

Role of Political Parties in National Reconstruction

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Abstract

This paper attempts to study significance of political party and their role in National Reconstruction (Nation Building); as an organization that coordinates candidates to compete in a country's elections. Nation-building is a normative concept that means different things to different people. The latest conceptualization is essentially that nation-building programs are those in which dysfunctional or unstable or "failed states" or economies are given assistance in the development of governmental infrastructure, civil society, dispute resolution mechanisms, as well as economic assistance, in order to increase stability. Nation-building generally assumes that someone or something is doing the building intentionally.

Role of political parties in the rise of democracies, in the formation of constitutional designs, in electoral politics and in the making and working of governments. Political parties as vehicles of federal sharing of political power and as negotiators of social divisions in the arena of democratic politics. But it is important to look at the evolution of theories of nation-building and at the other concepts which it has both supplanted and included. Many people believe that nation building is evolutionary rather than revolutionary, that it takes a long time and is a social process that cannot be jump-started from outside. The evolution of the Italian city-states into a nation, the German city-states into the Zollverein customs union and later a nation, the multiple languages and cultural groups in France into the nation of France, the development of China from the warring kingdoms, took a very long time, and were the result, not only of political leadership, but of changes in technology and economic processes (the agricultural and then industrial revolutions), as well as communication, culture and civil society, and many other factors. In what Seymour Martin Lipset has called The First New Nation, the United States, at first 13 colonies with diverse origins, came together to form a new nation and state. That state, like so many in contemporary times, faced the prospect of secession and disintegration in 1865, and it took another 100 years for the integration of black and white, North and South, East and West. This was a new type of nationstate, because its people were not all of the same ethnicity, culture, and language, as had been thought to be the case in the early defining of the concept of nation-state. Today many "First Nations" are in the process of nation re-building, re-building the social, cultural, economic and political foundations for what is left of self-governance.

Key words: Political Parties , National Reconstruction, political foundations, governance

Introduction

Political parties reflect fundamental political divisions in a society. Parties are about a part of the society and thus involve PARTISANSHIP. Thus a party is known by which part it stands for, which policies it supports and whose interests it upholds. A political party has three components: the leaders, the active members and

the followers . We still need to ask why modern democracies cannot exist without political parties. We can understand the necessity of political parties by imagining a situation without parties. Every candidate in the elections will be independent. So no one will be able to make any promises to the people about any major policy changes. The government may be formed, but its utility will remain ever uncertain. Elected representatives will be accountable to their constituency for what they do in the locality. But no one will be responsible for how the country will be run. We can also think about it by looking at the non-party based elections to the panchayat in many states. Although, the parties do not contest formally, it is generally noticed that the village gets split into more than one faction, each of which puts up a 'panel' of its candidates. This is exactly what the party does. That is the reason we find political parties in almost all countries of the world, whether these countries are big or small, old or new, developed or developing. The rise of political parties is directly linked to the emergence of representative democracies. As we have seen, large societies need representative democracy. As societies became large and complex, they also needed some agency to gather different views on various issues and to present these to the government. A 2003 study by James Dobbins and others for the RAND Corporation defines nation-building as "the use of armed force in the aftermath of a conflict to underpin an enduring transition to democracy."

Comparing seven historical cases: Germany, Japan, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan, "in which American military power has been used in the aftermath of a conflict to underpin democratization elsewhere around the world since World War II," they review the lessons learned. This definition of nation-building is substantially different than those which see nation-building as the province of people within a nation. The definition centers around the building of democratic processes, but many argue that the use of the military to bring about democracy may be inherently contradictory. Whether nation-building can be imposed from outside is one of the central questions in this field, and whether that can be done by the military is a further part of the question.

Objective:

This paper intends to explore and analyze role of political parties which are an organised group of people with at least roughly similar political aims and opinions in nation building process. Also gives the people a choice to make a more evolved and effective decision.

What is a nation and how it's built?

To understand the concept of nation-building, one needs to have some definition of what a nation is. Early conceptions of nation defined it as a group or race of people who shared history, traditions, and culture, sometimes religion, and usually language. Thus the United Kingdom comprises four nations, the English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh. The people of a nation generally share a common national identity, and part of nation-building is the building of that common identity. Some distinguish between an ethnic nation, based in (the social construction of) race or ethnicity, and a civic nation, based in common identity and loyalty to a set of political ideas and institutions, and the linkage of citizenship to nationality.

Today the word nation is often used synonymously with state, as in the United Nations. But a state is more properly the governmental apparatus by which a nation rules itself. Max Weber provided the classic definition of the state:

Today, however, we have to say that a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory. Note that "territory" is one of the characteristics of the state. Specifically, at the present time, the right to use physical force is ascribed to other institutions or to individuals only to the extent to which the state permits it.

In approaching the question of nation-building, and in particular its relationship to state-building, it is important to keep in mind that this definition specifies the legitimate use of force.

