cultural contexts. A possible local and global governance model for the future, subsidiarity may also have far older origins than previously envisioned.

> the people were fallible and the duties were not always done; but it was the clear intention that they should be done. The law gave remedies, and nobody in theory was above it." (Ibid.)

Of key interest to this discussion is the manner in which all strata of English society, right down to the village level, could participate in governance and have their views heard. Howarth points out that, "... though the rule at the top was autocratic, the English of that age were great committee men." (Ibid, p. 21) Meetings were held at the village level, called a *moot*, where anyone could, and undoubtedly did, participate in discussions about the affairs of the village. If a problem could not be solved, or required input from surrounding villages and *hundreds*[48], a representative would be selected and sent to attend a *hundred moot*, in which the representatives from the various *hundreds* in the shire would meet. Once again, if that level of association were not able to resolve the matter, then representatives from the various shires in the earldom would be nominated to attend the *shire moot* (Ibid.). Above this, were the *witangemot*[49] and then the King himself. While the King was the unquestioned ruler of the land, public opinion (always a healthy mainstay of English society regardless of the time period) was very important - the King could not rule by whim. And while the vast majority of the English people in those days were simple villagers and cared little for matters of high politics, in theory,

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[48] A "hundred" was a parcel of land that could support and be farmed by one family. (Howarth, p. 19)

[49] Howarth refers to the *witangemot* (the council itself) as an embryonic parliament comprised of members *ex officio* who were royals, earls and former earls, upper clergy, etc. It operated on a consensus basis and tried, if possible to obtain unanimous agreement on important issues, i.e., the anointing of a new king (Howarth, 1977, p. 29). It's most famous decision was that of the disputed succession of Harold Godwinson (the Saxon) as King following the death of Edward the Confessor in 1066 – which served as a pretext for William of Normandy (the Conqueror) to invade England (Ibid, pp. 67-76). It would be the last decision the *witangemot* would make - although the seeds of that institution would sprout again in the first true parliaments a few centuries later. Indeed, to this day, the spirit of the *witangemot* is still alive in the form of citizen groups advocating the establishment of a separate English parliament to rule on matters exclusive to England – much like the home rule granted to Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. http://www.toque.co.uk/witan/

anyone could be granted an audience to speak at any level of governance, including the *witangemot* (Howarth, 1977, p.21).

The late Anglo-Saxon state is a very remarkable phenomenon. Not only did it have a thriving, broad-based, bottom-up (as well as top-down) system of government, it was also a society that expected – and sometimes demanded – that the King of the day uphold the laws that the people themselves saw as important, be they fair taxation on *hides*, the removal of an unpopular earl, or the abolishment of harsh punishments. Indeed, King Cnut, who ruled from 1016-1035, issued a pair of codes, which, "... have the air of a 'charter of liberties' with guarantees of rights and for the discontinuance of abuses." (Campbell, 2000, p.22) It is probably not a coincidence that the same nation that produced the first European parliaments and the *Magna Carta* had, at its origin, an active, broad-based, participatory polity that valued laws of leniency, civic freedom and fair taxation. Yet at the same time, this polity throve outside of any modern context of western liberal democracy, despite the fact that the origins of the latter can be found in it.

The fallibility of people, their laws, and governments aside, the picture of governance that emerges in the Anglo-Saxon example is certainly not one of backwards, despotic rule over ignorant and oppressed masses, as is often how societies of the past are represented, particularly medieval ones.[50] Nor is it a model for an ideal society that can be transplanted at will to any other society regardless of its cultural context or historical time period. Rather, it was a system that evolved in a particular historical, geographic,

[50] This is reminiscent of Said's Orientalism in that what governs people attitudes is a representation of reality whereby the actors, in this case, medieval societies, form a caricature or stereotype that has little to do with the actual experience. This form of "historical orientalism" contributes, in my opinion, to the assumption that the way we organize ourselves now is more civilized than it was in the past and therefore any societies who possess "archaic" governance systems must also be uncivilized.

and social context and which had specific social, economic, and cultural relevance to its people. By all accounts, it functioned well in providing for the essential well-being and peace of the community at large by offering mechanisms for resolution of disputes and adjudication over matters of concern – however simple they may appear in comparison to our complex modern societies.

While the disaster of the Norman Conquest interrupted the evolution of this political society (we can only guess how things may have turned out had Harold won the Battle of Hastings) and placed the English under harsh rule, abruptly ending the peaceful and modestly prosperous conditions to which they become accustomed, there is little doubt that the cultural relevance of the Anglo-Saxon system, and some of its principles, found their way into the constitution of the later Kingdom of England and greatly contributed to its formation, and by extension, the outcome of world history.

The Ashanti Kingdom circa 1700

The chief difficulty in understanding the character, history and government of pre-colonial indigenous peoples in Africa and elsewhere is the sheer paucity of early written sources that treat these people as actually *having* a history and tradition of self-government in the first place. Virtually all early sources on African polities from the time of contact (circa 1450) were written by Europeans and thus contain the severe racial biases of that era of European thinking towards newly encountered peoples. While certainly, the myth of the "noble savage" also extends back to this period, colonized peoples were never studied with the intention of learning about their system of

government, or their institutions of social, economic and political governance, because they weren't thought to have possessed these things (Davidson, 1992, pp 10-11).

This severe bias, the origins of which were described in Chapter Two, has still not been entirely overcome. However, recent scholarship, much of it coming from the African continent itself, has begun to discuss African history from the point of view of Africans – and not from a perspective handed down from generations of colonial thinking (Odotei 2006, Frempong 2006, Asante 2007). While much of the history of pre-colonial Africa is lost to us, much has also been retained, reconstructed or re-examined through the application of modern sociological and anthropological methodology and scholarly political study of a more humanist nature that does not adhere to racial biases (Said 2003, Davidson 1992).

Thanks to this recent scholarship, it is now possible to examine certain African polities of which we *do* have a decent amount of knowledge about. What becomes clear is that African states prior to the colonial era were indeed fully developed states, nations, and empires, exhibiting all of the characteristics required for such status. Furthermore, the Ashanti example – one of the best in terms of our understanding – gives us an opportunity to not only study a powerful pre-colonial African nation-state, but to use it as an example in the process of identifying elements of good governance and the principles of political association that can be found in every successful state today – or in history.

