

Review

What Americans want from their leaders in the U.S. and foreign nations: A comparison of Universities' roles in the leadership development of the American State

Mohammed Viqaruddin

Department of Political Science, Deogiri College, Aurangabad - 431 005, Maharashtra, India.
E-mail: v4politics@gmail.com.

Accepted 23 January, 2012

American Universities are playing a great role in shaping leadership and development. Their work, as regards the vital role played by them, can give us the concept of Democracy for all. The historical outlook of that which was mentioned by Mark R. Nemecek and Ann Arbor in their book "Ivory Towers and Nationalist Minds: Universities", and Benjamin I. Page and Marshall M. Bouton, "The Foreign Policy Disconnect: What Americans want from our leaders but do not get", shows leadership and the development of the American State peculiarly and prominently by the Association of American Universities (AAU) which awarded the legitimacy to the situation that arises in favour of the United States of America (USA). Emphasis was made on the policies of university education that all Political Science Departments should include public policy in the curriculum. Universities continually used the agenda to establish institutions by defining the importance of social, political and foreign issues which were not under the circumstances according to public opinion. The general domain of foreign policy could not find evidence of prevalent horizontally constrained foreign policy belief system, regarding national security and trade. When authors analyzed the surveys made by Chicago Council of Foreign Relations (CCFR), it was observed that the public only cares about the numerous foreign policies. On the other hand, authors compared the attitudes of the masses and elites across identical issue dimensions. It was observed that they could not ascertain whether the U.S. foreign policy would look very different if elites were more responsive to the public or if the policy is broadly discussed.

Key words: Universities, leadership, categorisation, democracy for all, United States (U.S), foreign policy.

INTRODUCTION

The end of civil war ushered a new era in American State-building as the government sought to reshape the structure and identity of politics, group formation and individual identity. The war in spite of heavy losses rushed towards the event of great significances like, abolition of slavery, nationalism welcomed over state rights, progress of big enterprises, progress of universities as well as their leaderships Majumdar and Srivastva (1997). During this period, non-governmental agencies became central to disseminating and legitimating state authority. Most social scientists cling to a progressive image of history in which one group after another organized for various rights and interests pursues them in a number of arenas until often after

much struggle and bloodshed they gain the legal recognitions and influence on policies they seek. The circle of rights and recognition slowly and inexorably expands outward. Scholars of social movements in particular are committed to the idea that the protestors they study have a broad impact and play a key role in history. Their faith in this idea often outpaces the evidence and makes the proposition difficult to test.

Anyone who studies regimes that claim to be democratic faces a similar question: How do preferences among organized and mass publics work their way into political decisions and public policies? Or do they? Most current theories of political movements were formed and inspired by the protests of the 1960s and 1970s which

kept the progressive vision alive despite occasional setbacks. Perhaps we need new theories that incorporate the lesson of the great backlash that began in the 1970s and entrenched itself in two globally powerful governments with Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. Has progress toward social justice stalled or actually reversed? (Meyer et al., 2005).

A state is as much or more an arena for contestation as it is a player and it is rarely a unified player at that. The same is true of movements which are complex, tentative networks and cooperations among a variety of groups and individuals. Every government agency or protest group is also an arena of struggle among those individuals and factions with their own goals and favoured means. And at the degree to which members of a movement may also be government officials for at coalitions between those who work for governmental organizations and those who work for the state any number of players with multiple and shifting goals can occupy almost any positions inside or outside the state.

Although, universities have been recognized as influential agencies, Mark R. Nemeč argues that prior works overlooked the process by which they gained this influence. Nemeč (2006) illuminates the rise of American universities as active partners and independent agents of state building from 1862 to 1920. Universities provided services to national development through promoting democratic ideals, industrial competitiveness and intellectual vanguardism.¹ Primarily through the “institutional entrepreneurship” of university presidents, American universities rapidly expanded their role and influence in society; rather than the government, it was the university leaders who took the leading role to define what their universities and nation would become.

