

GOVERNANCE IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL
DISCOURSE: AN ANALYTICAL AND COMPARATIVE
STUDY

BY

ESSAM IBRAHIM MOHAMED MOHAMED ABOU
ELDAHAB

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Mark Bevir's claim, which says that "governance arose out of a crisis in the modernist state". In addition, the new governance consists of the interconnected theories and reforms by which people or the homo economic conceived of the crisis of the state and responded to it. The crisis, which existed with the logic of enlightenment and modernity itself, was interpreted by scholars and thinkers in various forms. The purpose of the crisis, according to the scholars' perspectives, is to create the conditions for the economic and administrative state. Governance is a key concept in the study of the social sciences in general and political science in particular. This study, therefore, specifically relates to the anti-liberalism thought and anti-neoliberalism in both Western and Islamic contexts, which are based on the communitarian theory and interpretive governance. This study also investigated the relationship between the modern State and its relationship to society through the concept of tyranny and corruption and that governance is trying to reduce them in modern societies. This study encompasses an analysis of the profound transformations concerning the nature of the relationships between the state and society. These transformations were studied through the underlying effects of the new vision formed through modernity and enlightenment. The latter concepts framed the relationship between society and the state by building the pillars of their relationships based on the paradigm-breaking, the relationship with heritage (religious or philosophical), and their various referentialities and values. Hence, both enlightenment and modernity have dismantled all forms of worldviews and visions of the past such as religions, traditions, norms and philosophies are concerned. This study dealt with six selected political thinkers, both from Western and Islamic perspectives. These scholars were selected due to their construed treatises regarding the problems of epistemological and ontological defects of modernity and enlightenment and then were brought into postmodernism context, especially the neoliberalism governance. They have found the issue of modernity and enlightenment which have cut their relation with heritage (religions and classical philosophies), and consequently founded a new paradigm of knowledge that is based on self-centric and positivist thought. This self-conscious and materialistic nature of modernity carries implications that dominate and restructure the concerned party's worldview to suit the worldly life (secularising of life). In essence, achieving the goals of the material life through the re-engineering of nature and society for the fulfilment of the happiness of the material humanity can be considered as the gathering between the hereafter and the earth (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984). This thesis adopted the discourse analysis approach as the method of analysis to understand the texts and to extract the common and mutual understanding among those six scholars. The analysis was also used to track the agreements and disagreements among them. Their theories are relevant because they disclosed an understanding of the modern epistemology and ontology concerning the nature of the problem of the state and its relationship to society. However, their analyses eventually refer to the necessity of reconstructing the heritage and cultures that have been demolished by modernity and enlightenment, as defined by their contexts.

