Public policies and the building of social awareness as a basis for political development and institutional stability: A comparative study of Jordan and Libya as a model

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Abstract:
This study investigates the relationship between public policy formulation and the development of social awareness as fundamental pillars for achieving political development and institutional stability. By employing a comparative analytical approach between Jordan and Libya, the research highlights how divergent governance models—one based on a constitutional monarchy with deep-rooted institutionalism and the other on a state in revolutionary transition—utilize public policies to shape national consciousness.
Keywords: investigates, political, comparative, institutionalism

Introduction

   Public policy is one of the most important tools a state uses to achieve its developmental, political, and social goals. It is the organized framework through which national resources and capabilities are managed to guide society toward stability and progress. Social awareness is a fundamental element that enhances the effectiveness of public policy, as it reflects the level of understanding individuals and groups have of the nature of the challenges and opportunities within the state, and their ability to interact consciously and responsibly with its institutions. The higher the level of social awareness, the greater the society's capacity to support sound public policies and the higher the level of political participation, which contributes to achieving political development and institutional stability. Conversely, weak social awareness leads to a decline in the effectiveness of public policies and an exacerbation of political and social crises, which negatively impacts the course of political development and threatens the stability of institutions and the legitimacy of the political system. Hence, the scientific importance of studying the dialectical relationship between public policy and social awareness becomes clear, given its direct impact on shaping the nature of the political system and its ability to withstand or collapse in the face of challenges. This relationship is clearly illustrated in a comparison between the Jordanian and Libyan cases.

Importance of the Research: The importance of the research lies in analyzing the relationship between public policies, social awareness, and political development, and exploring how building social awareness can contribute to achieving political adaptation and institutional stability, using a comparative study between Jordan and Libya as two contrasting models.

Research problem: (How do public policies affect the building of social awareness, and what is the impact of this awareness on political development and institutional stability in different countries, as shown by the Jordanian and Libyan experiences?).

Research hypothesis: (The higher the level of social awareness among members of society, the more effective public policies become in achieving political development and institutional stability. The lower this awareness, the more political development declines and institutional and political stability weakens.)

First: The conceptual and theoretical framework of the research

   This study aims to present the intellectual and methodological foundations upon which the research is based, by clarifying the basic concepts related to public policies, political development and social awareness, as well as reviewing one of the theories that explains the relationship between these concepts.

1- Basic terms and research concepts

A- Public policy: The term "public policy" was first used in 1922 when the American political scientist Charles Mariam attempted to link political theories with their applications. He defined public policy as "the system that ensures action plans, legislative procedures, laws, and funding priorities related to a particular issue, issued by governmental bodies or any other specific entity."[1].

   Public policy is also defined as: any plan, program, decision, or law adopted by the government in cooperation with other actors, for the purpose of addressing a specific problem or issue of concern to a cross-section of the population, with the aim of solving the problem or preventing its recurrence.[2].

B) Social awareness: Social consciousness is defined as the relationship of a person to the social environment in which they live. This relationship reflects the conditions in which a person lives and determines the features of their relationship, including methods of understanding, knowledge, perception, evaluation patterns, and methods of reacting to different situations.[3].

   Social awareness is also defined as understanding and sound perception. Perception refers to a person's knowledge of themselves and the society in which they live. It consists of a set of concepts, ideas, and cultures that individuals hold and that have shaped their understanding.[4].
Social awareness is also known as the awareness of members of society in general of the various issues of society that are related to their lives and reality and determine the features of their future. Social awareness is of several types, including political awareness, cultural awareness, religious awareness, and health awareness.

C- Political development: It is a multi-faceted political process aimed at consolidating citizenship, achieving integration and stability within society, increasing public participation in political life, strengthening the central government's ability to implement its laws and policies across the entire state, and improving government efficiency related to the distribution of economic resources and values.[5].

   Political development is also defined as a global, systematic, and homogeneous process, which globalization has greatly accelerated thanks to the scientific and technological advancements it has brought about worldwide.[6].

