



Favouritism in media practices and ethical concerns

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Abstract

Crony journalism has become a powerful international force. It is the political movement of the elite who are out of touch with reality. The mainstream media keeps us spouting politically correct banalities and falsehoods. Now that favouritism has become an important matter where it is rivened with many overlapping and vague concepts such as nepotism, cronyism, clientelism etc. Liberalism and cronyism are the two rival political and economic systems in the country.

Keywords: mainstream media, nepotism, particularism, paternalism, liberalism

Introduction

A lot has been written in recent weeks about crony capitalism, but an important issue for the media to introspect over is this, can this happen without significant amounts of crony journalism? When media companies begin to think they can run coal plants, surely this compromises them. When political parties think they ought to own media houses or be aligned to one, surely one cannot pretend innocence about what large sections of the media is really about. The idea of individual journalists having leanings towards one political party or the other is understandable; the fact that political parties may have their own mouthpieces is also not unreasonable. They are merely using these media properties to convey the party's stand to the faithful.

However, when entire media houses start aligning themselves to political parties for survival or undeserved profit, such journalism cannot but be tainted. The product of such a misalliance can only be the loss of media objectivity and credibility, if it's not actually a public disservice.

It has become fashionable for celeb speakers on TV to go ballistic about crony capitalism or crony socialism but for obvious reasons no one is ready to talk about crony journalism. The most glaring example of crony journalism lies in the biased coverage of some of the high profile protests in India and abroad.

Looking at the way networks are covering the Occupy Wall Street protests. Most networks are sending out the message that these protests are justified. If everyone in the world gets free healthcare, free education, job guarantees higher wages then who will be left to provide these things. Government's legislative powers are not the magic wand to create goods and services. No one cares to tell the protesters that they are behaving foolishly. Healthcare, education etc cannot be created by government's legislation. It is the thought and the hard work of individuals that creates all the good things in life. But individuals will only use their mind and work hard if they have an incentive. If one group of people demands services for free, then why should the hard working individuals bother to create these services? Even the coverage of some of the recent high profile protests in India has been very sub-standards. Hardly any media outlet cares to expose the hidden agenda of these groups. The crony journalists have aligned themselves to not just the political

establishment in every country, but also to the very large network of well-funded and powerful leftist-liberal institutions, which operate on global level.

Crony journalism has become a powerful international force. It is the political movement of the elite, who are out of touch with reality. The mainstream media networks are in the grip of a powerful liberal and egalitarian club. The private media networks have now become the drummer boys of the most absurd kind of socialist and even extreme leftist ideas. Instead of providing us with unbiased and unadulterated news, the mainstream media keeps spouting politically correct banalities and falsehoods. It almost seems as if the private media networks are no longer being controlled by "real businessmen", instead their control has passed into the hands of people or groups with an agenda.

We simply can't trust our high profile editors and talk show hosts any more. How can we trust them when these guys seem so eager to sacrifice truth on the altar of political correctness? There is acute need for more competition in the media space. We need new players in the media space to counter the influence of the crony journalists.

It is a fact that favouritism has become an important subject matter as corporations and governmental and non-governmental organizations become more concerned with ethical issues. However, the relevant literature seems to be rivened with many overlapping and vague concepts such as nepotism, cronyism, clientelism, patronage etc. We are aware of the fact that redefining concepts already in currency is a difficult, if not snobbish, task. Cronyism is appointing a person to a public position based on mutual friendship or its derivations. In fact, cronyism is not different from nepotism. However, the favoured person in cronyism is not a "relative", but acquaintances, friends or such kind of people. Cronyism is defined as giving preference to politicians. Cronies (close friends of long standing), in the appointment of hangers-on to office regardless of their merits. Cronyism is nothing new in real politics. In fact, office politics is highly similar to "real" politics. Thus, with reference to the organizational context, cronyism may be considered as a form of organizational politics.

Cronyism is defined as favouritism shown by the superior to his or her subordinate based on their relationship, rather

than the latter's personal loyalty. We argue that two cultural antecedents namely particularism and paternalism, give rise to strong in group bias and unreserved personal loyalty, which in turn lead to cronyism. Public servants favouring their acquaintances for their benefits in cronyism. Under some conditions, public servants tend to favour their colleagues. This closeness emerges with sentimentality and the feeling of belonging to a group. Homeowners in Turkey can be included within this kind of favouritism.

Individual outputs of cronyism are job satisfaction, performance and organizational commitment, while stagnation and adaptation are its organizational outputs. If there is cronyism inside an organization, in-group members have high job satisfaction, low organization commitment, high morale and less amount of works, however, all these outputs are low among out-group members. Also, cronyism causes stagnation inside the organization, controlling the key staff and lack of adaptation. All these negatives have a long-term negative effect on organizational performance. People regard favouring their acquaintances as a result of socializing and belonging to a group. Having thought the importance of the notion of 'acquaintances' and prevalence of collectivism in our country, it would not be a wrong idea to think that cronyism is inevitable.

Words of Dave Manuel

In words of Dave Manuel the term cronyism occurs when a powerful person appoints his friends and close acquaintances to positions of power, regardless of their qualifications for the job. Cronyism usually occurs because the person at the top of the pyramid is looking to protect their own job, because they themselves are not qualified for their position. By appointing his friends to positions of authority, the person at the top is protecting their own job.

Cronyism can occur in the world of politics and the business world as well. Cronyism is also referred to as the old boys club in the business world. Cronyism is a word with negative connotations. Unpopular leaders will usually appoint their close friends to high-ranking offices in order to protect their own jobs.

