

From Conflict to Cooperation: How Good Governance Fosters Peace and Stability

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Abstract

This paper aims at analyzing the connection between governance and the processes of enhancing or negating peace and stability in societies. It claims that such policies as non-violent, accountable, transparent, and rule of law types act as strong prerequisites for resolving issues and establishing a spirit of cooperation. By exploring the efficiency of governance structures these abstract aims to show how such structures help avoid conflicts by implementing several methods of distributing resources fairly, safeguarding human rights and cooperating through institutional channels. This proves factual references and well-articulated examples that argue that the regions with strong governance systems have reduced levels of violence and political instabilities in a region. Moreover, the paper also aims at reflecting on the international organizations and local government involvement as they address the need to support governance reform aimed at strengthening society against conflict. To sum up, the abstract states that analyzing the transition from conflict relationships to cooperation ones for the given regions and countries, it is possible to notice that governmental structures are not the only key drivers of effective change; active civic engagement and the dynamic development of governance practices that can meet the modern needs of society play a significant role as well. Therefore, based on the multifaceted cross sectional analysis of this paper, the author will aim at offering a new perception towards the core of the discourse on peacebuilding, with an emphasis on the application of governance fundamentals in the achievement and sustenance of durable peace.

Keywords: Conflict, Cooperation, Good Governance, Bad Governance, Peace & Stability

Introduction

Since the beginning of civilization, people of different societies have faced the issues regarding conflict as well as stability and that is where the levels of governance had significant effects. The civilized standards of functions like transparency, accountability, and participation are the principles that help in developing good governance, which is obligatory for the stability of any mankind and the establishment of peace. Transparency makes government activities transparent so that they cannot be manipulated by different individuals for their own self gain, ergo building trust between the state and all citizens (Transparency International, 2018). When clan's folk have an opportunity to distinguish the governmental occurrences and comprehend them they feel valued and this reduces the prospect of potential insubordination. Further, through implementing transparency, decision making is usually enhanced as policies are developed out of information that is readily available. The following is a discussion on two of these components: Accountability is another good governance element that has social stability implications. It may be true that when

government officials are brought to book, it warps their conduct because they will be more circumspect in the exercise of their power in to ensure that they do not abuse it and that they will acquiesce to the rule of law. This accountability can be attained by different means, for instance, an autonomous judiciary branch, freedom of press, and affective civil society organizations that oversee and check up on government (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi, 2009, p. 26). As it leaves leaders accountable to the people, AG enhances social order and reduces the risk of the use of power against the populace, leading to the ensuing conflict. In addition, the implementation of the comprehensive integration of gender and ethnic sensitive decisive policies, and the involvement of all categorical structures in polices that affect them add to stability. The characteristics of democracy as the key component of this system are: Inclusivity means that all ethnic groups of people or those of a certain religion or with a certain income level have a say in the system and believe that their opinion is valued (World Bank, 2020).

On the other hand, poor governance, especially corruption, poor leadership and poor governance scores in terms of patronage increases the risks of conflict. This paper has found out that when the government responsibilities are not clearly defined and are not transparent, people may develop some suspicion hence express lower satisfaction levels or stage rebellion (Rothstein, 2011). Corruption erodes confidence in government and wheat skews the funds hence making poverty and inequality as major causes of conflict. In the same sense, if leaders are not made answerable to their activities, they are capable of indulging into worst kind of autocratic practices that are oppressive in nature to assert their authority and this in turn would lead to more and more rebellion by the common mass (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). Some of the demerits of exclusionary practices are that certain groups of society may feel resentment and general demeanor in that society may rise due to suppressed discontent as they have no other means or avenue for change within the political structures. Hence, it is essential to promote good governance, as it can help support conflict-sensitive segments of societies and create stable and peaceful environments.

The Vicious Cycle of Bad Governance and Conflict:

Authoritarianism leads to poor management of resources, and this leads to conflict, which in turn leads to strained relations and poor governance in our society. One of them is exclusion of and the feeling of being an outcast from society. If some groups do not feel that they have the rights of independent identity in the domains of politics and economy, they will not only express their

grudge and hatred but also create riots and even armed conflicts (Stewart, 2008). For example, politically, socially or economically disadvantaged groups may use strikes or rebellion to express that their concerns are not being properly addressed or are being disregarded by the government. This exclusion is accompanied by Discriminatory measures that continue to exclude some groups in societies from the right to resources and the decision-making process due to certain classification of the former, which in turn, aggravates societal divisions and hostilities (Brown & Langer, 2010).