NEMEC UTILIZES CASE STUDIES DRAWN FROM FOUR MAJOR CATEGORIES

Nemeč places his emphasis on certain major categorisation such as Older Eastern Elite Institutions, Newer Midwestern and Western State Institutions, Newer Private Institutions, and Antebellum Southern State Institutions. Within the case studies, focus was on the “institutional entrepreneurs” who worked both in competition and conjunction with each other to expand the influence of their respective institutions. Specific leaders include Andrew Dickson White of Cornell, Daniel Coit Gilman of Johns Hopkins, James Burrill Angell of Michigan, and Gifford Pinchot of Yale (Nemeč, 2006).¹

For categorization of the process of university expansion, Nemeč mentioned two transition eras: the “loosely coupled era” of 1862 to 1999 and the “formally aligned era” of 1900 to 1920. During the first era, the government initiated growth of public institutions through

the 1862 Morrill Act. The act provided land grants for colleges that would focus on agriculture and mechanic arts. However, it was the university leadership who structured the act’s implementation and impact upon further academic initiatives. University officials limited the government influence and worked in cooperation with other universities to ensure autonomy. As problem of American expansion arose, universities act as independent agents, offered research and expertise. Nemeč cites the example of the Federal Bureau of Education, which lacked the resources and authority to regulate high school and university education. Driven by a desire to enhance their own reputations, universities stepped in and began by creating standards for entrance into the university and then expanded to standardizing credentials for teaching and advanced degrees. Although, universities compared each other for quality students and professors, they recognized the need to work together to create these standards. The measures also represented the collective effort by university officials to keep American students from going abroad for undergraduate and graduate level education. By doing so, universities could control the type of education Americans received, further promoting American Liberal Democracy over socialism and, in turn, increasing their usefulness to the state.

Most of the initial initiatives during the first era resulted from informal networks of personal relationships between university presidents. The formally aligned era of 1900 to 1920 grew through the creation of the Association of American Universities (AAU) 1900. Rather than limiting university presidents’ autonomy and influence, the AAU provides additional legitimacy. Taking full advantage, the institutional entrepreneurs aligned themselves with private philanthropists, such as the Carnegie Foundation, to government responded by increasing its reliance on universities for experts and trained workers. Certain government agencies could not have existed without university programs.

Nemeč cites Yale’s forestry school as a key example. The program made the Federal Bureau of Forestry viable by supplying it with trained graduates. The school served a secondary function of promoting America’s colonial efforts in the Philippines. The university brought Filipino students to Yale to pursue advanced degrees. Upon completion, the students would return to the Philippines to assist the U.S. civil service.

Throughout the two eras, Nemeč highlights the political savy and vision of the key university leaders. Quoting Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nemeč describes institutions as the “long shadow of men” Nemeč (2006). Their influence extended well beyond the ivory towers to all branches of government. University presidents utilized the relationships with governmental agencies, the AAU, and philanthropies to expand their own knowledge and experience. Presidents regularly took sabbaticals to work in outside departments; for example, Angell served three tours of diplomatic service. Universities subsidized presidents’

¹ The foremost part of an army or fleet advancing or ready to advance/the leaders of a movement or of opinion etc. [from Old French *avan* (*t*) grade].

service to the state, viewing this service as good publicity for the university. Each calculated action helped elevate the role and function of the university system. The pinnacle of university influence came as Woodrow Wilson, former president of Princeton, was elected president of the United States.

Nemec stressed on public policy in university education, arguing that all political science departments should include public policy in the curriculum. Universities continue to use the agenda to establish institutions by defining the importance of social and political issues. As such, political scientists must be trained in public policy. Nemec dismisses Lonathan Cohn's charge that political science has forgotten politics and that policy and public policy have parted ways "Irrational Exuberance: When Did Political Science Forget about Politics?", (New Republic, 1999). Theoretically, the two may still be linked, but we must recognize that institutionally they may be distant. As more universities create separate public policy departments, Nemec hopes that policy-oriented political scientists might become more difficult to realize.