The Ashanti Kingdom, as it is historically known, emerged near the end of the 17th Century CE when a host of various *Akan* groups and clans who shared a similar culture and languages came together in an effort to end the clan rivalry that had kept most of them in subjugation to their more powerful neighbours, who were also Akan

(Davidson, 1992, p. 53). These groups united around the historical figures of *Okomfo*[51] Anokye who was a spiritual leader, and the strongest chief of the Akan clans, King Osei Tutu. According to myth, Anokye called down from heaven, a golden stool (which still sits in the palace of the Ashanti King in Ghana to this very day) that became a unifying symbol of the new Ashanti Nation, with the King at its head (Ibid, p. 55). Despite originating in myth, the Golden Stool is an actual artefact that came to represent not simply the throne on which the King sat, but the power and fate of the Ashanti nation, very similar to the function of the English Crown, which, "... embodied a transcendental power beyond its material existence." (Ibid, p. 56)

> "What remained [from the myth][52] was the need not only for a symbol that could embody the idea of unity where no unity had existed before, but no less for a symbol acceptable to Akan concepts of ritual for change. Akan persons of authority had sat on stools made for them since times beyond memory, and new aspects of authority, introduced to meet this or that contingency of social change, had required the making of new stools for wielders of such authority. Such stools possessed the prestige of custom and clan solidarity, but they did not come down from heaven in a black cloud. They belonged to the person in authority who had the right to sit on them, and were of bureaucratic rather than mystical importance." (Ibid, p. 55)

The Golden Stool, and the King who sat on it, thus became the unifying symbol of a nation that had already begun to expand its territory, farming activities, and industries by the 17th Century and which grew into a powerful entity, encompassing many different social, cultural, and familial identities. This ability to reconcile differing interests at the local and clan level, as well as the regional and provincial level, while still supporting a national identity that serves as a unifying force across those divides is a key

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[51] *Okomfo* means "a priest or guardian of the ancestral shrines" in Twi, the dominant Akan language (Davidson, 1992, p.54).

[52] My brackets

pillar of good governance. It was this interwoven fabric of individual identities quilted together through flexible social mechanisms that diffuse power laterally to form something greater than the sum of its parts that helped enable the Ashanti Kingdom to rise to cultural and political prominence.

Davidson points out that the Ashanti Kingdom had all the trappings of a nation-state, even by European standards. "It had a given territory, known territorial limits, a central government with police and army, a national language and law, and beyond these, a constitutional embodiment in the form of a council called the Asantemen..." (Ibid, p. 59) This council was a kind of parliament (noted one British observer in 1886) "... at which all matters of political and judicial administration are discussed by the King and Chiefs in Council, and where the latter answer all questions relating to their respective provinces, and are subject to the consequences of appeals, from their local Judicial Courts, to the Supreme Court of the King in Council." (Ibid, p. 60)

Alexander Frempong reveals that this political system carried with it notions of participation, representation, respect for human rights, and the principles of good government by consensus (Frempong, in Odotei and Awedoba, eds., 2006, p. 381). While certainly much different in social and cultural context, setting, and inter-subjective meaning, this African constitution served the same essential function in providing good governance (in theory) that any other constitution, written or un-written, in the western world has done. While the Ashanti King was the indisputable ruler, he, like his English counterparts, could not rule by whim, and there were significant restrictions on his power. Specifically, he could be "de-stooled" (removed from office) and was subject to the same

checks against his power as the sub-chiefs below him. Like a feudal monarch, he was a *defacto* Chief-of-chiefs…

> "Given such wide powers, the chief would appear to be an autocrat or even a despot… …but in practice, he had little chance of being so. The system had in place built-in checks and balances that restrained the powers of the chief and ensured that he would be responsive to the wishes of the public. Property rights, particularly with reference to land, were fairly secured and prevented leaders from arbitrary exploitation." (Frempong, p. 384)

Furthermore, Akan society had firm normative values of respect for human rights and individualism that were a natural part of their cultural milieu - and it fell upon the political system to ensure that these norms were respected and reflected in the day-today governing of the nation. It is also clear that the Ashanti Kingdom was prosperous and generally well-run, as the historical record clearly shows that it rose from humble beginnings to eventually subdue its rivals, open up new lands for cultivation, provide security and the rule of law – African law – for its people, expand its cultural influence and language and in short, provide as good governance for its population as any other state in history can claim to have done.

The task of this thesis now turns to assembling these timeless components of good governance, observable throughout the historical record in widely varying social, historical, geographic and cultural contexts, and begin to sketch out a new way of imagining what governance is – free of any ideological loyalty, historical prejudices, or racial and cultural biases.

Chapter Four: Imagining Alternative Governance

"It is far better to be free to govern or misgovern yourself than to be governed by anybody else." – Kwame Nkrumah[53]

Rethinking Governance

Now that we can demonstrate that "the universe of good governance is much larger than just democracy" (Qureshi, 2007), and can be delivered by various constitutions and state formations, and can be observed in many forms throughout history, then the question now turns to defining what the essence of governance actually is – separate from any *particular* form of government. The theoretical purpose of this thesis is to attempt to de-link modern western liberal democracy from the notion of 'good governance' as it has been used by proponents of democracy in general, and neo-liberal democratizers in particular. In essence, the term 'good governance', in the current public and scholarly debate, is really nothing more than a smokescreen for economic liberalization and the imposition of liberal democracy on non-western nations regardless of whether or not such 'experiments' actually bear any fruit – as Abrahamsen, Paris and others have shown (see Chapter One).

In the previous chapter, I identified certain pillars of good governance that have been observable throughout the ages in order to demonstrate that good rule can be secured through various types of constitutions and in a variety of contexts. The task now turns to assembling these components of good governance so that we may arrive at an understanding of the essence of governance itself, or what I call, *essentialist governance*. This concept of essentialist governance will provide a new conceptual point of departure

[53] http://thinkexist.com/quotes/kwame_nkrumah/

that, hopefully, will enable us to imagine alternative forms of governance – not only for non-western nations, but perhaps even for western democracies themselves.[54]

There are four terms that have been used so far in this thesis that now require more detailed analysis and definition: 'governance', 'good governance', 'essentialist governance', and 'alternative governance'. In this chapter, I will first explore, in more detail, the definition of governance itself, and how it can be conceptualized. Second I will properly define *essentialist governance* and discuss the dynamic relationship between it and governance steering mechanisms, and its role in improving prosperity levels. I will then sketch out a model of *alternative governance* that is applicable to the state level of analysis but which also has relevance for the international development debate. Lastly, I will discuss how *good governance* can be delivered in the context of an alternative governance model and arrive at a redefinition of *good governance* itself.

Governance without Government

At first glance, the term 'governance' seems unproblematic, perhaps a synonym for governing, or the activities of governing performed by a government. In fact, throughout most of history, the governing of society was almost exclusively done by the state and formal religious institutions, with concepts such as social governance, civil societal governance, and corporate governance still left to be articulated and debated at a later time in the 20th century. So in one sense, governance means 'the act of governing' – as

[54] As discussed in the introduction, there appears to be a malaise of democracy in the western world, particularly in North America, as is evident by growing apathy (particularly amongst the younger demographic), declining voter turnout, and general disenchantment with the political system. Thus, the tendency for adherents of the democratic model to iterate that "the system is as good as we can do" rings hollow and is in fact dangerous in that the inability to develop new political systems may eventually be democracy's downfall.

traditionally done by the state. However, even in earlier times, and in every society, governance has happened on many levels and has always been a complex web of various formal and informal institutions and mechanisms: family, religion, cultural and societal norms, legal systems, education, etc. James Rosenau states, "Governance, in other words, encompasses the activities of governments, but it also includes the many other channels through which 'commands' flow in the form of goals framed, directives issued, and policies pursued." (Rosenau, 1995, p. 14)

Thus, Rosenau sees governance, etymologically derived from the ancient Greek *kybenan* (meaning 'to steer') as "control or steering mechanisms, terms that highlight the purposeful nature of governance without presuming the presence of hierarchy... ...To grasp the concept of control one has to appreciate that it consists of relational phenomena that, taken holistically, constitute systems of rule." (Ibid.) While the context in which Rosenau is writing is one of global governance without government, the essence of his definition is applicable to the matter at hand here. The point being, that governance entails the resolution of social, economic, philosophical and political interests through a plethora of societal relationships towards self-defined goals. In every society, these goals are determined collectively through the inter-subjective experience of the people who make up the society and ultimately, the polity.