Corruption and impunity play a key role to the promotion of poor governance and conflict in Rwandan society. A failure to sanction corrupt behaviors impacts the society in a negative manner as the public loses confidence in their institutions and the government which in turn leads to prevalence of lawlessness among the public (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005). Such views may compel the believers of such notions that their leaders are corrupt and not inclined to be responsive to public or civil disobedience, instead of detailed rebellion processes and demonstrations. This manner of eradicating trust is very dangerous in that it animates a society, as seen in many instances where corruption has become rampant leading to protestation and societal instability. Corruption is invariably committed by officials and the complicity of corrupt authorities only worsens the situation because it sends out a message to society that the government is uninterested in bringing justice and fairness, but rather just concentrates on its power (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2015).

Human rights abuses which are perpetrated by the state only compound the problems of cyclical bad governance and conflict. When government or those in authority participate in human rights abuses such as abduction, torture, or murder of targeted persons, then the ruled end up fearing the rulers and developing resentment (Davenport, 2007). Such vices could trigger social unrest and more specific instability since injustice fuels the oppressed groups to fight back in order to be heard. Also, when institutions are weak the role of solving societal ailment and injustice dissatisfaction is compromised leaving a void that is likely to be filled by radicals (Rotberg, 2004). It then poses as an authoritative force that can supplant the failing state to provide services as well as security to citizens in exchange for their allegiance, more aggravating the situation, and deepening conflicts. Hence, bad governance not only bears the responsibility for conflicts but also contributes to the predisposition of circumstances that might cause and prolong these conflicts.

This positive cycle is a product of good governance as it encourages an environment of harmony that supports the enjoyment of the principles of peace and stability as well as respect for people's rights and strengths of institutions. These are principles that guide this cycle, since they are based on inclusion of all stakeholders. Through promoting the inclusion of the many different perspectives of society within the decision-making process, citizens gain a shared feeling of responsibility and ownership over decisions. This increases social inclusion as all parties feel welcome and involved in the political processes in a country, hence reducing the potential of one group feeling left out hence leading to grumblings of marginalization. Inclusive governance also fosters teamwork, and people from all sides bring their unique ideas to find the most solution to problems affecting society.

Transparency and accountability are the two major principles of governance that play incredible roles in the implementation of reforms that can be easily-understood and accepted by the general public. Measures like transparency accountability and audit, whereby information is made public and the public is encouraged to monitor government activities, ensure that the officials are always on the spotlight for accountabilities (Kaufmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi 2009). This openness helps to minimize corruption mainly because the citizens will be in a position to oversee and challenge any improper conduct. Consequently, by increasing the government accountability and ensuring that the country's citizens is able to monitor its activities, the key tenets of peace and order are enhanced. This is because trust in leaders and other information sources will inspire people to follow policies issued by the government and thus the country will record enhanced social cooperation (Gisselquist, 2012).

Another principle of good governance is respect of human rights in order to achieve a culture of justice and conformity to law. Through the protection of rights and human dignity, governments contribute to the development of a society in which people do not feel offended. This is respect of human rights where the aggrieved parties do not have feelings or causes for conflict, as everyone is treated fairly and justly (Sen, 1999). Moreover, political institutions that are strong, efficient and which will respect the rule of law contribute a lot to stabilize peace. These institutions can solve societal issues as equitably and as effectively as possible, meaning that any grievances as well as conflict between individuals or different groups within society will be kept to minimum. Healthy political institutions also offer the forums for conflict settlement and proper administration of collective assets to avoid the accumulation of animosities that could trigger

warfare (North et al., 2009). To be concise, good governance not only avoids conflict but also lays the structure for the nonconflictual society.

