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The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Policy Making: the Case of Anti-Sexual Harassment Legislation in Egypt

A Thesis Submitted to Public Policy and Administration Department in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters for Public Administration

By

Injie Swailam

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dear family and friends who stood by me, inspired and motivated me to keep going. Your encouragement has made all the difference. You are my cheerleaders.

To my dear parents who have instilled in me values of commitment, love of service and helping others. This is for my father who taught me to never take anything for granted and to analyze everything. This is for my mother who taught me to love unconditionally and to never give up. This thesis is dedicated to my brother who, although far away, is always in my heart. This is for your belief and trust in me, and your continuous encouragement and inspiration to keep going.

To my loving husband and life partner whose love and motivation helped me pass so much. To all the times he believed in me and helped me overcome challenges to bring out the best from within me. This is to my husband who helped me to look within me and stood by me through my journey. Your commitment and support to my dream has made it happen.

To my lovely daughter whose little arms wrapped around me gave me all the strength to become better and do my best, hoping I can make her feel proud and instill in her the love of knowledge and education.

To everyone who is working hard to help develop Egypt and making it a better place.
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ABSTRACT

Egypt has recently seen several high profile unfortunate incidents were women and girls were attacked, sexually abused and harassed. This thesis studies the role that NGOs play in impacting anti-sexual harassment legislation in Egypt. It addresses participatory policy making and the complex relationship between state and NGOs. Challenges, concerns and considerations to collaborative work between the two are presented. The study proposes a conceptual framework for the different strategies that NGOs use to influence policy making. The method used is qualitative, through interviews with Egyptian NGOs working on the issue. Collaborative, confrontational, legitimacy building, community representation, advocacy, media engagement, partnerships and program implementation are all strategies that guide the conceptual framework and the study. The thesis argues that the strategies and approaches adopted by NGOs have an effect on their level of involvement in policy making. The main finding of the study is that the more NGOs are working on becoming partners of state and avoiding confrontational strategies that could jeopardize their legitimacy and ability to represent the people, the more they become partners in policy making. NGOs need to be aware of their potential and their ability to bring innovative approaches to becoming part of policy reform. Their relationships with their beneficiaries, state and media can indicate whether or not they are legitimate actors of policy making. Understanding that policy reform is a long complicated process and that there is a gap and lack of trust between government and NGOs, is strategic for the later to identify schemas to overcome this. With recent developments of law modifications and national strategies in Egypt, this study is important to conceptualize strategies and approaches for future endeavors of civil society in policy making.
I. Introduction

Sexual harassment is a serious problem in Egypt that received media attention in the last four years. With a reported percentage of 99.3% of women experiencing at least one form of sexual harassment in Egypt (UN Women, 2013), it is considered a wakeup call for all those involved in dealing with the issue. Mob attacks on women in public spaces and demonstrations have been witnessed after the January Revolution in 2011; alarming Egyptians to the intensity of the problem. Several NGOs and initiatives have sprung up in reaction to the problem of sexual harassment in Egypt. In addition a new state approach to handling the issue was set where the government issued law modifications and a national strategy to combat sexual harassment.

The intensity of the problem of sexual harassment is growing in the last four years after the break of the 25th of January Revolution; the responsibility of NGOs working on the problem has grown. With this comes the very important question of; what role do NGOs in Egypt play in creating policy change and why? With anti-sexual harassment policies being set out by government after the Arab Spring, a deeper look understanding what course of actions do NGOs take in Egypt to impact policy making, the challenges they face, and opportunities they have; will eventually create knowledge for both civil society and state on what could be done and what needs to be avoided in participatory policy making processes. The aim of this study is to develop an understanding of the role that civil society in Egypt play to impact anti-sexual harassment legislation. The goal is to identify the strategies and activities that NGOs working on the topic of sexual harassment and women safety in Egypt, take to influence policy makers.
The study focuses on the new anti-sexual harassment law modifications issued by State after the 25th of January Revolution of criminalizing sexual harassment in Egypt. The role of civil society in impacting these policies is the core of the study. A literature review on public participation for policy making is presented. Strategies implemented by NGOs to impact policy making that have been presented through scholarly research or through case studies of both success and failure for NGOs in creating policy change, are presented creating the theoretical framework. This framework was applied to NGOs working on combating sexual harassment in Egypt, to understand what role do they play in the policy making process.

The study builds on qualitative data, where leading staff at NGOs working on the issue of sexual harassment have been interviewed to understand from them what roles do they see themselves doing and why they chose the course of actions that they did. The interviews allowed for a better understanding of the challenges that NGOs face, the points of strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities to become part of policy making. Their aspirations for the future of combating sexual harassment in Egypt and how they saw their role, is also a focus of the qualitative research.