Considering public policy from another aspect, the study of Andrew and Ann (2007) emphasized on public policy, federalism and state politics. Public policy deepens nations' contribution rather than broaden the understanding of the important and neglected aspects of policy diffusion which is the process by which policies adopted in one jurisdiction spread and change in other places. This makes us think differently in a more nuanced way about policy diffusion. Attention is given to the different stages on the way a diffusing policy become adopted and how different sets of factors come into play. Through the analyses of the archetype diffusion study, five policies were examined namely: Senior Prescription Drug Benefits (1975 to 2001), Medical Saving Accounts (1993 to 1997), Individual Development Accounts (1993 to 2001), Term Limits for those on Welfare (1993 to 1996) and Family Caps on Benefits for Recipients who have children while on the Welfare (1992 to 1998). The explanatory factors about policies in general (national intervention, problem severity, state income, legislative professionalism and state ideology) have at best a middling performance in accounting for the patterns of adoption of these five policies. A process oriented approach (how a legislator becomes aware of the policy and the political outcomes of previous adoptions) and customisation (amendments of existing proposals which the literature calls reinvention) of Karch analysis beyond the initial event history models involves qualitative in-depth case studies in three states: Massachusetts, Virginia and Oregon.

Clem Brooks and Jeff Manza essentially answered their title's question by arguing that welfare states persist because the public wants them to persist. They even insist that the persistence of the cross-national welfare state efforts is because of the differences in mass opinions. These two do not seem to be controversial

claims, but are within the field of comparative welfare state research. Though dominant theories have explained welfare state development by functional need either from modernization or capitalism, or power resources and class coalitions, welfare state persistence has been explained by path dependency and other types of institutional lock in. *Welfare States Persist* offers a strong critique of such explanations. A point of basis is that there is a casual relationship between public attitudes and welfare state efforts. The casual relationship is fairly straightforward. Politicians will be responsive to mass attitudes in order to win elections. Analyses by Brook and Manza were based on aggregated country-level data on 14 Western countries and Japan. The main independent variables center on the answers given to the two questions in the International Social Survey Programme surveys. On the whole, do you think it should or should not be the governments' responsibility to: 1) provide a job for everyone who wants one, and 2) reduce income differences between the rich and the poor? But two items only gives a very rough account of mass attitudes which is particularly insufficient for the European countries. The main dependent variable is the total social expenditures divided by the GDP. These expenditure data also have problems. If the GDP rapidly increases, for example as in the case of Ireland and the Netherlands and social expenditure remain constant then the indicators shows retrenchment, or if unemployment suddenly increases as it did in the Nordic countries in the mid 1990s, it shows expansion. Nevertheless, in terms of the dependent variables, the measure of mass attitudes influences social expenditures. The relationship is significant even when controlled for female participants rates, left-wing strength and number of veto points. An argument is that public opinion is not only an intervening variable between the political strength of the left-wing parties and social expenditures and that mass attitudes have an independent impact. On the basis of their statistical analysis, the authors convincingly account for differences in social expenditures among countries and welfare regimes. They are less successful in accounting for welfare persistence over time. By means of expenditure data, the authors provide good empirical evidence for the fact that differences among welfare regimes persist over time. For example, differences in social expenditures become more similar within regime types but not across regime types, Clem and Jeff (2007).

ACHIEVING PUBLIC POLICY AND LEADERSHIP FROM UNIVERSITIES: AMERICA CREATING WAYS LIKE 'DEMOCRACY FOR ALL' AND CONSEQUENCES OF VARIFORM

In November 2006 midterm elections, voters swept Republicans out of power in what was widely interpreted as a rebuke of the Bush administration's Iraq policies. In subsequent polls, nearly two-thirds of the public opposed

President George W. Bush's postelection proposal for a surge in the U.S. troop presence in Iraq. Undeterred, the president declared on January 14, 2007, "I have made my decision and we are going forward," and his press secretary, Tony Snow, said on January 9, "The president will not shape policy according to public opinion". How can a U.S. president sustain a deeply unpopular foreign policy, seemingly uninfluenced by electoral setbacks or popular disapproval? Should the president be more responsive to public preference? In an important and ambitious new book, Benjamin Page and Marshall Bouton bring to bear an impressive array of survey data in order to answer these and other questions central to the study of public opinion and U.S. foreign policy.

Page and Bouton offer two core proportions, one descriptive and the other prescriptive. Beginning with the former, they argue that public opinion regarding foreign policy is purposive and rational, both collectively and individually. Concerning collectively, they argue that contrary to the prevailing wisdom, the public's foreign policy preferences are neither volatile nor impulsive, but rather mostly reasonable and consistent over time.