Examples of Good Governance Leading to Peace:

The historical record offers numerous examples of countries having transformed from the conditions bringing conflict to conditions of peace after the initiation of good governance reforms. In a bid to bring about ethnic reconciliation and perform good governance overhaul, Rwanda, particularly in the post-genocide 1994 period, embarked on thorough reforms. The government of Rwanda emphasizes the fight against corruption, the development of policies that enhance the fight against corruption, as well as the promotion of transparency and accountability in the institutions of Rwanda. These measures included setting up of organization such as the Office of the Ombudsman with responsibility for monitoring and eradicating corruption (Clark, 2010). Furthermore, decentralization was adopted as a critical policy measure in Rwanda to enhance powers of subnational governments and promote citizens' engagements in policy-making processes (Chemouni, 2014). It is noteworthy that, in addition to improving governance, it paved the way for restoring the population's trust and increasing social solidarity.

Therefore, Rwanda enjoyed relative stability and it registered remarkable economic growth and hence it has been considered a model worth emulating in Africa in its post conflict reconstruction and governance. The move from apartheid rule to a democratic government in the South Africa can also be noted as another example where good governance has led to the experience of peace. Democracy and transformation, which started in early 1990s after the dismantling of apartheid, heralded change and integration. The presence of visionary leaders who introduced change and embraced a democratic system to form a constitution that is friendly to human right promoted the unity of the South African nation eradicating long held ethnic enmity that tormented the nation for years (Johnson, 2015). This transition was well facilitated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) formed in 1995 with the mission of fostering a culture of forgiveness by collecting and attempting to reverse social ills of the past (Tutu, 1999). This process of reconciliation, alongside the formation of transformation political institutions, helped South Africa change from a volatile society to a much more stable one, where the main factor that ensures the change is good governance.

The Road Ahead:

The development towards unity and order is not often unidimensional, but the use of good governance continues to be one of the key strategies for creating a better society. As part of this process, one of the most important fundamentals is that of international cooperation. Through cooperation in the countries, the approach is that the members of the club can exchange experience, help each other and fight together with common problems, such as corruption or violation of human rights, and the failure of states in this area. Cooperation between these countries is fostered by International organizations such as the UN and the World Bank through its initiative and program that aims to improve the status of good governance across the world (Kaufman, Kraay & Zoido-Lobaton; 1999). For example, the United Nations Development Programme UNDP focuses on the governance support to help countries build their better institutions and support the political processes aimed at improving the state and causing the stability in the world (UNDP, 2011).

This is another indispensable factor if civil society is to play its part in the quest for good governance and sustainable peace in the nation. CSOs promote the participation of the people in ruling and leadership tasks as a way of ensuring that they are afforded a seat at the policy-making table. A professional civil society organization possesses the responsibility of monitoring governments, demanding for equality and fairness of the minority groups, and pushing for the public institutions to act accountably (Brinkerhoff & Wetterberg, 2016). Furthermore, the reinforcement of democracy appears to be a critical essential to sustain and fulfil installment as well as stability in a nation. Democratic nation-states that follow the rule of law, respect and protect the rights and freedoms of their citizens as well as provide equal opportunities for all candidates in the elections that they conduct are less likely to engage in conflict. This commitment entails constant dialogue that ensures societies engage in nation's cooperation; which mean societies can effectively solve their disagreements without having to resort to violence (Diamond, 2008). Consequently, the sense of international cooperation, empowered civil society, and the strict adherence to the concept of democracy which is the foundation of even more harmonious and well-developed society.

Further Consideration

This paper takes a brief look at how good governance can help to positively influence peace and stability. In perhaps more detail, one could look into certain countries that have become examples

of countries transitioning from a conflict-ridden society to a more peaceful one by instituting certain systematic reforms. For example, the analysis of Rwanda after genocide or South Africa after shifting to a multi-party system can demonstrate how donor agencies and governments put good governance principles into practice and how they foster sustainable development and prosperity. These case studies can help to identify the implemented strategies and policies or even find out what strategies and policies were effective, and what problems were met on the way (Clark, 2010; Johnson 2015). Through such analysis, the researchers can learn successes of governance reforms and chances of failure and export the lessons to other conflicted regions. A closer look at these practices can be also made in the involvement of international organizations like the United Nations in the promotion of good governance practices on the global level. The UN along with its agencies and programs on regular basis delivers significant assistance for building the governance reforms in the conflict and developing countries. For instance, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) aims at improving, the governance architecture, building institutions as well as encouraging the comprehensive politics to be accomplished (UNDP, 2011). Thus, when examining concrete activities and services that are offered by these organizations, one would comprehend the processes through which international cooperation enhances tranquility and order. Also, assessing the impact and outcome of these interventions can help identify and document effective tools, strategies and strategies for better international intervention thus aiding in the promotion of better governance.