Therefore, the realization of those goals, the reconciliation of those various interests, and by extension, the day-to-day administration of public affairs will happen through formal and informal institutions in a manner specific to, and derived from, a particular inter-subjective experience. Rosenau states,

> "Governance is thus a system of rule that is as dependent on inter-subjective meanings as on formally sanctioned constitutions and charters. Put more emphatically, governance is a system of rule that works only if it is accepted by the majority (or at least, by the most powerful of those it affects), whereas governments can function even in the face of widespread opposition to their policies. In this sense, governance is always effective in performing the functions necessary to systemic persistence, else it is not conceived to exist (since instead of referring to ineffective governance, one speaks of anarchy or chaos). Governments, on the other hand, can be quite ineffective without being regarded as non-existent (they are viewed simply as 'weak'). Thus it is possible to conceive of governance without government – of regulatory mechanisms in a sphere of activity which function effectively even though they are not endowed with formal authority." (Rosenau, 1992, p. 4-5)

The Commission on Global Governance offers a definition of governance that is useful for understanding how these control and steering mechanisms manifest themselves in human activity...

> "Governance is the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action may be taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions have agreed to or perceive to be in their interests." (The Report on the Commission on Global Governance, 1995, p. 2)

Thus, governance can be the formal legislative activity of a state's government, or it could take the form of a local area organizing a neighbourhood watch program. The key point is that governance takes place in many locations other than in the context of state rule and as a result, constitutes a phenomenon unto itself.

Where this 'governance without government' concept takes us in this thesis will be dealt with in the following section, where I will examine, more comprehensively, the various governance functions that can be observed and show how they interact in a historical setting to produce a particular system of formal government. But for now, and

in the context of this study, let me simply state that this inter-subjective experience Rosenau speaks of can also include not only societal relational phenomenon, but the historical, geographic, environmental, material and cultural circumstances of the society in question. When one then connects these with the hierarchy of the state and its material and strategic interests, a particular form of governance – and therefore government – emerges. This governance is a natural evolution of the formal and informal institutions arising to manage and reconcile the myriad relational, and inter-relational phenomena that are found in the society. Therefore, when an outside power, with its own particular inter-subjective experience and attendant form of government, seeks to impose its system on another polity with a markedly different experience, serious problems are bound to arise.

The problem with imposing any political system on a population rests with legitimacy. It is irrelevant whether or not a system is "good" or not to one particular group of observers. The population of the country in question must view it as a legitimate form of rule and feel that it is reflective of their interests and capable of giving expression to their goals, be they individual or collective. Lipset defines legitimacy as meaning "... that the society as a whole believes that the existing political institutions are most appropriate, regardless of how it feels about the specific people who hold office at any given time" (Lipset, 2004, p. 209-10). So while Africans, for example, may dislike an autocrat who rules them unjustly, they still wish to see African solutions to African problems.[55] While there undoubtedly are differing opinions and competing interests to be

[55] During my internship in Ghana, I found varying attitudes towards both the western democratic system and the traditional chieftaincy system, which operate in parallel political "spaces". Some felt that the chieftaincy system was parochial, anachronistic and corrupt and should be abolished in favour of a purely

found amongst the population in any society, those interests and goals must be reconciled through controlling and steering mechanisms that resonate with the people en masse – and if those mechanisms include western liberal elements in a modern African society, for example, then so be it. But it is for *them* to decide that - or any "peacebuilding" or "democratizing" efforts are likely to be meaningless and smack of neo-colonialism. This is in essence what Nkrumah's famous quote speaks to.

Ultimately, if Rosenau is right – that one can conceptually separate governance from government – then the opportunity opens up to examine the constituent elements of governance functions. These can be many: familial, social, cultural, civil societal, religious, legal, economic, political, etc. However, the focus of this thesis is on systems of rule in a more formal constitutional sense that are shaped by these forces from below, but also determined by and acted upon laterally and from above - through historical, geographic, and perhaps most importantly, material circumstances. Hopefully, by analyzing these components, they will give us a more nuanced understanding of governance as a mosaic of all the things mentioned above – but a mosaic that has an internal logic and *modus operandi* that behaves similarly in *all* states past and present, irrespective of specific constitutional forms of government.

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western-style republican government. Others expressed the fact that they identified with the chiefs and the traditional form as better serving local interests and distrusted the republican system as essentially being alien and too easily subject to outside influences. Still others, Like Dr. Kwasi Ansu-Kyeremeh from the University of Ghana felt that there was potential to fuse the two systems, retaining the best elements of both. For a comprehensive study of democracy and chieftaincy in Ghana by various scholars, see *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*, edited by Irene K. Odotei and Albert K. Awedoba.

Essentialist Governance

In *Guns, Germs, and Steel,* Jared Diamond divides societies into one of four different types: *band*, *tribe*, *chiefdom*, *and state* (Diamond, p. 268). He then identifies five categories that will have different levels of organization for each type of society. They are: *membership*, *government*, *religion*, *economy*, and *society*. Under each category he also lists several factors; for example, under government, there is decision-making, bureaucracy, hierarchy of settlement, etc., and for society, he lists stratification, slavery, luxury goods, literacy, and so on (Ibid.).

Thus, the *band* and *tribe* types of society base their relationships on kin and clans whereas *chiefdoms* and *states* are based on class and residence. A *band* or *tribe* does not possess bureaucracy whereas a *chiefdom* may have none, one, or two levels, and a *state* will have many levels. Under economy, a *band* and *tribe* exhibit no division of labour yet a *chiefdom* and state *will*. Food production will be more intensive under a state formation than a *band* or *tribe* and will require much more sophisticated systems of storage, management and distribution. Conflict resolution will be informal in a *band* or *tribe* whereas it will be centralized in a *chiefdom*, and even more sophisticated in a *state*, with laws and judges, etc. Of particular salience to our discussion, the decision-making and leadership formation of a *band* is identified as "egalitarian"; a *tribe* also exhibits an "egalitarian" formation, with possibly a "big-man" taking the role of a first-among-equals. A *chiefdom* will have a centralized hereditary style of decision-making, and lastly, a *state* will have a centralized formation (Ibid, p. 269).

While I am concerned almost exclusively with states in my discussions about governance, the matrix that Diamond has developed allows us to see how the control and

steering mechanisms of governance will take different forms according to the level of organization of a particular society and its environmental circumstances. For example, a society with a population of only a few hundred clearly does not need a bureaucracy, whereas, conversely, the larger and more stratified a society becomes, the more difficult it is to maintain egalitarian systems of decision-making and informal methods of conflict resolution. Either society, however, can be governed "well" or "poorly" relative to its context.