ملخص البحث

يُعالج هذا البحث فرضية مارك بيفر التي يوجزها في قوله إن "الحوكمة نشأت من أزمات الدولة الحديثة"؛ إذ تكوّن الحوكمة الراهنة تصوّر الفرد أو "إنسان الاقتصاد" أنه أدرك أزمة الدولة الحديثة واستجاب لمتطلبات إصلاحها، وأن هذه الأزمة كامنة في منطق التنوير والحداثة ذاته الذي فسّره المفكرون تفسيرات مختلفة، والغرض من الأزمة تهيئة الظرف لفهم الدولة الاقتصادية والإدارية الراهنة، والحوكمة هي المفهوم الرئيس في دراسة العلوم الاجتماعية بعامة والعلوم السياسية بخاصة؛ لذا يتعلق هذا البحث تحديداً بدراسة الفكر المناهض للتحريية (الليبرالية) والتحريية الجديدة في السياقين الغربي والإسلامي، ويستند إلى النظرية الجماعية والحوكمة التفسيرية لفهمها، كما يتناول العلاقة بين الدولة الحديثة والمجتمع من خلال مفهوم الاستبداد والفساد اللذين تحاول الحوكمة الحدّ منهما، ويشمل البحث تحليلاً للتحوّلات المتعلقة بطبيعة العلاقات بين الدولة والمجتمع، وقد دُرست من خلال مآلات الرؤية الكلية التي تشكلت عبر الحداثة والتنوير وصاغت مفاهيم العلاقة بين الدولة والمجتمع من خلال تحطيم النمط القائم على العلاقة مع التراث - سواء الديني أم الفلسفي - ومرجعياتها وقيمها المختلفة، ومن ثمّ؛ فكّك التنوير والحداثة جميع أشكال رؤى العالم القديمة؛ سعياً نحو بناء نمط مغاير، وقد درس هذا البحث ستة مفكرين سياسيين من السياقين الغربي والإسلامي؛ اختبروا وفق أطروحاتهم المفسّرة طبيعة الإشكاليات المعرفية والوجودية الكامنة في الحداثة والتنوير، وقد خلصت أطروحاتهم إلى أن قضية الحداثة والتنوير التي فكّكت علاقتهما بالتراث (الأديان والفلسفات التقليدية) أسست نمطاً جديداً للمعرفة تركز على الذات والمنطق الوضعي، وقد أدى هذا الوعي بالطبيعة المادية للحداثة إلى هيمنة نمط أعاد بناء رؤية العالم؛ لتناسب الحياة الدنيوية (علمنة الحياة)، وجوهر هذا النمط قائم على تحقيق أهداف الحياة المادية من خلال إعادة هندسة الطبيعة والمجتمع؛ لتحقيق سعادة الإنسانية المادية كأنما يجمع بين الآخرة والدنيا (براجوجين وستنجيرس، 1984م)، وقد ارتكز هذا البحث على منهج تحليل الخطاب لاستخراج المضامين المشتركة بين أولئك المفكرين، واستخدم المنهج التحليلي لكشف الاتفاق والاختلاف فيما بينهم، وأكد أن نظرياتهم كشفت عن طبيعة مشكلة الدولة الحديثة وعلاقتها بالمجتمع، وإجمالاً؛ تشير تحليلاتهم في المآلات إلى ضرورة إعادة بناء التراث والثقافات التي دمرتها الحداثة والتنوير وتشكلت في سياقاتها.

APPROVAL PAGE

The thesis of Essam Ibrahim Mohamed Mohamed Abou Eldahab
has been approved by the following:

S. M. Abdul Quddus
Supervisor

El-Fatih Abdullahi AbdelSalam
Internal Examiner

Hamdy A. Hassan
External Examiner

Afroza Begum
External Examiner

Mohamed Elwathig Saeed Mirghani
Chairman

DECLARATION

I hereby declare this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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To my father, who taught me how I could be patient.

And my mother, who gave me satisfaction.

And my wife, who is crowned with sincerity.

And my children have taught me the meaning of love.

And for Egypt, which takes possession of my soul.

Almighty said:

As for the abode of the Hereafter, We will assign it to those who do not seek arrogant power on earth (Tyranny) nor cause corruption and disorder. The (truly desirable) outcome is for the God-revering, pious. (Surah Al-Qasas (The Narrations):28:83)

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CHAPTER ONE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY AND THE INVESTIGATION OUTLINE

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

In contemporary discourse, the term “governance” is being used widely in the literatures of public administration and public policy. The present era is also called the era of governance. The circulation and popularisation of this term in the economic sector have been strongly advocated by international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to rationalise economic progress for development purposes at various levels. Governance has embedded itself into the political dictionary as one of the crucial concepts which are necessary to achieve the best results of public policies of the state, hence achieving the stability of society. The term “governance” has thus evolved as a concept, and the concept is greater in scope than the government alone. There are diversified definitions of governance according to its expected roles regarding the state and society that deal with two levels of stratification; a) at the international level, which the purpose is to build a governance perspective to address the relationships among the States, i.e. the global peace and environmental issues; b) at the national level when governance is embodied in the relationship between the State and society, this relationship has been framed by sovereignty and hegemony whose significance and meaning can differ from one state to another according to the dominant cultural context. However, some researchers pointed out that governance in the late decades means restricting the authority and power of the State and strengthening the abilities of society to combat of absolute

sovereignty in what is called the process of reducing the role of the state or the process of statelessness (Osterfeld & Reichert, 1983; Rosenau & Czempiel, 1992).