Liberalism and Cronyism – Two Rival Political and Economic Systems

Cronyism is a system in which people receive benefits from personal connections – benefits that are not available to individuals who are outside that group of cronies. The possibility of cronyism exists any time; some people have the power to impose their will on others. If some people can use force to take resources from others, there will be a natural tendency for those in power to transfer resources to those who have political connections, family connections or other personal connections to them.

There are only two possibilities for how the ownership of economic resources can be transferred. Resources can be transferred to someone else by the voluntary agreement of the resource owner, typically in a mutually beneficial exchange or resources can be coercively taken from one person and given to another. This second method of transfer leads to cronyism.

Cronyism and Big Government

The bigger the government measured both in its expenditures and its regulatory power, the bigger the potential for cronyism. The larger the government budget,

the more influence its tax and expenditure policies will have on business profitability and the prosperity of individuals. The larger the governments regulatory footprint, the more profitability and prosperity will be determined by regulatory favours rather than by productive activity. In this environment people must become rent seekers as a matter of economic survival. No matter how well – intentioned regulations are at their creation, over time regulatory agencies become captured by those they regulate so that regulations benefit the regulated rather than the general public.

Big government not only steers businesses toward seeking political benefits, it often gives them no alternative but to engage in the political process to protect them from harm. The government often threatens to impose taxes or regulatory costs on business, pushing even those that want to avoid the political process to get involved in lobbying to protect themselves from predatory policies. Business is then presented with two alternatives: either attempt to compete against cronies that have an unfair advantage or become a crony to stay afloat.

One justification often given for expanding the scope of the government is that a bigger government presence in a market economy can help to control the abuses of cronyism. Once we understand the causes of cronyism it becomes apparent that this reasoning is exactly backward. Government powers allow some interest groups to allow some interest groups to impose costs on others which force everyone to engage in the political process to compete to be the cronies who benefit from government interference.

The common element that links all the economic and political systems is that they are all based on the premise that people should turn over control of part of their lives and property to some form of collective organization- most commonly, the government for the good of everybody. When this surrender happens some people are able to control the resources of others for the benefit of some in the group and at a cost to others. While there may be a tendency for most people to favour those with whom they have relationships, in *The Road to Serfdom* Hayek explains that the incentives inherent in Government attract people into positions of power who want to use that power to their advantage. We cannot evaluate economic and political systems under the assumption that people who hold power will abuse it for their own benefit. Although not everyone is prone to commit such abuses. Some people are so political and economic that institutions should be designed to guard against the possibility that the worst will get on top.

People have designed many political and economic systems based on sophisticated analysis of social interactions that point to ways that society might be redesigned and improved. Fundamentally, all systems rest on either the principle that people control their own lives and property or the principle that some people should control the lives and property of others. The latter principle inevitably leads to a system in which the people who have connections to those with control benefit at the expense of those who do not. Despite sophisticated terminology and justifications the choices reduce to liberalism versus cronyism.

Cronyism versus Liberalism

Throughout history, everywhere in the world countries that have adopted capitalist economies have prospered, while those that have not have remained poor. The capitalist

institutions that describe are the institutions of liberalism: protection of property rights, rule of law and freedom of exchange. Capitalism is the economic embodiment of the principles of liberalism. Alternatives to capitalism have been tried ranging from government ownership of the means of production and central economic planning to government oversight of the market economy through industrial policy, fascism, corporatism and other variants of managed capitalism. The common element that all these alternatives share is that they substitute group control- typically government control- of economic resources for private property and freedom of exchange. They do so to varying degrees but in all cases government control means that the political process rather than voluntary exchange allocates resources, and that means that close connections to political power can steer resources toward cronies. The alternative to liberalism is cronyism.

Fukuyama's argument about capitalist democracies being the end of history has its foundation in the general acceptance of the superiority of the capitalism and democracy after the triumph of capitalist democracies in the cold war. However, there is an inherent tension between capitalism and democracy that Fukuyama glosses over. Democratic government like any other government has the ability to use force to transfer resources from some to others that is it has the ability to displace liberalism with cronyism. To think that when some can profit from political power people will not compete to obtain that power and to benefit from it is wishful thinking and indeed dangerous thinking.

Conclusion

Despite the sophisticated labels attached to various political and economic systems, all come down to the alternative of allowing people to direct their energies and resources as they choose or giving some people the power to direct the energies and resources of others. The first alternative is liberalism and the second is cronyism. But it is not always obvious that illiberal systems allocate power and resources through cronyism. Regardless of the system's details, the first step is to recognize that if some people have the power to direct the resources and energies of others, people can use the power for their benefit. The next step is to see that for people to keep power, they need support of others. It then follows that they will use their power to benefit others in exchange for these others support. The people with the power and the people who support them are the cronies. If those in power do not use their power to support cronies, competitors for that power will arise with another set of cronies to take that power away. Government regulation, taxation and spending all lead to cronyism regardless of the specific system under which that government power is organized. Cronyism comes in many forms, but ultimately the only alternatives for political and economic systems are liberalism and cronyism.

No society finds itself at either extreme on the continuum between liberalism and cronyism, and the threat from people who will attempt to benefit from acquiring political power is always present. Ultimately the only way to limit cronyism is to limit the government's power so that there is little benefit to participating in cronyism rather than productive activity. A common response to cronyism is to call for additional government regulation and oversight of markets, but bigger government often makes the problem worse. Politicians using political power to their advantage causes cronyism, so

a government with less regulatory power and a government with a smaller budget will be less prone to cronyism. A larger presence of government in an economy causes cronyism, it does not prevent it.

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