Of key interest is the way in which Diamond separates the various factors and constituent elements, activities, and relationships found in societies of different types, and organizes them in a fashion allowing one to appreciate that governance takes place in a multitude of loci and will take a form dependent on a society's particular circumstance in any given category. Applying this essential approach to comparing different forms of government found in the historical record, one can see that particular formations of institutions, or levels of sophistication in any given category (decision-making, food production, religious organization, etc.) will differ according to the structure, capacity and organization of the society and to its needs. In addition, the geographical and historical context further shapes and defines the boundaries of a state's character – it's experience with its neighbours, its cultural legacy, the level of domesticated animals and crops available for cultivation, the amount of arable land it possesses, the level of access it has to strategic resources, whether or not it is an island nation or a land-locked nation, it's proximity to trading routes, the ethno-linguistic make-up of its populations, its religion, and so on.

All of these areas of human action and interaction require governance at the micro-level, at the state level, and in our modern context, increasingly at the global level. At whatever level of analysis (local, national, global), lands must be cleared for cultivation, roads and seaways must be protected for trade and travel, children must be educated, people must have access to clean drinking and bathing water, people must be employed, buildings must be built, taxes must be collected, disputes must be settled, and states must be defended from outside invaders. Regardless of the historical time-period, or the level of technological advancement of the state, or even whether or not it *is* a state (as defined by Diamond) or a band or tribe, all these things, or most of them, must be attended to. As Rosenau pointed out, many of these things are governed through control and steering mechanisms that can be conceptually regarded as existing independent of any actual *government*. Of course, governments do govern and usually, the success or failure in the areas of human social and economic activity is dependent upon the effectiveness of a government's policies.

If allowed to develop without undue outside interference, the system of governance of a particular polity arises in response to the existing historical and environmental conditions in which it emerged. As this moves toward state formation then the mechanisms through which governance (hopefully good) is delivered take structural forms, i.e., armies, central administration, tax collectors, policemen, courts, markets, religious and learning institutions, etc. Thus, the state becomes a structural entity concerned with overall governance and serves as a primary localized agent in the management of governance. It seeks to manipulate – or leave alone – the steering and controlling mechanisms Rosenau speaks of in the hope of producing action that is

beneficial to the polity. What is considered to be beneficial and for whom is another matter - and in fact, forms the arena in which politics itself takes place.

Therefore, what is created is a dynamic relationship between what I call the *governance milieu*, which is, the myriad human social relationships, economic and cultural activities, forces and interests acting upwards on the state and laterally throughout society, and the top-down governing policies of the state itself to ensure order and the preservation of the polity. Thus, *essentialist governance* is the result - in the form of policies, political action (or inaction) and observable political behaviour from the political society at large - of this dynamic relationship between the state and the complex *governance milieu* upon which the functioning of the polity relies. In simpler terms, *essentialist governance* is the actual "output" of the governance process at the state and societal levels.

An example would be how the issue of, say, homosexuality is dealt with and governed in a country. To use Ghana as an example, homosexuality is illegal according to state law; however, it is tolerated to some degree within society. The state has its law and prescribed punishment, but the way in which homosexuality is handled in the *governance milieu* ranges from open acceptance to meting out vigilante "justice" on homosexuals by youth gangs, with the government sometimes prosecuting homosexuals, sometimes charging perpetrators of vigilante justice, and sometimes leaving the issue alone entirely. What emerges is a particular state of affairs that defines the character of the issue and how that issue is dealt with in that particular society.

Another example would be jaywalking in Canada. It is illegal, and sometimes people are fined, but it largely goes un-enforced because the (governance) practices and

social systems of rule (Rosenau's control and steering mechanisms) deem that it is generally something people can do with receiving punishment, with the police – an instrument of the state – usually complicit with this view. This state of affairs is the *essentialist governance* of that particular issue.

In this sense, *essentialist governance* is broader than simply "the act of governing" by the state but narrower than the term "governance" alone. The combined *essentialist governance* of all the governance activities of a polity, in turn, affects the prosperity levels of that polity in material terms, security, health, satisfaction, cultural output, civil liberties, social, economic and political capacity, etc. Depending on what policies, action and behaviour are produced, these prosperity levels will be affected either positively or negatively. The task now turns to situating this idea of *essentialist governance* in a larger model through which we can imagine an alternative conception of how governance functions, and how good governance can be brought about.

An Alternative Governance Model

Alternative governance, in this thesis, means governance, *essentialist governance* and ultimately, *good governance* that is brought about through other forms of government, real or imagined, than the western liberal democratic model. This is not to suggest that the latter is incapable of producing good governance, but rather, that it is not the *only* form of government that can be successful in this regard. Alternative governance can refer to political systems of historical states, as reviewed in Chapter Three, it can mean current forms of effective governance that are not bound to the western democratic model, or it could refer to new ideas of political association yet to be realized. The bulk

of this thesis has attempted to show that the universe of good governance is much larger than democracy, and that, because of this, there must be other forces at work in the machinations of effective governance than simply holding elections, training judges in Anglo-American Common Law and writing republican constitutions.

While this holds true for western democracies themselves, the primary motive of this line of argument is to critique the imposition of western liberal democracy on non-western nations; to show that there are *other* possibilities for bringing about prosperity through government that may be more culturally, environmentally, and historically relevant to those concerned – and thus, more successful. But in order to imagine governance in a different way, it has been necessary to cast off the commonly held assumptions about the superiority of western democracy. This is admittedly not an easy task – to unlearn what your mind tells you is so.

In chapter three of *The Political Economy of a Plural World*, Robert W. Cox discusses the work of the 18th century Italian philosopher, Giambattista Vico. Cox was interested in how Vico saw history and its remaking in an entirely different fashion from Descartes, who believed that "... the *cogito*, was a mind possessed with universal rational capability which received the impression of the observable external evidence research could turn up" (Cox, 2002, p. 45). By contrast,

> "Vico's view was very different. For him there was no such thing as a universal rational mind; nor do we know history as something as something external to the human mind. People can know history because people have made history; and the making of history is also the making if human minds and the transformation of minds through the process. As he put it, knowledge of history is 'to be found within the modification of our own human mind.'" (Ibid.)

Thus for Vico, the "mind is transformed by reaction to the changing material conditions of existence, or, as he put it, 'the human necessities or utilities of social life'." Furthermore,

> "Mind is the avenue of access to understanding how such material influences have provoked the reshaping of society. The problem for the historian is how to imagine the mental processes of people whose minds are differently constituted from the historian's own, and in this way to be able to reconstruct mentally their world and their actions. Vico called this capacity *fantasia*. Others have called it imaginative reconstruction." (Ibid.)

It is this capacity for imaginative reconstruction that is applicable to our discussion of alternative governance. If one is able, at least to some extent, to imagine the experience of a person living millennia ago in a completely different social, historical and ontological context, then one can better see that what we hold as true is shaped by the collective inter-subjectivity of our own experience. In this fashion, we must also attempt to think outside of our own current inter-subjective understanding, as it relates to the discussion of democracy and government, and envision alternative models of how we govern ourselves, and what results in good or bad governance. The model I propose for re-imagining governance is only an exercise in imaginative construction, as opposed to reconstruction. It is not intended to be the basis of a new theory, nor has it been empirically tested. It is only a conceptual starting point that may lead to further research about alternative governance.