As for individuals, Page and Bouton do not consider a typical American to be ideologues as purported by Campbell et al. (1960). They do not find evidence of prevalent horizontally constrained foreign policy belief system, whereby attitudes in one issue domain (for example, national security) are functionally related to attitudes in other domains (for example, trade). Rather, drawing from the cognitive schema theory, they argue that most people possess vertically constrained, purposive belief systems, whereby opinions on specific issues follow sensibly from broader policy goals, which, in turn, follow from core values, all within the general domain of foreign policy. The authors thus, challenge the near-ubiquitous post-World War II "Almond-Lippmann consensus" Ole (1992) that mass opinion is unhelpful even dangerous as a source of guidance for policymakers.

Page and Bouton's prescriptive proposition is that political leaders are insufficiently responsive to public preferences in foreign policy. To establish the need for increased responsiveness, they demonstrate a shortfall by analyzing two recent surveys by the Chicago Council of Foreign Relations (CCFR), conducted in 2002 to 2004. These unusually comprehensive surveys include separate modules posing identical questions to foreign policy elites and the general public. This allows for wide-ranging comparisons of attitudes across the two groups. Wherever feasible, the authors also employ prior CCFR surveys to investigate longer-term trends.

Page and Bouton first show that the public cares about numerous foreign policy issues, that its priorities have remained largely stable over time, and that where public preferences have changed substantially, such changes were reasonable reactions to external events, like the end of the Cold War. They then turn to individual-level

analyses, in order to demonstrate that the opinions of typical Americans are purposive, following logically from their foreign policy goals (for example, defending national security) and values (for example, multilateralism). They find that across nearly all areas of foreign policy, individuals' goals and values outperform socioeconomic characteristics (for example, education, ethnicity, and gender), as well as partisanship and ideology, in predicting their foreign policy opinions. Although, the book is grounded in social science theories, the authors want to reach a broad audience. They state early on that they do not intend to spell out any very elaborate theory in this book Page and Bouton (2006). There is often some trade-off between theoretical rigor and accessibility. Where to draw those lines is a judgment call. As Nemeč mentioned, the best came from experts and trained workers developed through universities and even hopes for policy oriented political scientists.

A consequence of the particular line they draw is that the statistical results can frequently be interpreted in ways more or less favorable to their preferred interpretation. For instance, opinions are made indirectly through their effects on goals and values. However, their approach to hypothesis testing varying the specifications of ordinary least squares models and then comparing magnitudes and significance levels on causal variables, as well as model R^2 values does not allow strong causal inferences. The evidence, though highly suggestive, is thus, inconclusive. Stronger causal inference would require stronger theoretical assumptions and more nuanced statistical methods. As such, even Americans have increasingly polarized in their commitment to traditional moral values Wayne (2006). Its founding values are not the typical Lockean liberal values of democracy, liberty and equality, but traditional religious values, strong belief in religion and God, family values, absolute moral authority, national pride and so on.

In reminder, the authors first compared the attitudes of the masses and elites across identical issue dimensions finding frequent, large and persistent gaps, and then consider the normative implications for democracy of elites consistently discounting the preferences of sensible citizens. Though fascinating, and often highly suggestive, the evidence here is somewhat less compelling, especially with respect to normative implications.

Page and Bouton report substantial disagreement between elites and the general public on nearly three-fourths of the issues they investigated. This figure, however, is based on a seemingly arbitrary definition of "disagreement" as any instance where elites and the public diverged in their support for a policy by at least 10%. In fairness, on many issues the gap is considerably larger, averaging around 20%. It is nonetheless unclear that even this larger figure necessarily represents a politically consequential disconnection. If 90% of elites and 70% of the public support a policy, elites would presumably best represent the public by pursuing it. The

authors counter that as 90% support levels, elites are likely to pursue more of a policy than a 70% supportive public might want. Yet, this interpretation is debatable. Moreover, many questions like whether to fight a war or sign a treaty are dichotomous; it either pursues the policy or not.