The Evolution of Nation-Building Theory

The term nation-building is often used simultaneously with state-building, democratization, modernization, political development, post-conflict reconstruction, and peacebuilding. But each concept is different, though their evolution is intertwined. The concept of nation-building came to be used especially among American political scientists a decade or so after World War II, to describe the greater integration of state and society, as citizenship brought loyalty to the modern nation-state with it. Reinhard Bendix focused on the expansion of citizenship and of rights to political participation. [5] Karl Deutsch focused on the role of social communication and national integration in nation-building in Western societies.[6] Others began to apply it to non-Western societies as well.

Almond and Coleman argued for the functional approach to understand and compare the political systems of developing countries.[7] They argued for the interdependence and multi-functionality of political structures, and argued especially that the input functions of political systems could help to distinguish stages of political development. They defined input functions as: 1) political socialization and recruitment, 2) interest articulation, 3) interest aggregation, and 4) political communication. Output functions were: 5) rule-making, 6) rule application, and 7) rule adjudication. [8] Most nation-building after the end of the Cold War seems to focus more on the output functions.

Lucian Pye linked modernization with Westernization and "the diffusion of a world culture," what we might today call globalization.[9] He identified political development with:

A world culture based on advanced technology and the spirit of science, on a rational view of life, a secular approach to social relations, a feeling for justice in public affairs, and, above all else, on the acceptance in the political realm that the prime unit of the polity should be the nation-state.[10]

Pye identified multiple meanings of political development, among them:

- as prerequisite to economic development,
- as politics typical of industrial societies,
- as political modernization,

- as administrative and legal development,
- as mass mobilization and participation,
- as the building of democracy, and
- as stability and orderly change.

He identifies equality as one of the basic themes running through all of these.[11] While nationbuilding after 9/11 still incorporates many of these meanings of political development, equality does not seem to play a major role in practice.

Dudley Seers, in his presidential address to the Society for International Development in 1969, presaged what has become the concept of human development. He said:

The questions to ask about a country's development are therefore: what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development....[12]

In the 1990s the UN Development Program brought out the Human Development Report and the Human Development Index to focus on those aspects of development other than economic, including in the index both health and education. Many UN programs, as well as NGO efforts, focus on these aspects, and the World Bank has begun to focus on poverty, but to date there seems no effort by the US in either Afghanistan or Iraq to include poverty, unemployment, or inequality in nation-building efforts.

Almond and Verba in 1963 introduced the concept of The Civic Culture to the development literature. The civic culture, which combines tradition and modernity, is one of the processes that sustain democracy. Almond and Verba defined as part of this civic culture the obligation to participate and the sense of civic competence and cooperation. They also noted the importance of the role of education in the development of a civic culture.[13] Alexis de Toqueville had noted the importance of associations in sustaining Democracy in America at its earliest stages.[14] Robert Putnam, in exploring the civil traditions in modern Italy that make democracy work, includes in his notion of the civic community: civic engagement, political equality, and solidarity, trust, and tolerance, in addition to associations.[15] He finds the presence of choral societies in Italy, bowling leagues in the US, and other associations, to be important, but in Bowling Alone, finds such associations to be reducing in the US today.

The importance of civil society also became clear as a factor in the movement from authoritarianism toward democracy in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe at the end of the Cold War. The role of civil society received much support in early nationbuilding/ democratization efforts in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but has drastically declined since then. This notion of the importance of civil society as an underpinning to democratic nation-building seems to be given lip-service in current efforts, but in reality it is not seen as significant by nation-builders if one measures this by any spending measure.

If nation-building in the 20th century is to be successful, it may want to return to look at some of its early theorists. The importance of democratic values, of the civic culture and civil society that develop and sustain

them, the importance of increasing social, political, and economic equality, and of human development, rather than just economic development or state-building, are key in any successful strategy for long-term democratic nation-building. Nation-building is more than just state-building. To be a sustainable force for peacebuilding, it must incorporate more than just the Western appendages of democracy. Voting systems and free market development and increasing the GNP per capita are not likely to bring stable peace.

Why does nation-building matter?

Nation-building matters to intractable conflict because of the theory that a strong state is necessary in order to provide security, that the building of an integrated national community is important in the building of a state, and that there may be social and economic prerequisites or co-requisites to the building of an integrated national community.

Further, when nation-building implies democratization, there is the further hypothesis known as the democratic peace hypothesis. Originally explicated by Immanuel Kant in the 17th century, the democratic peace hypothesis says that perpetual peace can be achieved by developing a federation or league of free republican nations. Representative democracies, organized in an international organization, would bring peace. Political scientists who have explored this hypothesis have focused on one of two versions: democracies don't make war against each other, or democracies don't initiate war at all. There is certainly evidence of the former, and some evidence of the latter.