The concept of governance is also one of the basic terms of Islamic political theory and economic systems. For example, some scholars indicated that Islamic economic governance traces back its roots to the principles of the Islamic law or “sharī‘ah”, which is based on the principles of accountability, transparency, social responsibility, and other common principles that are shared with Western economic values (Šrámek, 2009). In contrast, other scholars consider that the concept of governance in the Islamic political theory goes beyond the functional performance of its narrowly-defined meaning to be embedded as a measure of supreme referentiality. In other words, governance or politics in the Islamic context is broader than mere power or authority in itself because in the Arabic language, the word “governance” means “to do the matter, including correcting it”. This meaning of politics is referred to Ibn Khaldun’s thoughts on the science of urbanism, which was summarised by Gellner as “an institution which prevents injustice other than such as it commits itself” (Gellner, 1988, p. 239). Thus, the meaning of governance has a broader scope from the meaning of government. However, to address the concept of governance in the context of the Islamic and the Western discourses, there are aspects of agreements and differences among scholars.

1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM:

The concept of governance is a problematic conceptual phenomenon. The meaning and understanding of this concept are ambiguous and complex when it comes to the epistemological and ontological dimension of it, which are embodied in religions, metaphysics and its expressed values in such different contexts (Hamad, 2010a; Bob,

2011; Milbank, 2006; Peters, 2012). On the other hand, the problems of tyranny (despotism) and corruption necessitated an implicit framework to understand the complexities of the reciprocal relationship between the state and society by recognising their nature, roles, and responsibilities toward each other. However, efforts in searching for the epistemology and ontological roots of the concept of governance have not been addressed in a proper manner. Governance is defined as a concept that has been developed to dismantle the causalities of tyranny and corruption, as well as to reduce their negative effects in modern societies (World Bank, 2017; Bauman, 2000). It is also aimed at neo-liberalism in the face of corruption and tyranny that has spread in recent decades.

According to Huntington (2006),

The most important political distinction among countries concerns, not their form of government but their degree of government. The differences between democracy and dictatorship are less than the differences between those countries whose politics embodies consensus, community, legitimacy, organisation, effectiveness, stability, and those countries whose politics is deficient in these qualities (p.1).

Indeed, Huntington looked for the meaning and nature of political action not from its structure forms, but rather its practices. On the other hand, the relationship between the state and society in forming these relationships and their reflections on tyranny (despotism) and corruption through the concept of “governance”, has become the central concept and issue in contemporary social theory in various fields (Peters, 2012). Additionally, the governance emphasizes the changing in roles of the state in ‘steering’ action within complex social systems (Kooiman, 1993; 2000). Also, it indicates the reshaping of the role of local government away from service delivery towards ‘community governance’ (Clarke & Stewart, 1999). Hence, Rhodes (1997) summarises that “governance signifies a change in the meaning of government,

referring to a new process of governing; or a changed condition of the ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed” (p. 44). The question lies on what basis the relationship between power/state and society are building, especially in a condition in which the society has to play a role in governance in any way.

There is a misunderstanding of the concept of governance in relation to its various dimensions that resulted from the essential changes of governance to its epistemological and ontological contents that were made during the period of enlightenment and modernity. Thus, distortion and transfiguration of the concept governance have led to many contradictions and paradoxes which brought in issues such as nihilism, meaninglessness, liquidity, and the ‘cultural death’ of God (Abul-Fadl, 1988a, 1990b; Milbank, 2006). This misunderstanding of the concept of governance represents confusions and perplexities, which has impacted the comprehension of the transformations that occurred in societies (Polanyi, 2001). The most prominent manifestation of this research is the examination of the vacuum or void between the State and society that has resulted from acts of modernity and enlightenment in relation to governance. The state has been trying to fill these vacuums through several acts that monopolise and colonise the resources of power and through various mechanisms, such as principles of legitimacy and sovereignty. In addition, the state has been combating and omitting everything that is opposed to its existence, while society has been trying to repulse and confute state dominance through the restoration of the consciousness of their existence. This dialectical relationship without referentiality between them has produced many differences, conflicts, and rivalries, which are rooted in the boundaries between the public and private sphere. These boundaries, hence, are considered an essential part of the understanding of the relationship between the State and society (Habermas, 2011;

Hoexter et al., 2002; Salvatore, 2007; Fraser, 2014; Gripsrud et al., 2010; Mah, 2000; Horkheimer, Adorno, 2002).