Page and Bouton also investigate the proportion of issues on which absolute majorities of the two groups came out on opposite sides of an issue. This is the case for 26% of the issues in the study. Yet, as they admit, this indicates that elites and the public agree nearly three-fourths of the times. Is the glass one-quarter empty or three-quarter full? The authors favour the former interpretation. This too is debatable, as it is assumed to be the opinions of most midlevel foreign policy officials. The government decision makers who are probably inattentive/non-absorbing from the elite samples represent a good proxy for U.S. foreign policy actions. The data are illuminating at times, and they do reveal significant and persistent differences in relative magnitudes and in the fundamental valance of public and elite foreign policy preferences Page and Bouton (2006).

CONCLUSIONS

Nemec based his study more on universities and the role of institutional entrepreneurs. His emphasis suits those interested in public policy, leadership and education. He claims that strategic actors define the relationship between the state and universities. The brief discussion of policy recommendations in the conclusion is the weakest part of the book. One of such recommendations is that policy makers should read this book Matthew (2007). This portrays the question: Would U.S. foreign policy look very different if elites were more responsive to the public? The authors' implicit answer to this question is yes. But this is not obvious, at least not in many instances like the proverbial often-opaque details of foreign policy. Public opinion surveys are ill suited for capturing the many nuances necessary for connecting general attitudes to specific policy courses of action.

The authors offer a litany of suggestions for increasing elite responsiveness to mass opinion, such as reversing the gerrymandering of House districts, making election day a national holiday, automatically registering all citizens to vote, and fining them for failing to do so. They argue that the media and interest groups should better publicize instances where politicians do not follow the public will. These all appear to be reasonable ideas. But their precise relationship to foreign policy decision-making is not spelled out. Given the breadth of the intended audience, it would have been nice to see a weightier discussion of policy implications. The foreign

policy and public policy practitioners, as well as scholars and students, would benefit from discussing these issues. At minimum, doing so might help to correct some of the misconceptions political leaders clearly continue to hold about American public opinion.

Christian Alberkt Larsen of Alborg University do not believe that allowing a role for legislators preferences and legislative procedures would alter Karch's conclusion but it would provide a deeper understanding of why policies are chosen for attention and what information is favoured in the development of policy proposals in different legislative settings. Brooks and Manza suggest an embedded preferences theory which claims that attitude is derived from social-structural location and collective memories of welfare state development. If the theory of political responsiveness is to be linked to the other theoretical explanations in the field, then there is need for more detailed studies of the origin of mass attitudes.

Fung, Graham and Weil argued about a complex, diverse and highly fractious policy making environment with remarkable result achieved with virtually no centralised executive orchestration of the political system that seems so enamored lately. The studies of the different authors showed that good governance with legislators at the local, state or national levels leads to pragmatism of both policy expectations and policy results, as such; it should prevail among political leaders and citizens alike.

REFERENCES

- Andrew K, Ann A (2007). *Democracy Laboratories: Policy Diffusion among the American States*. University of Michigan Press.
- Campbell A, Philip EC, Warren EM, Donald ES (1960). *The American Voter*, New York.
- Page BI, Bouton MM (2006). *The Foreign Policy Disconnect: What Americans Want from Our Leaders but Don't Get*. p. 39.
- Chicago Council of Foreign Relations (CCFR) (2002-2004).
- Clem B, Jeff M (2007). *Why Welfare States Persist: The Importance of Public Opinion in Democracies*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Meyer DS, Valerie J, Helen MI (2005). *Routing the Opposition: Social Movements, Public Policy, and Democracy et al.* (eds), University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Majumdar RK, Srivastva AN (1997). *History of the United States of America (From 1845 to Present Day)*. pp. 28-30.
- Nemec MR (2006). *Ivory Towers and Nationalist Minds: Universities, Leadership, and the Development of the American State*. p. 17.
- Matthew B (2007). *The Foreign Policy Disconnect: What Americans Want from Our Leaders but Don't Get*. *J. Persp. Pol.*, 5: 2.
- New Republic (1999). p. 26.
- Ole H (1992). "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Challenges to the Almond – Lippmann Consensus", *Int. Stud. Quart.* 36: 439-466.
- Wayne EB (2006). *America's Crisis of Values: Reality and Perception*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p. 54.