2- Structural Functional Theory

   Structural functionalism is one of the most important theories in the social sciences, linking the individual to society. This theory attempts to explain the relationship between the individual and the society in which they live. Functionalism views society as a complex system whose parts

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[1] Birkland, Thomas A, an introduction to the policy: theories, concepts and models of public policy making, new york,P.8.
[2] Ibid, p.9.
[3] Anwal Saafaq Abdul Rahman, The extent of awareness of inpatients in King Saud University hospitals regarding the role of the medical social worker, Journal of Social Service, Egyptian Society of Social Workers, Issue 58, 2017, p. 359.
[4] Lubna Muhammad Fattouh, The Main Influences in Shaping Social Awareness, Journal of the Faculty of Education, Ain Shams University, Cairo, 2015, p. 108.
[5] Kamal Fateh, The Role of Political Parties in Local Political Development: A Case Study of Political Alliance Parties in the Wilaya of Mascara, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Oran, 2012, p. 49.
[6] Aisha Abash, The Problem of Political and Democratic Development in the Maghreb (Tunisia), Arab Democratic Center, Berlin, 2017, p. 20.

work together to promote solidarity and stability. It also sees our social lives as guided by a stable social system or structure, comprised of stable patterns of social and political behavior.[7].

Regarding the theoretical aspect of this research: Structural functionalism is one of the most important theories concerned with studying public policy and social consciousness, and their importance in achieving general political development. Social consciousness is one of the topics most addressed by structural functionalism. Talcott Parsons, one of the most important pioneers of structural functionalism, believes that society consists of integrated social units or interconnected systems. He views society as a large social unit composed of a group of systems. There is the political institution, which performs its role correctly and aims to achieve political growth and stability. Similarly, the educational institution aims to achieve advancement and development in the field of education, and the health institution aims to achieve progress in the field of health and spread health awareness in society. Social consciousness is the foundation for developing social and political relations within society, making members of society more aware and understanding of the policies pursued by the state. All efforts are combined to achieve political development, as social consciousness is an awareness that links all political, economic, and religious issues in society. Through alignment between state policies and social consciousness, individuals can understand all political matters and issues in order to maintain... The larger system, which is society, and spreading social awareness among members of society contributes to preserving society and achieving political development aimed at the progress and development of society.[8].

Second: The role of public policies in building social awareness

Public policies constitute the comprehensive framework through which the mechanisms of social awareness are shaped. The state, through its various institutions, plays a pivotal role in formulating the system of values and behaviors that contribute to guiding individuals towards positive participation in the public affairs of society. The effectiveness of these policies is demonstrated through their executive tools, including:

1- Family: To begin with, the formation of awareness in every individual is through the family, as we see that the individual's personality is greatly influenced by his family environment. The family is the first building block in the formation of the individual's personality, and the basic structure for the formation of societal awareness in its early stages. The family is considered the social unit with political implications, as it represents the first axis of any political group. The family contributes to political development, and as a result, the awareness of the individual and society may develop and witness several future changes.

2- Methods of education and instruction: Despite the importance of the family in building an individual's personality and awareness, education, especially in its early and advanced stages, plays a complementary role in the socialization process. The learning process, with its various means and phases, contributes to shaping an educated and highly responsible individual. Therefore, education has a central role in building a conscious national personality and thus contributes to social, cultural, and political development. Consequently, the participation of the masses, through societal awareness, in the decision-making process in a democratic manner requires that the masses have a certain level of social awareness and political knowledge, and this goal cannot be achieved except by raising their level through education.[9]

3- Media outlets: The media plays a role no less important than that of the family or school in the socialization process of shaping individuals' social awareness, and its influence is then reflected in the individual's political socialization. Therefore, the media can play a dual role (positive and negative) in the matter of social and political awareness, depending on the nature of the content and the individual's modes of consumption, i.e., their interests and orientations.[10]

4- Civil society: Civil society is a crucial pillar in building and supporting social awareness. It plays an integral role alongside state institutions through its awareness-raising and cultural programs and activities that contribute to spreading the values of citizenship, collective responsibility, and public participation. Unions, NGOs, and voluntary organizations are effective tools in enhancing individuals' understanding of their rights and duties, and in consolidating the principles of dialogue, tolerance, and respect for differing opinions, thus raising the level of social awareness in society. This social awareness, which civil society helps to establish, forms a fundamental basis for political development, as it leads to broader conscious participation in public life, supports institutional stability, and strengthens trust between the state and society. This comes within the framework of sound public policies that allow civil society to operate freely and effectively, and benefit from its role in implementing development goals. The more public policies support freedom of organization and initiative, the more social awareness is strengthened, and this is reflected positively on the course of political development and national stability.[11]