Moreover, as it has been stated, the issues of good governance reforms in the post-conflict context deserve more attention and better understanding of problems and issues connected with them. These environments often include challenges that may be devoid of institutional structures, characterized by massive corruption, and rife social differences. Effective reforms in such contexts entail responding not only to the existing policies but also the understanding of the broader dynamics and issues at play (Brinkerhoff, 2005). For example, regaining the confidence of the citizens in their government and involving all citizens in decision making may be especially difficult in societies that go through years-long civil strife and human rights violations. Through understanding these complications, scholars and policy makers can better formulate and design context-specific approaches to strategic and institutional tessituras in relation to peace building governance reforms to effectively resolve conflicts (Chesterman, 2005). In all, if these areas are

further researched then better results will be developed regarding theories of good governance and the peacebuilding initiatives.

Conclusion:

The fact that governance quality is closely connected to societal peace and stability makes this report's findings particularly remarkable. Following the brief analysis of historical and modern cases, it can come to the conclusion that good governance is inalienable for the creation of the conditions that can be conducive to peace and stability. Leadership that features transparency, responsiveness, representation, and respect for people's rights does not only help improve trust in public institutions but also in preventing and solving conflict. On the other hand, poor governance escalates and strengthens conflict and leads to the circle of insecurity and aggressiveness. Both Rwanda and South Africa are good example of how effective governance can result in resulting to having full peace and order. Rwanda's post-genocide strategy has entailed ethnic harmonization, eradicating of corruption and promotion of decentralization. These endeavors have accrued to give the peoples of these countries relatively stability and profound economic growth indicating how governance reforms can turn a volatile theatre of war into a peaceful and prosperous society. Likewise, the transformation of South Africa from apartheid rule to a democracy is another good example of the transformative aspect of diversity and democracy in addressing a generational old racial hatred. The introduction of the institution of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) had a significant positive impact for the country in a way of rewiring the nation and in the process of vulnerable people's healing, as well as bringing the idea of justice and equality. UN and every other International organizations have an utmost important position to play in the promotion of good governance. These organizations sponsor reforms of governance in the conflict nations and nations in the course of development and creating effective institutions of politics together with politics participation. An innovation example can be the UNDP which has helped in building governance institutions and promoting democratic governance globally. All these efforts underscore the need for collective cooperation that is directed towards the enhancement of global order and security.

However, when it comes to the process of attaining such supreme type of governance or depending on the kind of challenge that is under discussion, one has to know that the journey to good governance is difficult especially in a post-conflict context. Despite the liberalisation of market policies, poor governance features insignificant challenges or barriers restricting progress

with regard to the seven institutions weakened institutions, pervasive corruption, and deep social division. Meeting these challenges depends on country-specific research and development of context by context; innovative approaches that encourage the awareness and engagement of diverse groups in the decision-making processes or the rebuilding of the trust that had been eroded through the years between the governed and the government. Therefore, more detailed investigation into the concrete instances of the successful accomplishment of such reforms could be more beneficial in terms of investigating the most efficient approaches and policies. Furthermore, extending the knowledge about the attitude of international organisations and the difficulties of the institutes of the governance reforms in postsurregional settings may help to identify the factors that support peace and stability. In this particular case, I would like to emphasize that good governance is something that should be encouraged in order to have a better future for everyone and create a more stable society. Through greater levels of openness, particularly obligations that are strictly and meaningfully enforced, governments can prevent the emergence of conflicts while making them more containable when they do occur due to their gross disrespect for basic human rights. These are all strong commitments on the part of international actors and directly on the part of democratic actors that will never be fully fulfilled as it is a process which will go on indefinitely. In this case, societies learn to move from working at cross-purposes to working at harmony, a state of perpetual peace and order.

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