The essence of this study lies in understanding the nature of interpretive governance as a framework to understand the role of theological, metaphysical and the unseen values. Those concepts which have distorted and buried in the era of enlightenment and modernity, which can be expressed by the concept of “secularisation”. However, based on the epistemological foundations of enlightenment and modernity, the modern theory of governance is constructed on the dismantling and separation from the heritage and the past to the present. Hence, they work to simplify and reduce human affairs in accordance with the laws of direct causal nature (the nature of modern reason). This separation, dismantling, and simplification was followed by the equality of all existences (God, humanity, nature) and its resulting institutions (state, law, sovereignty) with nature which was studied by a man who imagined that he understood the nature in-depth and comprehensive understanding through objective scientific theory (positivism theory). Thus, this situation contributed to an imbalance in the worldview system in which the human derives the meaning of his life, as well as to the imbalance in the value system that has governed his behaviours (Grimm, 2015).

This imbalance and tension between the heritage and modernity have made simple causal rationality as a major source of human knowledge. It also eliminated every other source of knowledge that could contribute to life. This imbalance has also encouraged individualistic human beings as a major anchor for all the perceptions interpreting life, the universe, and the political community. The rationalism and individualism, together under the dominance of the economic pattern that was developed with the bourgeoisie in the seventeenth century, created the homo

economic (Polanyi, 2001). However, a theory of governance arouses out to deal with such a man who understands the entire life as a market. In other words, it derives its value from itself to serve its very existence and survival in modern time. Also, the different epistemology of governance sources created a kind of balance and a continuous look for the best systems based on the value that surpass the economic logic. In modern governance theory, this deification of rationality and individuality under the economic pattern led to an imbalance in the relations between several entities such as the relationship between the State and society. To ensure its dominance, it developed a philosophical discourse based on the denial and abolition of all old perceptions and even the abolition of their sources, whether philosophical or religious. This enlightenment and modernism discourse, thus, established its legitimacy by emphasising its ability to find bliss, happiness, good life, equality, and justice in this world, but in the hereafter. This discourse reinforced the idea that immortality and paradise can be achieved on earth and that the values of justice, equality, and absolute freedom can be realised in this life, and it can only be achieved by redesigning societies according to the rationalism, individualism, and economic paradigm.

As a result, tyranny and corruption became inherent in the structure of the governance theory of modern enlightenment. Authoritarianism, hegemony, and dictatorship have become a necessity for those in power to redesign society to achieve values such as equality, justice, and freedom. This discourse itself reduced and lowered the main human perceptions about these values (equality, justice, and freedom) and thought to corrupt the perceptions of humanity so that it can achieve in reality. By providing freedom, it merely means the freedom to own and choose within the requirements of the physical body. In addition, it made equality only equal to

economic dimensions. Justice is just getting what a person deserves, according to the individual's perception of himself, which is reduced to just enjoyment, pleasure, and entertainment. In contrast, the governance of the neoliberal era had addressed these problems, but it failed.

The discussion, as mentioned earlier, summarised that there is a qualitative and radical transformation in the theory of governance arose with the enlightenment and modernity period and extended to the era of neoliberalism. This transformation has led to the creation of a philosophical discourse based on the values of rationality, individuality, and economics, considering that it will save humanity from the scourge and plague of philosophies and religions. This transformation also dismantled all other components of human existence and abolished them or their contents. All this led to the creation of a self-centred discourse, which deified itself as the referentiality of itself and the source of the values that should dominate human life. Hence, the scope of this study is to understand the nature of this transformation and work to find an alternative view that could combat the consequences of this modern enlightenment discourse that made the worldly life and the aims for the very existence.

In short, this study was meant to examine and to approve that modernity and enlightenment, as well as postmodernism, have promoted the economic dimensions and their values, and the dismantling or limitation of the political dimensions and their values formed in the consciousness of different civilisations. In addition, the current governance theory requires a return to the political values of Western and Islamic civilisation and a reduction of the economic values. In other words, the governance should be represented as “a continuous battle over the simplifications, reductions of complexity, or models of the world that will exert more influence over the future community” (Van, Beunen, & Duineveld, 2014, p42).

1.3 SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY

The concept of governance is inherently complex and multifaceted, fraught with ambiguity, and thus this research is important as it attempts to understand the roots of knowledge inherent when concerning the concept of governance. This study deals with the epistemology and ontology of the foundations of the relationship between the State and the society, and its impact on the phenomena of governance, and how it may lead to corruption and tyranny. As this study is an attempt to examine the extent of agreement and disagreement between two schools of thoughts, i.e. the Western and Islamic, thus, the significance of this study lies in the quest of exploring the concept of “governance” as a cultural framework, rooted in communitarianism, constructive and interpretive paradigm, through comparisons between the contextual discourses of Western and Islamic scholars.