5- Political parties: Political parties are among the most important institutions contributing to the development of social awareness within society. They work to convey political ideas and programs to citizens and guide them towards conscious participation in public life. Through their political, media, and cultural activities, parties contribute to raising awareness among individuals about national issues, informing them of their rights and duties, and training them in practicing dialogue, democracy, and accepting differing opinions. They also contribute to shaping an enlightened public opinion capable of understanding the nature of the political and social challenges facing the state. This social awareness, which political parties promote, is directly reflected in political development through increased popular participation, deepening democratic culture, and strengthening trust in political institutions. The higher the level of citizens' political and social awareness, the more effective the political process becomes and the more stable state institutions are. The effectiveness of parties in performing this role is linked to their alignment with the state's public policies. Public policies form the framework that regulates the work of parties and guarantees their freedom of activity and diversity, while parties represent a tool for implementing these policies on the ground through awareness-raising, mobilization, and guidance. Therefore, the integration between public policies and political parties is a fundamental factor in consolidating social awareness and achieving sustainable political development for society's.[12]

Third: The relationship between social awareness and political adaptation (practical examples)

1- The Jordanian case: Social awareness and political adaptation as a model for political stability

A review of the political history of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan reveals that its political system possesses a high degree of political adaptability, which has contributed to relative political stability over the past decades. This stability is largely attributed to the rise in the level of social awareness among Jordanian citizens. During the last two decades, the Kingdom has witnessed political and social transformations that have contributed to improving the level of public and higher education, significantly reducing illiteracy rates, and the widespread dissemination of mass communication tools resulting from the information revolution and modern technology, such as the internet, traditional and new media,

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[7] Abdul Basit Abdul Mu'ti, Theoretical Trends in Sociology, National Council for Culture and Arts, Kuwait, 1981, p. 151.

[8] Nikola Timasheff, Sociological Theory: Its Nature and Development, translated by Mahmoud Awda et al., Dar al-Maaref, Cairo, 1983, p. 320.

[9] Tariq Abdul Hafez and Laila Mubarak, Community Awareness and its Role in Building the Arab State: An Intellectual Vision, Journal of Political Science, University of Baghdad, Issue 66, 2023, pp. 41-43.

[10] Hassan Hadi, The Impact of Media on Shaping Knowledge and Political Awareness, Journal of Political Science, University of Baghdad, Issue 58, 2019, p. 355.

[11] Mouzai Bilal, Civil Associations as a Basis for Activating Political Development, University of Tebessa Journal, Issue 2, 2014, pp. 152-155.

[12] Ahmed Ibrahim, The Role of the State and Parties in Socialization and Political Culture, Journal of Jurisprudential and Legal Research, Faculty of Sharia and Law in Damanhour, Issue 45, 2024, pp. 2874-2877.

social media platforms, and satellite television, which have played an active role in raising the level of political awareness among Jordanian citizens.[13].

This was accompanied by a gradual and peaceful democratic transition, which was represented in the establishment of a legal system regulating political life in all its aspects, and the establishment of new institutions with specific functions, as well as a relative rise in indicators of freedom, equality, justice and the rule of law. This contributed to consolidating the principle of the political institution and enhancing the system's ability to adapt and contain, which was reflected positively on the level of political and social awareness of the Jordanian citizen, who became more aware of local, regional and international events and issues.[14].

Furthermore, the Jordanian citizen's conscious understanding of the political and economic reality, and their relative acceptance of the challenges of rising living costs, inflation, and declining purchasing power—despite recognizing the magnitude of these challenges—reflects a high level of maturity and national awareness. Similarly, the citizen's patience with certain manifestations of administrative and bureaucratic shortcomings and the increasing public debt reflects their awareness of the importance of preserving security and stability as a supreme value that transcends individual or sectarian interests.[15].