As briefly explained in the previous section of this chapter, the formal institutions of state governance (representative bodies, constitutions, laws, courts, etc.) attempt to manipulate and influence the various "non-governmental" governance practices and mechanisms that take place in multiple loci within the *governance milieu. Essentialist*

governance is the tangible political behavioural output of the dynamic relationship between the state and the complex multitude of the steering and control mechanisms found in the milieu. *Essentialist governance* then directly impacts on the prosperity levels of the community or polity, which further shapes the capacities of the system of government and the levels of complexity and organization it requires to meet new needs. Thus, what is created is a *governance cycle* that is a more holistic concept than a rationally constructed idea of the Weberian state (See Appendix 1).

The Applicability of the Model to "Development"

In the context of external involvement of other nations in the governmental development of other nations - specifically non-western and "developing" nations - there are four points of entry into the governance cycle that can have positive or negative consequences for the realization of good governance. They are: *positive outside influence* on the *governance milieu* (e.g. assisting human and economic rights advocacy, raising awareness of rights, health issues, encouraging intolerance of corruption, etc.), *positive outside influence* on the prosperity levels of a community (e.g., economic development assistance, micro-loans, personal and infrastructural capacity-building, cooperative building and farming projects, etc.), *negative outside interference* in the system of government (coercing nations to adopt particular forms of government, forcing elections, tying diplomatic relations to reform of system of government, etc.), and *negative outside interference* on essentialist governance/actual policies (linking aid to fiscal austerity measures, imposing economic liberalism through global governance institutions, demanding a nation adopt a particular policy, etc.).

In addition, there are three causal assumptions in the understanding of how to bring about good governance that are either erroneous or spurious and weak. The most important is the assumption that altering the form of government by adopting a particular constitution (in our case a western liberal democracy) and holding elections will somehow result in better *essentialist governance*. As demonstrated in Chapter One, this has clearly failed the vast majority of instances. The reason for this, according to the model proposed here, is that it bypasses the inter-subjectively derived control and steering mechanisms that are fundamental for making these electoral processes relevant. Also stemming from this kind of *negative outside interference* is the erroneous assumption that by changing the system of government, the community will magically see a return to prosperity. This type of thinking is evident in the comments made by George W. Bush and Condoleezza Rice, cited earlier in this thesis, about the need for all nations to adopt democracy in order to prosper.

The one spurious, or weak, connection is the belief that by changing governance practices and control/steering mechanisms in the milieu at either the state or civil societal levels, the prosperity of the community will be increased. While certainly, for example, a reduction in the petty corruption that plagues many nations would be beneficial, it does not necessarily result *directly* in more prosperity. Rather, a reform or evolution of broad social, economic, and governance practices at the local, civil societal, or state level, needs to be reflected in an actual reform of *essentialist governance* and actual policies if they are to have any lasting tangible effect. Furthermore, the *negative outside interferences* I have identified are, themselves, brought about by erroneous assumptions. As discussed previously, global governance institutions like the IMF and World Bank have repeatedly

sought to directly change the actual policies of governments (*essentialist governance*) by imposing austerity measures, with often-disastrous results (see Chapter One). In the same vein, the fetish with electoral democracy that seems to possess Western governments has resulted in many failed democracy experiments where the attempt to alter a country's form of government results in a sharpening of instability or even a return to conflict, as the case of Angola and others have shown.

However, there are points of entry into the governance cycle from outside actors that can have a positive effect on the evolution of the governance cycle. From my personal experiences conducting an environmental scan of local, national, and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) in Ghana in 2006, I had the opportunity to observe, first hand, the interaction at the civil societal level between foreign involvement and local governance.[56] Based on these experiences and my studies in international development and political economy, I found that outside actors – Westerners in particular – *can* have a positive impact on the mechanisms of governance at the civil societal level. The inter-subjective experience that Westerners have of enjoying civil liberties, understanding the importance of protecting human rights, refusing to tolerate corruption, etc., can be a constructive influence on civil societal groups and NGOs who share these same values and goals. In essence, there can be a convergence of the mutually self-defined goals Rosenau speaks of

[56] It must be stated at this point that local, national, and international NGOs are extremely varied, not only in their size and capacity, but also their effectiveness and dedication to actually improving the lives of people. Some NGOs are engaged in pure profiteering, playing on the heartstrings of well-meaning people, while others are truly committed to building social foundations in their countries. The NGOs in the *governance milieu* that I consider to have the most positive effect on building substantive democracy are generally local, community-oriented groups that operate at the broadest base of society to tackle issues of common concern to the ordinary citizen.

(that normally happen at the sub-state level) and the positive legacy of actually having those goals realized, as most people in the West have enjoyed. This relationship between outside influences, at the level of human agency, can be effective in helping to reform governance practices – or at least influencing the governance culture in a direction that will eventually result in better *essentialist governance*.

Similarly, despite the often-negative effects of Western foreign investment in former third-world countries, not all forms of external influence are counter-productive. From personal experience, I saw first-hand, the positive impact of micro-loans, for example, on the local communities in Accra, the capital of Ghana, and the Liberian refugee camp at Buduburam. [57] As well, there are many opportunities for foreign investment in worthwhile development projects that can directly impact the capacity of communities to improve their economic, social and environmental conditions themselves. Most of the worthwhile projects I saw were smaller in scale than traditional aid programs and had a well-defined goal of improving the prosperity of a local community in a meaningful way.[58] Thus, smaller investments of money into local projects that are self-initiated and that have specific relevance to the community involved can have a positive impact on prosperity levels, particularly when multiplied across many communities.

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[57] Micro-loans offer a small amount of money, usually not more than $100.00 to individuals wishing to start a small commercial enterprise in their community. Most of the recipients I observed were women. The money is used to help establish something as simple as a peanut-butter stand, or tailor shop, but the positive economic impact can be enormous for the individual, and by extension, the community in general – once multiplied by many recipients. These loans are paid back gradually and go a long way to empowering people, particularly women, both economically and personally.

[58] In northern Ghana, I met with the organization, Dew of Charity, which was helping to finance a local project outside of Tamale in conjunction with funding from the Ghanaian government. The project sought to complete a building (construction had halted due to a lack of funds) that would perform a value-added operation to the production of Shea butter, in order to expand the sale of this commodity and develop new markets. The extra revenue from selling Shea butter would then be put back into local literacy and health awareness programs – with the building serving as a multi-purpose facility to house the community's activities in these areas. The cost of completing such a building is approximately $35-45,000.

Redefining Good Governance

It is perhaps a bold statement to make (but not entirely untrue) that one can trace the myriad ills of the human condition –at least, those over which we have control - to the problem of governance. Hypothetically speaking, if all administrative problems were handled intelligently and efficiently, if all public works functioned properly, if economy and trade were robust, if the education system resulted in the general increase of knowledge amongst the population at large, the people were secure, safe, healthy, enjoyed leisure time, and all citizens of the political community received their fair share of justice (as defined by that community), then we would approach as close as possible, a perfectly governed society. Because a perfectly governed society is likely an impossible goal to ever achieve, the meaning of the word "good" in this discussion takes on a relative character.