1.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS:

This research seeks to test the following hypothesis:

There is an implicit agreement between the Western and Islamic discourses on the concept of “governance” especially from the perspective of anti-literalism. This hypothesis contains two variables, i.e. the foundation of the concept governance. First, one is “transcendent”, which means the transcendental overstates physical reality in all its dimensions such as religion, philosophy, and values, or political dimensions. Second, one is “immanence” which is in contradiction of transcendence, and it briefly means the entity or the finite being, whether nature, mind, or man himself, which specifically means economic dimensions. The contradictions between the transcendent and immanence at the beginning of enlightenment and modernity caused many effects

on the relationship between the State and the society, and their influence on corruption and tyranny from the perspectives of Western and Islamic scholars are considered and examined. In addition, their criticisms of enlightenment and modernity are still an effective paradigm in reforming the current governance system.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. How has enlightenment and modernity changed the epistemological and ontological contents of governance? Moreover, how did these epistemological and ontological change the contents and influenced the emergence of liberal worldview from the perspectives of Western and Islamic scholars?
2. What are the enlightenment strategies that have contributed to constructing modern governance?
3. How has the governance crisis affected the relationship between the state and society, hence, the phenomena of corruption and tyranny, and what are the main forms of this crisis from the views of selected scholars?
4. What is the alternative approach to address the enlightenment and modernism crisis? Furthermore, can it contribute to addressing the current governance crisis?

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research aimed at explaining the concept of governance and the relationship between the State and society, as well as the phenomena of tyranny and corruption from the perspective of both the Western and Islamic scholars. The specific objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To explore the nature of the concept of governance through the study of some selected models of intellectual properties from both the Western and Islamic school of thoughts, and to understand those scholars' findings in relation to the concepts of state and society.
2. To look at the expected impacts of governance on the phenomena of corruption and tyranny.
3. To reveal the role of enlightenment and modernity that is stressed on the economic dimension in the discourse of governance and the deletion of the political dimension in it.
4. To understand how the ideas of liberalism contributed to problematise the relationship between the enlightenment and modernity by considering the religious and philosophical heritage both in the Western and Islamic contexts.
5. To review principles of the economic paradigm (both the liberal and neoliberal) that dominate the theory of governance, which impacted the relationship between the state and society and the spread of tyranny and corruption.

1.7 SCHOLARS HIGHLIGHTED IN THIS RESEARCH:

In this study, the following selected theorists were studied and compared to acquire answers to the research questions and hypotheses mentioned earlier. There was also an attempt to examine their agreements and disagreements on the issue of governance and their reflections on the relationships between State and society.

In the Western context	In the Islamic context
------------------------	------------------------

Strauss Leo (1899 -1973)	Abdullah Hamed Rabi (1925-1989)
Hannah Arendt (1906-1975)	Mona Abul-Fadl (1945 – 2008)
Carl Schmitt (1888- 1985)	Muhammad Abu al-Qasim Hajj Hamad (1941-2004)

1.8 PROFILES OF SELECTED SCHOLARS:

Carl Schmitt: (1888-1985)

Carl Schmitt was one of the most prominent scholars of political and legal studies in the 20th century, and his influence even extends to the present time. He was born into a racist German Catholic family, and he wrote sixty books and several articles over sixty years, dealing with the problems of the political systems he engaged with (Meier, 1995).

Schmitt was influenced by his Catholic heritage, as well as the new Kantian idealism, especially in his early writings. After the First World War and with the onset of the German crisis, Hobbes’s political realism began to be adopted by many scholars, especially by Schmitt. His theories focus on the assertion of decisions, which were departed from the “Exception State”, which is the main idea of Schmitt’s thought. So, he opposed in his political theory both the legal and liberal pluralistic approach that worked to isolate politics from society, as politics is the area through which society achieves its existence (Marder, 2010; Ojakangas, 2006).

Regarding his governance theory, he stressed the importance of the sovereign states referencing their decisions in a manner analogous to the miracle in its nature, which he has found a new vision called “political theology”. According to him, the State represents the core of the framework, which could protect the political system.