

A New Egyptian Model of Participatory Democracy

Pillared on a Flexible Apolitical Societal Elite

By

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Abstract:

This paper introduces a new Egyptian model of participatory democracy pillared on flexible apolitical societal elite. The paper discusses the post-ideology and supra-ideology state that is needed to prevail in the post-revolution Egyptian society in order to establish the new flexible civil apolitical societal trans-ideological elite as the leaders for a new Egyptian political institution.

The Historical and philosophical background on which this is based can be found in the first four sections of this paper; namely the sections that discuss the centralization of the human; the development of human paradigms through history till we reach the wisdom age paradigm which is at the focus of this paper; the origin of ideology and thus our take to look beyond ideologies to form an elite that converges around the common good and interest of the society, hence, the introduction of the new Egyptian model of participatory democracy.

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Man Central

Man is a Manifestation of Allah's insurmountable might in creation. Man is bound to his Creator body and soul in the literal sense of the word. In the spiritual sense, he is bound to his Creator – by choice through rationalizing, even though he might not choose to worship Him - for as long as he is alive; and his spirit is bound to his Creator after his death in the eternal realm. In the material world, man was destined for greatness from the beginning. He was initially blessed by belonging to that unique breed of Humans; and this blessing came with a duty to make this world a better place for himself and the others as this is his ultimate reason for being. Altruism is not something that comes naturally to man, but his spiritual growth and needs (inherently built in by the Creator) impose that movement for the good of the society through freewill. Impose and freewill do not mesh well together as words up in the air, but within the complexity of the human being, the imposition comes from within man himself, and, thus, the freedom and freewill.¹

Human Paradigms through History

Man has evolved and has witnessed the world evolve around him; he was an actor in this evolution and a subject of it as well. Humanity has gone through four principal paradigms thus far; each had its criteria of what is good and what is evil in this world. These paradigms are chronologically the "Hunters Gatherers" Paradigm, the "Agrarian" Paradigm, the "Industrial Paradigm", and the "Knowledge" Paradigm. The Industrial paradigm marks a shift in the origins of the governing criteria. Before the industrial age, man considered nature the origin of these criteria; with the advent of the industrial age, man started to claim dominance over nature.

In the agricultural age for an example, man positioned himself as an actor and recipient in the environment; he knew he could not control nature, and there were floods and hurricanes to prove the validity of that position. Religiousness – idolatry included – was a dominant aspect in this paradigm; many popular myths were woven around the relationship between God - or the Gods - and Nature. The Industrial revolution brought to the front the material needs and the need to control the surroundings to satisfy and maintain those material needs. Thus, the industrial civilization witnessed to shift of the focus from nature and religion to matter and the individual himself believing that this shift would constitute a new ultimate freedom. However, this individuality of taste and needs needed rationalizing – as discussed by Max Weber who explained the need to compromise the need for mass production and the individuality of taste - which resulted in profiling and stereotyping propagated by the media and thus consecrating the enslavement to the market and matter. This enslavement is not different from the enslavement to the Church at one point in time. Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) pardoned Ammar Ibn

¹ باسم زكريا، الأنسنة قبل المواطنة،

http://tafkeergy.blogspot.com/2011/05/blog-post_08.html

Yasser when he admitted to idolatry under the coercion of torture and witnessing the death of both his parents which condones the need to conform under severe pressure. This pressure to conform was practiced by the media to service the industrial paradigm continuous need for mass production. And here shines Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) brilliance when he said "Let the servant of the Dinar, the servant of the Dirham and the servant of the Khamisah (of clothes) perish, as he is pleased if these things are given to him, and if not, he is displeased. Let such a person perish and be humiliated, and if he is pierced with a thorn, let him not find anyone to take it out for him. Paradise is for him who holds the reins of his horse, striving in Allah's cause, with his hair unkempt and feet covered with dust: if he is appointed to the vanguard, he is perfectly satisfied with his post of guarding, and if he is appointed in the rearguard, he accepts his post with satisfaction; if he asks for permission he is not permitted, and if he intercedes, his intercession is not accepted."²

Had Marx been alive now, he would have changed his famous quote from "Religion is the opium of people" to "Market is the opium of people".