All these activities I have mentioned - administration, public works, defence, education health, etc., require governance. They can be done poorly, or they can be done well. Moreover, they are all naturally interrelated and not easily divisible from one another. This complicates the activity of governance and the more problems, complexities, deficiencies, and so on that a particular polity experiences, and introduces into this governance soup, the harder it is to deliver *good* governance, given human imperfection. An example on the micro scale might be the effect of unsafe drinking water on the population of a village. It has appeared to me that in the past, the popular discourse (be it of a humanitarian or developmental nature) surrounding such an issue usually focused on the immediate consequences and human impact of contaminated water, i.e., people get sick – itself an obviously negative state of affairs. However, what I feel has

often been neglected in the past is how the ill health of the people of a village directly and indirectly effects a whole host of other activities, including, broadly, governance.

Clearly, a sick person cannot perform work. If that work is not performed, then some other productive capacity is negatively effected, which then results in a reduced capacity for say, defence, or learning, and so on. Thus it is the *integrated* nature of the problems arising from, say, poor drinking water that needs further appreciation and analysis. Multiply this situation by a selection of many other problems and one can begin to understand why many developing countries, for example, suffer from apparent "bad government". It is at this juncture that an ignorance of the integrated nature of social, economic and political problems often leads to erroneous assumptions that, say, "Africans don't know how to govern themselves". Thus, the concept of governance that I am employing treats the issue of unsafe drinking water, for example, as more than an isolated health issue. It has a direct effect on prosperity levels, which in turn shape the capacity of the state to improve the condition of the polity in other areas.

The UNDP offers an interesting definition of governance that is useful to this discussion...

> "Governance includes the state, but transcends it by taking in the private sector and civil society. All three are critical for sustaining human development. The state creates a conducive political and legal environment. The private sector generates jobs and income. And civil society facilitates political and social interaction - mobilising groups to participate in economic, social and political activities. Because each has weaknesses and strengths, a major objective of our support for good governance is to promote constructive interaction among all three."[59]

[59] From, "Governance for sustainable human development", a UNDP policy document, 1997. Found at http://mirror.undp.org/magnet/policy/default.htm

Figure 1 demonstrates in visual terms, the UNDP concept of governance and neatly captures the inter-connections between three key spheres of political interest and activity:

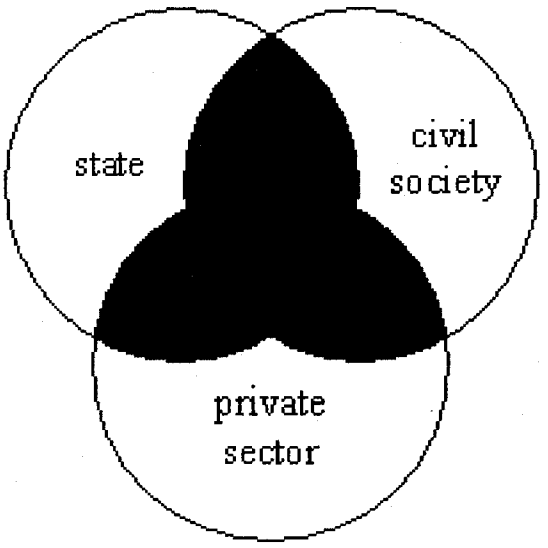

Figure 1

While this model is very useful in locating the area of crossover that must function in harmony for good governance to be realized, the alternative governance model I propose builds upon this by attempting to describe the mechanics of the dynamic interaction in the crossover area, illustrates how they work together in a *governance cycle*, and how *essentialist governance* is produced from this cycle in the form of actual policies.

Accordingly, if a polity has a system of government that is in harmony with the control and steering mechanisms of society, is reflective of the inter-subjective experience of society, and represents both the identity of the nation, its goals and desires, then the dynamic relationship between the system of government and the governance practices/culture will result in *essentialist governance* policies conducive to improving the prosperity of the polity. This prosperity increases the capacity of the state to address

new needs, manage the transformative forces brought about through interaction with other states, the environment and social forces from within. Thus, the formal and informal institutions of governance in a state, over the *longue dureé*, are gradually transformed in a continuing cycle.

This alternative governance model attempts to capture the dynamic created between top down hierarchical authority and bottom-up governance. When these forces are in balance, mutually reinforcing and legitimated through effective decision-making, accountability and the representation of societal goals and interests, however defined and constituted according to cultural historical, geographic and material circumstances, and contain the timeless pillars of good rule identified in Chapter Three, the result is *good governance*.[60] It derives from a specific set of conditions and actions in which, to the greatest extent possible, the polity as a whole thrives and peace is maintained - at least internally. Furthermore, this good governance can be delivered through many different forms of government and is not linked to any particular ideological bias. My intention is not to de-politicize governance but to remove ideology from the assumptions of how it should be conducted. *Good governance*, therefore, becomes a tangible state of affairs, and can be more specifically defined as:

> *The positive capacity of a state, its constitution, and form of government to provide the basic material and security needs of a polity while fostering a socio-economic environment conducive to the generation of wealth and as much civic freedom and well-being as possible for as many people as possible. Necessary for this is the reasonably genuine desire on the part of the ruler(s) to govern in the best interests of the population at large while avoiding gross violations of human rights and the degradation of the human spirit.*

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[60] Those elements are: just administration of laws, religious and cultural accommodation, political autonomy or tolerance granted to conquered or minority peoples, broad-based participation of the populace, and diffusion of power through different social, cultural and institutional mechanisms.

Thus, the timeless elements of good governance identified in Chapter Three through an examination of the historical record are those practices that help "deliver" the above definition, in the form of good *essentialist governance*, and in a properly functioning *governance cycle*. They are also applicable to both domestic and foreign spheres of political activity. True, these pillars may be thought of as merely "wise" policy – but there is a reason why they are wise. This chapter has attempted to provide a perspective for understanding why this is so; to appreciate that good governance can be delivered in different ways, and to sketch out a possible model for understanding how the various elements of good governance fit together in a dynamic relationship not defined by any particular political ideology - be it Western liberal democracy or something else.

Conclusion

The Quest for Good Governance

This thesis has attempted to show why so many experiments in democracy have failed and why a few have been successful. But it is worthwhile to ask another question; why should any experiment in democracy succeed? Perhaps it is not democracy *per se*, i.e., as defined through the Western inter-subjective experience, that is the guarantor of a peaceful, prosperous, and ordered society - but good governance *itself*, defined and shaped by the relevant inter-subjective and historical experience of the human society in question. Furthermore, if democracy is to take root in a particular instance regardless, then why should we expect it to happen overnight and carry with it the same significance and relevance that it does for those of us in the West?

The process of electoral balloting emerged in the Western historical context of industrialization, mass labour, expansion of wealth and the rapid development of technology that began in the late 19th century. Casting votes was a particular mechanism that was responsive to the forces at work in those particular societies undergoing such change. It was also a contested concept and an unstable political process at the time with mass bullying at the polls, with armed gangs threatening voters to cast their ballots a certain way, and with heavy manipulation (Bensel, 2004). It was in response to such conditions that secret balloting and other measures were introduced in order to ensure the impartiality of the voting process.

It is useful to look more closely at the West's *own* experience with governance so that we may better understand how it evolves differently in other contexts – particularly ones where governance has broken down and conditions of security and prosperity are

deteriorated. It is out of these changing social and material conditions that demands for improved governance mechanisms emerge, are contested, and ultimately take shape in a manner relevant to the society in question, as opposed to being imposed by external forces based on a rationally constructed ideology.