The other side of the coin is that nation-building may sometimes be simply another name for external intervention and the extension of empires. If it can be said that failed states are the cause of national, regional, or world security problems, or that human rights abuses are so extensive that the need to overcome them in turn overcomes the traditional sovereignty rights of states under international law, then intervention in the name of nation-building can be seen to be justified. Sometimes nation-building may simply be used as a justification for the expansion of imperial control. So nation-building matters, but what is meant by nation-building matters even more.

What can be done?

The first major question that needs to be asked is whether nation-building should be done at all. In the context of intractable conflict, is nation-building an appropriate method of providing stable peace and a secure community, which can meet the needs of the people within it? There are mixed conclusions here. The democratic peace hypothesis argues that democratic states do not initiate wars, or alternatively, in its more limited version, do not initiate wars against each other. Immanuel Kant's original statement of the hypothesis in his essay on Perpetual Peace in the 17th century argued both for the necessity of republican (or representative democracy) governments, and for their participation in a league of peace, or federation of free nations.[16] This would mean that the simple creation of democratic nations would not be enough; peace would require also the creation of some sort of international governance and international law.

There is disagreement among current theorists of nation-building as to the relationships between the development of a free market economy and the development of democratic participation, as well as over the necessity of building a civil society as a prerequisite for the development of state institutions for democratic participation. Different theories of nation-building emphasize different parts of the arguments. Different versions of nation-building benefit different groups. Some appear to benefit more the outside countries, and/or the international governmental and nongovernmental organizations which are involved. Some benefit elites in the nation being built or rebuilt. Some spread benefits widely in the society; some do not.

Nation-building that will be likely to contribute to stable international peace will need to emphasize the democratic participation of people within the nation to demand rights. It will need to build the society, economy, and polity which will meet the basic needs of the people, so that they are not driven by poverty, inequality, unemployment, on the one hand, or by a desire to compete for resources and power either internally or in the international system. This does means not only producing the formal institutions of democracy, but the underlying culture which recognizes respect for the identities and needs of others both within and outside. It means development of human rights-- political, civil, economic and social, and the rule of law. But it also means development of sewer systems, and roads, and jobs. Perhaps most important, it means the development of education. Nation-building must allow the participation of civil society, and develop democratic state institutions that promote welfare. Democratic state-building is an important part of that. This is a multi-faceted process that will proceed differently in each local context. Dobbins and colleagues recognize the advantages of a multilateral approach, arguing that while it is more complex and time-consuming, it is less expensive for any one participant and, more important, is better at producing both transformation and regional reconciliation. They also recognize the important role of neighboring countries. They make no mention of the US attempt to win hearts and minds in Vietnam.

Role of international organizations

The United Nations has participated in nation-building efforts both through the Security Council's authorization of peacekeeping missions involving primarily military, but also civilian and police participants as well. Among these have been Cambodia, Angola, and Bosnia in the early 1990s, and Kosovo and East Timor. Some have been more, some less, successful. It has also participated in development and human rights efforts completely aside from peacekeeping. Efforts range from those of UNICEF in fostering children's rights, to the UN Development Program in providing human development aid, to the Ad Hoc Criminal Tribunals on Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, to the World Food Program, to UNESCO's Education for All program. These are also an important component of nation-building. Economic, social, and political development, and institutions which protect human rights and provide for the rule of law, are important not only to post conflict peace building, but to nation-building at any stage of development or any stage of conflict. And it may well be that the international legitimacy that can be provided by a global institution may be better for nation-building than efforts by any single country, or a regional organization, or

a "coalition of the willing." Accusations of "imperial nation-building" are reduced when there is greater international consensus.

But Donini, Niland and Wermester question whether Western approaches, military and technological, can foster just outcomes, whether through individual countries efforts or through UN agencies. They raise questions of how UN agencies and international NGOs interact with national and local communities in the process of providing aid for political reconstruction and human rights development. Can nation-building really come from outside at all? It may be necessary to go back to the debates over the definition and purposes of nation-building to answer that question.

Conclusion

Nation-building is an evolutionary process. It takes a long time. One of the problems with outside actors is that they come and they go. While it may be considered useful for an outside military occupation or peacekeeping force to provide the temporary stability and security necessary in order to allow the process of nation-building to proceed, the question of whether this is the best method remains. If a military stays too short a time, expectations of a dependable peace for the foreseeable future may not develop, and thus people will be unlikely to invest in the future. If, on the other hand, a military stays too long, people will rely on the security provided by outsiders and fail to develop their own institutions for providing it.

The same questions may be asked about outside civilian actors, whether a single state, a regional organization, a global organization, or an NGO. While a significant influx of resources may be necessary, especially in the period immediately following a violent conflict, the right amount, the right methods, and the right length of time are critical. In general, it appears that nation-building is best left in the hands of those whose nation it is or will be, and that outside organizations support, rather than direct, nation-building. Political Parties put forward different policies and programmes and the voters choose from them. Each of us may have different opinions and views on what policies are suitable for the society. But no government can handle such a large variety of views. In a democracy, a large number of similar opinions have to be grouped together to provide a direction in which policies can be formulated by the governments. This is what the parties do

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