This advanced awareness among Jordanian citizens was clearly demonstrated during the popular movement that swept the Kingdom in 2011, when citizens demanded political reform, combating corruption, and improving living standards and public administration. The political system responded to this movement with a high degree of conscious responsiveness and calm political adaptation, adopting genuine, gradual reforms that began with the 2011 constitutional amendments and subsequent important reform steps. Furthermore, the security services dealt with the movement peacefully and civilly, refraining from violence and adhering to the law and resorting to the judiciary in addressing issues. This contributed to containing the movement and reducing its intensity. In this context, the wise and rational role of the Hashemite leadership had a profound impact on managing the movement and mitigating its repercussions through dialogue, containment, and a realistic response to the demands for reform within the available resources.[16].

Thus, the phenomenon of political and social awareness, which is based on understanding, perception, wisdom, and rationality, represents today a fundamental pillar in the stability of the Jordanian state. Despite the existence of some imbalances in the social, political, or administrative structure, these remain phenomena with limited impact and do not affect the essence of the state's general stability. Therefore, it can be said that Jordanian societal awareness is the most prominent factor in achieving political adaptation and security and political stability for the Kingdom, and it is considered an advanced model that can be measured against in the context of political development.

2- The Libyan case: The impact of low social awareness on the political stabilization process

The Libyan case represents a clear example of the close relationship between the low level of social awareness in Libyan society and the absence of political stability. This is clearly evident when studying the country's experience before and after the fall of Muammar Gaddafi's regime. For decades, Libya remained under absolute central rule, characterized by the absence of genuine mechanisms for popular participation and the lack of an institutional environment that encourages social and political awareness. This led to a weakened ability of citizens to understand and observe politics and to engage responsibly with national events and issues.[17].

The centralized control policies of the previous regime, limited to individual decisions, led to a lack of civic participation and institutional accountability. This negatively impacted the development of social awareness, as Libyan citizens were unable to develop the capacity to monitor government performance, contribute to the formulation of public policies, or evaluate their impact on society. This coincided with a decline in political education and community participation, making society less able to influence or protect its interests within the state. Consequently, social awareness became significantly lower compared to the experiences of stable countries like Jordan.[18].

This decline in social awareness directly impacted political stability in Libya, weakening the institutions' ability to adapt to the political and social transformations following the fall of the regime in 2011. Furthermore, the absence of a culture of participation and accountability, coupled with a lack of awareness of citizens' rights and responsibilities, exacerbated internal conflicts and struggles for power and resources, including oil and gas, which constitute the cornerstone of Libya's economy. These conditions resulted in political and security chaos, the proliferation of armed groups, and the disintegration of government institutions, further weakening the Libyan state and hindering its ability to achieve sustainable political stability.[19].

Thus, the Libyan experience demonstrates that low social awareness undermines the regime's ability to adapt to internal and external challenges. The absence of political knowledge and societal understanding of national issues has led to a weak ability to contain popular movements or to interact with reform demands in a peaceful and systematic manner, which in turn has led to an escalation of conflicts and institutional and political instability. Moreover, Libyan society has not possessed effective mechanisms to contain these conflicts or to exert constructive civil pressure on institutions, which makes low social awareness one of the main factors that have exacerbated political and security crises in Libya during the last decade.

Fourth: Challenges and solutions in the path of political development and enhancing social awareness

Political development in many societies faces a number of challenges related to social identity, class inequality, ethnic disparity, and weak political participation, which requires the adoption of effective mechanisms to address them. Hence, promoting social awareness has a pivotal role in supporting political stability and ensuring the effective participation of all segments of society.

1-   Challenges facing political development and social awareness

The process of political development is a complex one, influenced by a range of social, economic, and cultural factors that determine the stability and cohesion of society. The success of political development cannot be achieved in isolation from building a social consciousness capable of embracing diversity and achieving a balance between different affiliations within the state. From this perspective, a number of challenges emerge for contemporary societies, the most important of which are:

A_ Identity crisis: Modern societies are based on the idea of citizenship, deepening national identity, and working to build a lasting sense of belonging in each individual to a specific society and a defined land. An identity crisis occurs when it becomes difficult for all members of society to merge into a single entity that transcends their traditional or narrow affiliations. Modern societies are based on the idea of citizenship,

[13]Amin Al-Mashaqbeh, Factors of Political Stability in the Kingdom, at the following link: https://alrai.com/article/711929Publication date: 24-3-2024.