For example, the lack of proper policing in Medieval England led to a more community-oriented approach to justice with individual townsfolk holding each other accountable.[61] This presumably resulted in the witness/court system from which modern Anglo-Saxon justice derives. Thus, this system emerged in its own historical cultural and situational circumstance and further evolved in its various later settings (America, Canada, Australia) being further modified according to local circumstances. It was not a system with universal application or relevance. Indigenous justice, be it African, Asian, Islamic or Aboriginal, emerged in accordance with the same principles, only in different settings, and therefore took on different structural qualities and characteristics.

The practical point here is that the historical transformative process in the case of Western Civilization from a pre-capitalist, aristocratic, feudal society concerned mostly with agricultural issues into mass urban society with plebiscitary democracy and an industrial economy did not happen overnight. It took centuries – and has had its major crises that could have easily caused it to fail many times. Why then do we expect that the mere holding of elections in a troubled country will somehow magically solve the political problems of that country in short order?

Even a casual observer of global political developments can see that there is a genuine growing desire on the part of many people currently living under oppressive

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[61] http://www.livescience.com/history/060803_medieval_torture.html

regimes to reform their systems in favour of more openness and political freedom. I share this desire. Indeed, in many ways, the idea of "democracy *is* spreading" and being fought for in many parts of the world – in countries across Africa, in Tibet and Myanmar, in Ukraine, in Latin American countries, and even within established democracies themselves, for example, among Aboriginal peoples in the Americas and the South Pacific. Much of this thesis has criticized the process of forced democratization and has attempted to reveal the origin and impulse of the perceived need to "bring democracy to the world" – an impulse that seems so deeply rooted that it has become almost impossible for many to imagine any other way of bringing about the 'good' governance, required at all levels, to deal with the pressing problems of our times. What we need, in essence, is democracy without forced democratization - meaning, more open, representative and equitable systems of government (as defined and shaped by the society in question) without the political project of imposing a particular constitutional form of democracy on "target" countries through foreign policy initiatives and inter-governmental institutions.

It is not the goal of having a more "democratic" world per se that is misplaced as much as the assumption that one particular form of government, in this case Western liberal democracy, is *the one and only* form that is both legitimate, and capable of bringing about good governance. Rather, good governance can be secured through many different forms of political association, as Aristotle recognized over two millennia ago. Furthermore, it must be accepted that political reforms in the direction of more openness and participation may take on different qualities and result in different institutions and relationships than the ones with which Westerners are familiar.

For example, there are signs of political reform in the direction of more openness observable in several Islamic nations at this very moment.[62] Robert Hefner points out that reformist developments are underway in countries like Turkey and Iran, but are being defined in a different context of social, demographic, and economic relevance. For example, The Justice and Development Party (JDP) in Turkey, although an Islamist-based organization, has nonetheless focussed its objectives on promoting human rights, equality, and reforms aimed at ending corruption and improving economic conditions – while at the same time distancing itself from the Islamic rhetoric of the past (Hefner, 2005, p.3).

Similarly, even in Saudi Arabia, one of the most conservative Islamic nations in the world, there are stirrings of political liberalization. For example, in 1992, King Fahd laid down through decree, the "Basic Law" that created a 60-member consultative body called the *Shura*...

> "The *Shura* is only a consultative body – it has no power to pass laws and can offer advice only when the government asks. Yet in the course of the decade, the *Shura* has become more and more active. In 2001, it doubled in size. The new members are mostly technocrats, businessmen, and academics (no royal belong), and their ranks include – remarkably – two Shi'ites." (Seznec, in Diamond L., ed., 2003, p. 81)

Seznec points out that given the traditional mistreatment of Shi'ites in Saudi Arabia by the Wahabist establishment, which considers Shi'ism to be heresy, this is a significant development (Ibid.). Furthermore, and of particular significance to this thesis, these small steps towards reforming the political systems in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and others, have arisen ostensibly through social and deliberative processes that are native to

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[62] Interviews with Dr. Mojtaba Mahdavi, University of Alberta, December 2007.

the countries in question, and not imposed from the outside. Demands for more equitable, just, and representative governance have emerged in response to the social demographic, economic, and historical circumstances in which these polities currently find themselves. Ultimately, the task becomes one of identifying the common principles of liberty, equity, and justice that unite all human societies and their aspirations, and of understanding that these values are not the sole purview of one particular historical and cultural experience but have found expression in as many different ways as there are people in the world.

Summary

To begin to tackle the above questions, and to arrive at a new understanding of how good governance ought to be imagined and redefined, this thesis has taken a decidedly classical historical empirical approach using qualitative analysis. Part One of this paper dealt with the origins, motives, processes, and ultimately, failures of the vast majority of forced democratization "experiments" and sought to understand the essence of the "democracy fetish". Chapter One discussed democracy in the modern context and its various definitions. It demonstrated how the fetishism with democracy led to poor policy choices by Western political leaders. It examined the "good governance agenda" revealing that it has largely been a smokescreen for advancing neo-liberal economics and post-conflict peacebuilding strategies that are tied to neo-liberal ideology. Those strategies, usually in the form of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), imposed elections, and democracy-building experiments have actually contributed in some cases to a worsening of political and economic conditions in many non-Western, particularly African, states. Some of these strategies have actually acted as a catalyst for a return to conflict.

Chapter Two looked at the continuing language of Orientalism and dealt, in some depth, with the origins of the assumption that Western liberal democracy is the superior form of government for all states. To do this, I looked at Edward Said's *Orientalism* and compared the arguments of that work to the current policy language of a major Western nation, Canada, with the hope of showing that Orientalist and neo-colonial attitudes still lie under the surface of the political debate over such issue-areas like the war in Afghanistan and contribute to misguided policy prescriptions. This chapter then led to an examination, in more detail, of the origins and fates of human societies. It embraced the assumption that civilizations do not advance towards some pre-determined destiny but are instead shaped by the historical, cultural, geographic and material circumstances in which they find themselves.

Part Two of the thesis perused the historical record for signs of good governance displayed in contexts other than the modern Western one and then set about proposing a new way of imagining alternative governance. Chapter Three undertook an analysis of four historical states, Ancient Babylon, the pre-Classical Era Persian Empire, the Anglo-Saxon state prior to the Norman Conquest, and the Ashanti Kingdom of the Early Modern era, with the intent of identifying certain timeless elements of good governance that could serve to sketch out an alternative governance model. These elements are: just administering of laws, political autonomy and tolerance of conquered or subject peoples, religious and cultural accommodation, broad-based participation of the populace, and diffusion of power and power-sharing through different social and cultural mechanisms.

Chapter Four, examined governance in even greater detail, discussing its constituent elements and forwarding an exploratory model of the *governance cycle*. The

goal of this exercise was to understand the cyclical dynamics of a properly functioning governance system, propose new terms for understanding how governance works, and ultimately, show how good governance can be delivered through various mechanisms and in a variety of social and political contexts.

The Search for Common Ground

The ultimate question that arises from this thesis is: if indeed good governance in our modern context can be secured through different forms of governance and government, then what are those values found in the democratic tradition that have a universal appeal without being married to an attendant form of government and constitution? In other words, how do we resolve the paradox of accepting that Western liberal democracy may not be for everyone while at the same time wishing to see the spread of increased freedom, equality and civil liberties? For these are essential elements in building substantive democracy.

