Mass Civic Education and Public Policy Exchange: Tamarod Movement June 30, 2013 As A Case Study

Salwa Thabet Mekky

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the role of mass civic education in creating a highly participatory environment in the public sphere and active engagement in promoting public policy exchange which is indispensable in transitional democracies. The paper explains how this process revolves around the concept of rational neutrality as a backbone, where absence of absolute neutrality characterizes the current context of political realities. The paper reflects on Tamarod movement in Egypt, during the period between April 2013 and June 2013 as a case study, which has creatively introduced a form of neutral mass civic education as effective means to educate and empower masses capacities to become actively engaged in their own governance and actually contributing to public policy exchange. The first part of the paper, to illustrate the environmental context in which Tamarod surfaced, overviews critical events that took place in Egypt between February 11, 2011 and June 30, 2013. Thereafter, it introduces Tamarod (Rebel) movement and how it emerged taking the active leading role in June 30 revolution that has changed the modern history of Egypt. The second part presents the public sphere and an account of its contemporary structural change. The study analyzes how Tamarod interfaced with dialogical opportunities and challenges, and created a rationally neutral platform for public discourse assessed against specific neutrality measurement criteria. In light of the crucial role of civic education, especially during periods of transition, in creating an environment conducive to active participation of citizens to address public will, the paper investigates variables and mechanisms for inducing somehow neutral mass civic education environment. An environment which could articulate common public interests, values, rights and duties through an iterative process of dialogical participation and finally integrate such active engagement in public policy exchange.

AL Nahda, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University 2015, January

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