[14]The strength of the Jordanian state and the stability of its political system are the result of the people's awareness, as shown at the following link:https://www.ammonnews.net/article/950750Publication date: 27-9-2025.

[15] Yazan Dakhallah Haddadin, A Reading on the Stability of Jordan, at the following link:https://alrai.com/article/10862075Publication date: 29-12-2022.

[16]Amin Al-Mashaqbeh, Factors of Political Stability in the Kingdom, previous source.

[17]Mohamed El Hadi Saleh, Political Participation in Libya: Between Readiness and Repression, Transformations Journal, University of Ouargla, Algeria, Issue 1, 2019, pp. 53-54.

[18]Hamza Brabeh, How State Failure Affected Stability in Libya, Journal of the University of Ouargla, Algeria, Issue 1, 2023, pp. 453-455.

[19]Marai Ali, The Problem of Sustainable Development and its Impact on Political Life in Libya, available at:https://www.acrseg.org/41865?utm_source=chatgpt.com. Published on 6-5-2022.

and loyalty to the nation must surpass all other ties, such as loyalty to the clan or group. This crisis is also linked to the level of social awareness, as it leads to a decline in the collective perception of shared destiny and common belonging. This weakens awareness of the common good and increases conflicts between individuals. Furthermore, a weak national identity reduces the effectiveness of social awareness and makes individuals less able to participate in building values that support political and social development. This crisis stems from several causes.[20]Among the most important are:

- Class disparity: The sharp class division between the groups of society generates a conflict of interests between social classes, as feelings of resentment have become prevalent among the majority against the minority. The deprived groups, which constitute the majority, view the ruling authority as merely a tool to preserve the privileges of the rich, which has had a negative impact on identity. In addition to the repercussions resulting from globalization and privatization, which have increased the severity of this crisis, class disparity is also reflected in social consciousness, as this disparity leads to deepening the gap in perception between the groups of society, as it weakens the sense of belonging and citizenship, and thus spreads feelings of frustration and isolation among the deprived groups, which limits their participation in life matters, including participation in political affairs.

- Ethnic diversity: The artificial borders created after colonialism in many countries of the world have created a kind of multi-ethnicity, which has led to multiple loyalties. Moreover, the wars, tribal, sectarian, and ethnic conflicts, and political unrest witnessed by some countries have led to a fragmentation in the issue of loyalty. This diversity also contributes to weakening social bonds and the values of coexistence and tolerance, leading to the spread of stereotypes and a decline in societal awareness of the unity of national destiny.[21.]

- Economic and cultural backwardness: The clear disparity between developed and developing countries, both economically and culturally, has negatively impacted the concept of identity, leading to a lack of confidence in the foundations of national identity in Third World countries. Backwardness has become the prevailing characteristic in thought, which has affected national identity and consequently weakens the individual's understanding of the importance of community participation. Values of dependency and subservience prevail, thus limiting the development of political and social awareness in the individual.[22]

  B_The problem of political participation: The failure or inadequacy of modernization processes in building a democratic system that transcends traditional authorities is largely due to the problem of weak political participation, which is one of the most important pillars of political development. Instead of involving all members of society in political life, we find a low level of participation and the inability of individuals to express their opinions clearly. This deficiency in participation, which is a real challenge to political development and to achieving social awareness that positively impacts effective political development, must be acknowledged. The problem of political participation is rooted in the absence of a high degree of political awareness among broad sectors, which reinforces the problem of illiteracy and backwardness at the intellectual and social levels. The challenge is further increased by the restriction of media and expression freedoms, the freezing of the role of political organizations, parties, and interest groups, and the weak practices of civil society in monitoring power. All of this limits the ability of political institutions to absorb societal forces, creating an environment that repels rather than attracts participation in the political process.[23]

  The legitimacy crisis This crisis arises from the citizens' rejection of a particular political system, considering it illegitimate. It is related to the nature of power and the responsibilities of the government, as the relationship between central and local authority is affected, as is the extent of the role of the ruling apparatus and the role of the army in political life. When constitutions are not respected, or when there are undemocratic constitutions, or when there is no real separation of powers and no peaceful transfer of power, as the transfer of power is through a military coup, or the organization of formal referendums and fraudulent and unfair elections, all these factors lead to a loss of social awareness, and then the crisis of legitimacy appears, and this is reflected negatively on political development.