The Origins of Ideologies

Politics in the industrial age became a pool of ideologies which drew very specific air-tight frameworks for life within any ideology. These ideologies represent to politics what assembly lines represent to manufacturing – an assembly line of identical humans that oppresses man's creativity for the sake of industrial efficiency; this assembly line mentality did not provide the answer to man in his quest for Utopia. The answer lies in humanity which transcends all ideologies.

Ideologies answer questions specific to the society where they originate; however, these ideologies are too specific to become generalizations adopted by societies outside the one where it originated. This attempt to enforce ideologies upon foreign societies resulted in devastating wars and bloodshed; the cold war is a clear example of that conflict of ideologies where the arms race represented an ominous cloud over the head of the whole human race. The attempt to have one comprehensive ideology was faced by the cultural differences of the different societies and thus rejected. The Egyptian society is one example where alien ideologies were ingested and digested and hybrid ideology representative of the Egyptian culture emerged.

The conflict between ideologies in the west can be mapped against the war between schools of Islamic teachings in the west; the difference lies in the attempt to ideologize politics in the west, while in the east the concern was politicizing schools of Islamic teachings. Schools followers consecrated the school itself rather than its termini (maqasid) – an action on which the school founders would denounce – to give themselves a license to kill.

Not one ideology was able to answer the eternal question of "Why were we created?" "What is our raison d'être?" The communist ideology failed with the demise of the Soviet Union; the defeat of the capitalist ideology is unfolding and its manifestation is the exodus to Yoga and other spiritual practices

² صحيح البخارى

from the Far East. Ideologies have shown their fragility with the evolution of hybrid ideologies such as social liberalism.

Some attempts of setting the theory for the post ideological era – such as the “End of History” hypothesis by Fukuyama – are but attempts to ideologize in themselves. This hypothesis is an extension of the Darwinian theory of the evolution of man which envelopes man in a material context. This material dominance and attempt at stereotyping is evident in the US policies regarding democracy in Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia

Post Ideologies and Supra Ideologies

With all this in mind, what we are proposing isn't just a solution to cope with what is given to us by other ideologies; it is a radical paradigm shift that allows for the transition from the dominating Industrial Paradigm to the Wisdom Age or Paradigm. The TCT's³ main hypothesis is that man himself is the origin and reference for any dialogue and framework. Man is distinguished from other creations by having a body and soul – a matter and purport; an individual who practices this individuality while integrating with the society – an integration that doesn't infringe on his privacy nor that deletes his uniqueness within a herd mentality. Our school of thought establishes that the ultimate goal for humans is sustainable happiness which is essentially different from temporal happiness. To attain that elusive goal of sustainable happiness, man's actions should all fall within a framework that stems from and aims to achieve Justice and freedom.

Justice is the foundation for equal opportunity to build the individual's eligibility, equal opportunity to practice the individual's ownership of the society based on his acquired eligibility. This eligibility is the core of any distinction between individuals within the society.

Eligibility as per the TCT has two necessary but also sufficient components: efficiency – both professional and technical- and merit and entitlement that stems from the individual's belief that he owns his society and from his realization that his role in the society is part and parcel of his duty to himself and the society in a manner that secures his individuality and doesn't encroach on his individual thinking.

Freedom is defined within the same framework of eligibility as the clearance between the individual and achieving this eligibility and practicing his ownership of the society on an eligibility base – which we reiterate to be the only basis for distinction in the society. A freedom that hinders the individual from attaining his eligibility is not freedom; a freedom that attains eligibility but places obstacles to act upon it is not freedom; all definitions of freedom that revolve around the individual and neglect the societal context are but decorative definitions of freedom.