The answer posited is that there are certain liberal values that are not solely the purview of Western democratic tradition. As has been pointed out in this thesis, there are examples from the past – outside of the context of liberal democracy – where key principles of a just society have been manifest in the political tradition of the people concerned. Thus, I offer a modified version of universal "democratic" principles worth keeping that support the conditions of good governance yet are flexible enough to find institutional expressions of them in a variety of social, cultural and historical circumstances relevant to today's world. They are:

- The right to speak one's mind

- The right to political association
- A meaningful consultative processes
- The accountability of those holding power
- The diffusion of power through social and political steering mechanisms
- An educated and informed public
- A strong civil society
- The right to basic human rights and human security

Finally, it must be reiterated that it is not my intent to disparage democracy. Rather, I argue that if we are to preserve the best aspects of democratic culture we must view that culture from a more critical light – both in the usage of the term itself and in its mechanical practices. It may be the case that those in the West have reached a common inter-subjective understanding about what they *mean* by democracy – that being the positive elements of legitimate rule based on the participation of the population at large and the recognition of the rights of the individual. And, if it has attained this inter-subjective meaning through related historical and philological processes that denotes a particular set of liberal values expressed in political terms, I do not protest. I will certainly not argue that those values are undesirable. Quite the contrary - I share them. But they are values expressed in *Western* terms, and this specificity must be kept well in-mind.

Other societies may desire, and function better in, a social environment where the focus is more on the community (i.e. the Muslim *umma*) and not the individual. The issue of education for both boys and girls, for example, could be examined from a western

egalitarian, individualistic motivation or from the desire of an indigenous person that their children, boys and girls, receive an opportunity to be 'broad-minded', which entails expanding their mental faculties beyond a narrow, local ideological context to embrace a larger understanding of the world around them and gives them the skills to improve their quality of life. This notion of broad-mindedness is compatible with Western values - but not a western value specifically, as it can be shared across many different social, cultural and religious contexts.

Perhaps the introduction of liberal values can serve to disrupt social cohesion in a state where the concern should be more about how *essentialist governance* must deal with immediate material conditions (clean water, safe roads, education, adequate infrastructure, etc.) rather than introducing potentially contentious ideas that could wait for another day. Thus, for example, tolerance of behaviour (e.g., minority cultural expression, alternative opinions and lifestyles, etc.) should be encouraged because it improves the conditions of good governance, i.e., substantive democracy, but the legal recognition and entrenchment of those values in the constitution may be delayed until such time as those values find "bottom-up" expression in the social foundations upon which substantive democracy is built.

Therefore, we must be candid and frank about the fact that democracy, specifically Western liberal democracy, is a system – not the system. It has its strengths and weaknesses. It has its justices and injustices. It has its freedom and it has its tyranny.[63] It may be suitable for some societies but not for others who may find their own path to freedom and prosperity. Furthermore, the broadly democratic values that we

[63] E.g., "the tyranny of the masses"

cherish may be secured by other means and through other institutions, relationships, and processes than simply going to the polls every 4 years – and this is as true in established Western democracies as it is in non-Western states trying it for the first time. By slavishly adhering to one particular version of democracy that emerged from a particular set of historical, cultural, material and geographical circumstances, and insisting that all others adopt it virtually by rote, we actually do a disservice to its great emancipatory potential by taking it for granted and assuming that it *is* 'good governance' itself – then scratching our heads when we watch it fail.

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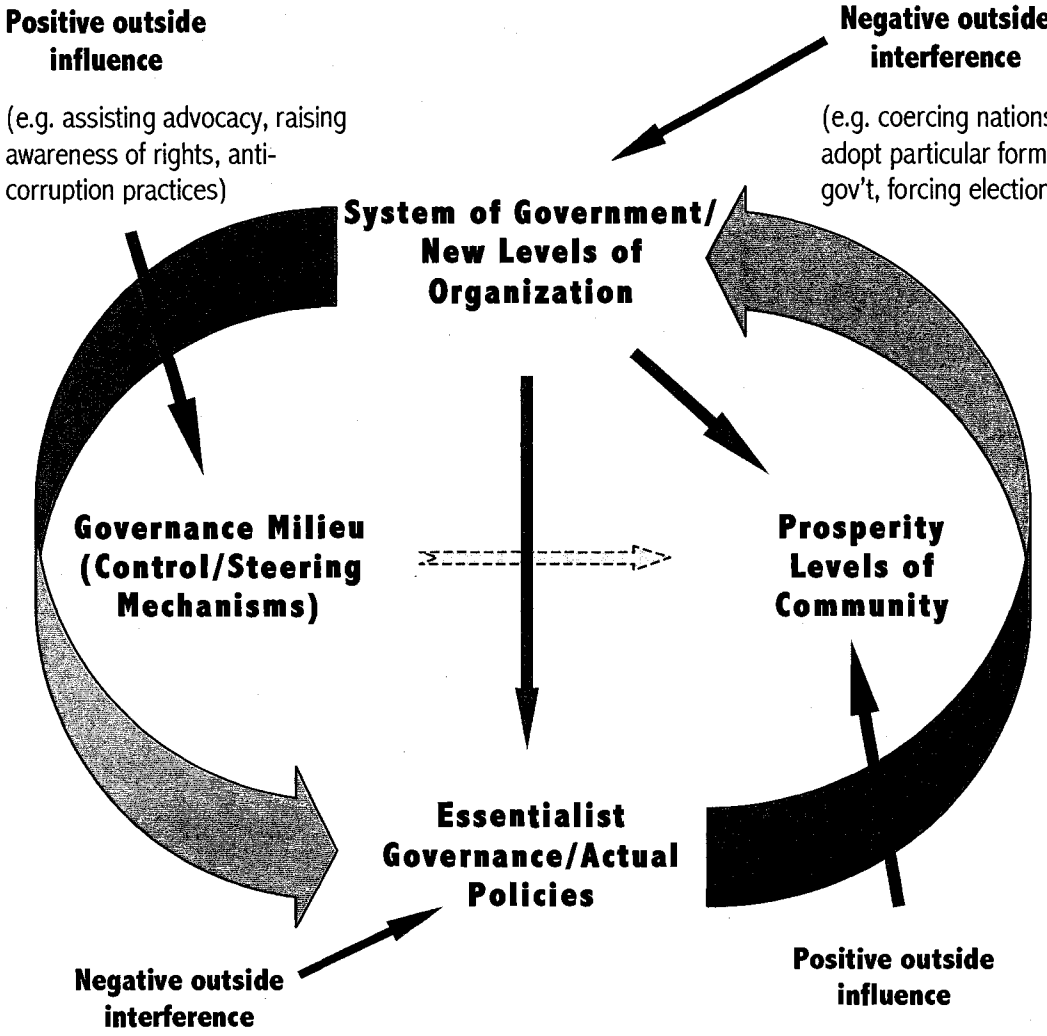
Appendix 1 The Governance Cycle



Legend

- **Erroneous Causal Assumptions**
- **Spurious/Weak Causal Assumptions**
- **Constructive Relationships**
- **Counter-productive Relationships**