Virtual Advocacy Impact on Public Policy: Egypt as a Case Study

Salwa Thabet Mekky

Abstract

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Abstract:
Moving from an authoritarian regime to a progressive build-up of democratic transition requires radical institutional reforms that are highly challenged by the ability of the state to decide on policy actions that reflect the interests, needs and values of the majority. No doubt that policy decisions arrived at through an iterative process of stakeholders consent most likely have very low cost of enforcement and high degree of effectiveness, which insinuate a high level of political advocacy and commitment. Virtual space has created new avenues for participation of an increasing number of unofficial policy actors including beneficiaries and advocates, who are now facing ever increasing social, economic and political stakes.
Virtual/cyber advocacy refers to the use of social media networks to advance public policy initiatives and change. As we are moving toward advocacy practice in virtual environments, we are faced with new opportunities to build a more vibrant broader base of community advocates compared to those belonging to the traditional faces of advocacy. Yet shifting cyber advocacy into real public policy impact raises numerous critical issues, some of which this paper explores. The paper focuses on three main dimensions: First, a conceptual approach to public policy virtual advocacy; second, study the impact of social networks, as a rapidly growing communication resource that has recently proliferated on political discourse and public policy; and third, explore mechanisms to articulate common public interest expressed through virtual advocacy coalitions in public policy environment.