³ TCT: Termini Context Thinking School – developed by and at SQUARE Institute for Strategic Thinking – establishes the human as the core of all actions. Any action should essentially lead to achieving justice, freedom and dignity. Actions in politics, economics and the society ... should all lead to one terminus which is sustainable happiness pillared on justice, freedom and dignity.

All actions that fall within the TCT definitions of justice & freedom essentially lead to a dignified life for the individual. Dignity is to live for and by justice; for and by freedom; anything less is considered a death sentence.

The Political Manifestation of the Wisdom Age Paradigm

The wisdom age paradigm takes the form of a new mainstream in the society. The main source of reference for that mainstream is a set of humanistic values that conform with the callings of religions and many philosophies. This mainstream is manifested in apolitical institutions where a new flexible elite emerges that leads based on a bottom-up-acquired legitimacy instead of the typical polarized systemized political skeletons which are imprisoned in the their own rigid ideologies.

The wisdom age paradigm aims at humanizing these institutions through the creation of humanly customized products. The political assembly lines – AKA political parties – that emerged during as a product of the industrial paradigm usually produce rigid stereotyped political elite that is imprisoned ideologically and tool haunted overlooking the national political termini that they were meant for in the first place. Hence, our take is to create flexible societal apolitical civil bodies capable of attaining political objectives through a human-element, trans-ideological, flexibly-positioned, consensus-built, multifaceted national ideology where a flexible/non-rigid civil apolitical societal elite acts as a pool of origin for an ever emerging, ever self-reviving, non-rigid trans-ideological political elite.

This elite is ideally the eligible elite which is developed, built and given the representation rights through efficiency and merit and entitlement; entitlement that stems from birth rights, blood ties or neighborhood ties. Eligibility is the cornerstone for the highest noblest human value- Justice. Thus, eligibility is the one and only foundation for real non-fake leadership; without eligibility, leadership turns into exaction of the right of a well-deserved inbred leadership. A leadership capable of clear vision that protects it from vainglory and falling into the hands of undeserving pretentious hands which uproots the individual's humanity by suppressing his ability to progress and survive.⁴

Without merit and entitlement, any leadership becomes exaction; without efficiency, any leadership becomes pretentiousness.

We can now say that the new Egyptian elite **first**, cannot be found in the current pool of political activists, but the search should include the broad society; **second**, this elite should put first and foremost the Egyptian society and the Egyptian nation – in both belief and practice – above any individual or ideological interests; **third**, this elite should believe that mutual compromise is necessary for the co-existence of different sections in the society and that society values and trends surpass personification.⁵

Thus the elite within the wisdom age paradigm is not the one that focuses on conflict but one that empowers the practice of ownership in the society through granting or holding the right to rule

⁴ المصطفى حجازي، آفات الإصلاح والنهضة – الإدعاء، مقالات مؤسسة لمفاهيم، مركز المربع للفكر الاستراتيجي، نوفمبر 2004

⁵ المصطفى حجازي، القوى الوطنية، مقالات مؤسسة لحالة مصر قبل الثورة ولبناء المرحلة التالية، مركز المربع للفكر الاستراتيجي، ديسمبر 2010

according to eligibility: eligibility that is manifested in the ability to identify the universal goal for the society at each stage and the ability to push towards its execution. This elite is bound, along with the society, with a one criteria which is that universal goal that maintains the hegemony and dominance of the state rather than disperse the powers among conflicting ideologies; difference will ever occur, but they will occur to enrich rather than tarnish and mar the objectives of the nation.

With the Egyptian Revolution, and with the flood of political activity in its aftermath, we have a greater responsibility now to look for the true national players and powers within the youths. Youths is not confined to a definite age bracket; youth is our dictionary means the ability to dream, the ability to look beyond one's self and ideology, the ability to put the collective good ahead of the personal good, the ability to tolerate differences. We need to look now and we need to move fast.

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