  H- Distribution crisis: This problem relates to the political system's inability to distribute the returns and burdens of development properly and equally. This problem increases in developing societies when foreign experiences are transferred without regard to the specificities and requirements of these societies' realities. Increased social awareness and effective political development cannot occur in isolation from authenticity and cultural identity, but rather through political awareness and adapting political values to keep pace with development.[24.]

2- **Ways to address the challenges of political development and enhance social awareness**

   Addressing the challenges that hinder political development and promoting social awareness requires adopting a set of measures that ensure a balance between institutional development and societal awareness, thus contributing to consolidating effective participation and political stability.[25.]

- Working to develop the efficiency of responding to the demands of justice requires providing the system with the necessary capabilities to respond fairly to popular demands related to participation, equality, and the application of distributive justice, thus removing obstacles to political development and strengthening social awareness.

- Working to enhance the system's flexibility and adaptability requires a continuous search for ways to develop the political system's capabilities, to increase its ability to absorb societal changes and then provide effective solutions, which supports political development and meets the aspirations of social awareness.

- Ensuring institutional independence through consensus, as governmental institutions with autonomy must be established within a framework of general political consensus, because the system's lack of such independent institutions hinders its ability to absorb changes and address the challenges of awareness and development.

- Building a comprehensive and inclusive national identity requires focusing efforts on stimulating a spirit of rationality and positivity that believes in the law, and guiding individuals towards a unified loyalty to society that transcends sub-loyalties, thus supporting political development and forming a solid foundation for social awareness.

a. Working to develop the legislative framework and support participation. This requires reviewing and updating the laws that regulate public affairs, providing strong incentives for popular participation, and reorganizing public institutional structures to address the challenges of political development.

[20]   Hammam Taha, The Crisis of Cultural Diversity in Arab Societies: Identity Wars Derail Hopes for Sustainable Development, available at:https://www.mominoun.com/article. Publication date: 13-2-2023.

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[22]Thanaa Fouad Abdullah, Mechanisms of Democratic Change in the Arab World, Center for Arab Unity Studies, 2000, pp. 2050-206.

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[24]Osama Al-Ghazali, Political Parties in the Third World, Alam Al-Maarefa, Kuwait, 1987, p. 30.

[25]For further information, see: Osama Al-Ghazali, Political Parties in the Third World, previous source, p. 87; and Ahmed Saeed Nawfal, article in the Jordanian newspaper Al-Ghad, June 29.-2006.

b. Activating communication tools to shape awareness: The work of communication tools must be activated and their material technologies developed, given their vital role in spreading ideas that bring about social and political change in societies, which positively affects the structure of human and political awareness to support authority and achieve stability.

c. Achieving equality in rights and duties among all citizens, regardless of their different affiliations, and not viewing the state from the perspective of personal interests.

d. Activating the role of parties as a constructive partner and facilitating their work, as this requires the establishment of political parties that are strong and capable of working in a healthy environment, far from blind fanaticism and monopolizing the attribute of patriotism, while ensuring the participation of citizens in decision-making through constitutional institutions, and dealing with parties as a major partner in political life and not as a competing entity, which supports political development and enhances democratic awareness.

e. Activating the role of civil society institutions, women and youth in political life because it leads to creating a political culture that is aware of its responsibility in civil society.

f. Enacting legislation and laws that protect the rights of individuals, whether in terms of private individual freedoms or laws related to political parties and elections, ensuring that everyone can fully exercise their political rights.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of public policies in any country is inseparable from the level of social awareness among its citizens. This awareness forms the basis upon which trust is built between the state and society, and thus determines the extent of the success of policies in achieving political development and institutional stability. The comparison between the Jordanian and Libyan cases showed that the high level of social awareness in Jordan was a decisive factor in enhancing the ability of the political system to adapt and maintain its stability, while the weakness of this awareness in Libya led to the stumbling of political development and the exacerbation of institutional crises. Therefore, building an enlightened social awareness based on the values of participation and responsibility is a fundamental condition for the success of public policies and the achievement of sustainable political stability in any country.

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