The analysis of the interviews seeks to address the ability and potential for NGOs in Egypt to impact sexual harassment policies. The strategies currently used are analyzed against those presented in the conceptual framework. Connections between successful and failure strategies are contrasted with those of the interviewed NGOs. The analysis allows for an understanding of the roles that NGOs in Egypt play to influence policy which is important to a country with an unclear future in regards to women and their status in the Egyptian society. Understanding the accessibility of civil society to
the policy making arena will map out new perspectives for the future role that they can play in participatory policy making. Analysis on why civil society choose the course of actions and strategies that they did gives an in-depth understanding on how NGOs in Egypt can work on their role in impacting policy making for the future.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of sexual harassment of Egypt has been growing rapidly with research revealing the disturbing numbers of sexual harassment victims. News on incidents and footage of the victims presented the severity of the issue drawing the attention of public opinion. In addition, there have been several initiatives and NGOs that started to highlight the problem taking some steps towards a solution. In addition, the state has recently issued policies criminalizing sexual harassment and called for a National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women that was issued on April 28th, 2015. The study sees that there is needed development in research on the role that NGOs in Egypt play to influence the process of policy making. The problem here is that a disconnection from the people or inadequate public participation in the process could jeopardize the effectiveness and the implementation of the policies made. Understanding what activities and strategies do NGOs in Egypt have towards becoming participants of policy making is critical to help NGOs figure out opportunities to seize and challenges to overcome. With the new laws, the growing interest from civil society to the issue, and the alarming numbers of victims; research on studying and documenting the strategies used by NGOs is needed to act as guidance and reference for future endeavors by civil society for policy change.
Justification for the Research

A research on the relationship between the state and NGOs in regards to policy making and to what level public participation is practiced is much needed especially at this moment of time when the relationship between state and NGOs is being shaped after the 25th of January Revolution. First, there has been little research on the dynamics between state and the different stakeholders during policy making and public participation in Egypt. Second, there is little qualitative research available documenting the process and dynamics of policy making in Egypt and on the issue of sexual harassment.

Third, there are a high percentage of women in Egypt who have experienced at least one form of sexual harassment, making a large number of the Egyptian population affected by the problem. Fourth, the Egyptian state after the Arab Spring has showed high interest in the issue by passing out new law modifications, and calling for a national strategy to tackle the problem in response to the great rise of interest from civil society and interest groups. This interest from the different stakeholders towards the issue of sexual harassment requires research and analysis to understand what role do NGOs play to initiate, contribute, impact and/or influence such polices. Fifth, this study will provide insights for future endeavors of NGOs and policy makers with reflections and acquired knowledge as to what entails for participatory policy making in Egypt. This study will provide analysis and qualitative documentation of the process of policy making and the dynamics between the different stakeholders, providing guidance for future endeavors.
Research Objective

The research looks into the role of NGOs in impacting policy making in Egypt. It identifies what does policy making mean while focusing on the participatory processes, as well as understanding the role of NGOs in shaping those policies. It looks at the activities of the NGOs interviewed and the strategies that they undertake to reach their mission. The problem of sexual harassment in Egypt is the case study, listing all the recent advancements in sexual harassment and the role of civil society in combating it. The central focus of the study answers the question; what role do NGOs in Egypt play in anti-sexual harassment legislation? It also attempts to find answers to the following questions:

- What are the participatory policy making theories and how are they linked to public participation for anti-anti-sexual harassment legislation in the Egyptian context?
- What role do NGOs play in regards to the issue of sexual harassment in Egypt? What are their strategies to influence policy making?
- What are the dynamics of the relationship between state and NGOs in the context of anti-anti-sexual harassment legislation?
- How can the case of sexual harassment in Egypt and the potential role of NGOs help inform future policy making processes?

This introductory chapter provides an overview of the thesis and the statement of the problem, followed by a background section providing context to the issue of sexual harassment in Egypt. The second chapter provides an overview of the relationship between state and NGOs giving context to the gap between them in the literature.
review. The third chapter presents the conceptual framework and the fourth presents the methodology used for the research and. The fifth chapter presents the findings from the interviews and analysis in regards to the strategies presented in the conceptual framework. Finally, the sixth chapter concludes and presents recommendations for future involvement of NGOs in policy making.
II. Background

This section gives an overview on what sexual harassment is, and the intensity of the problem in Egypt. It also presents what were the important highlights for the issue in Egypt in 2014. Then it looks at the work of civil society in the form of NGOs and the role they played with the state regarding the new law amendments that were issued in the same year, and the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women.

Sexual Harassment: an Overview

Sexual harassment has been defined as the “behaviors that violates, derogates, demeans, or humiliates an individual based on sex or gender” (Lopez et al., 2009). Research done on this topic only focused on the sexual harassment in the workforce only and little research has been done on the phenomena in public spaces. In most cases the harassment is done by men and the victims are women (Lopez et al., 2009). It is usually done using the power of the male whether through authority or power forcing women and punishing them if they refuse (Amin and Darrag, 2011). “It is critical to recognize initially that sexual harassment includes nonphysical actions such as sexually suggestive comments; it is not limited to pinches, pats, leers, or grabs” (Crocker, 1983). NGOs working on sexual harassment have also identified sexual harassment as “any form of unwelcomed words and/or actions of a sexual nature that violate a person’s body, privacy, or feelings and make that person feel uncomfortable, threatened, insecure, scared, disrespected, startled, insulted, intimidated, abused, offended, or objectified” (Harassmap, 2010).
Street harassment is identified as violence against women from all different backgrounds through “heckling, being whistled at, rated, propositioned, leered at, fondled, and in other ways assaulted and humiliated by men as they go about their daily lives in public spaces” (Lara, 2007). Being a violent act; it may include “touching, grabbing, and caressing a woman’s private areas” (Peoples, 2008) in addition to verbal harassment that includes sounds, kisses, and sexual comments that are performed on a daily basis (Peoples, 2008).

In recent years attention to the problem in Egypt culminated with the 2006 Eid El Fitr mob harassment attacks in downtown where several women were injured, raped and molested, and for the first time media presented the problem in the public (Amar, 2011; Ebaid, 2013; Ilahi, 2008; Peoples, 2008). In Egypt, the problem has been heightening. With a reported percentage of 99.3 % of women having experienced some form of sexual harassment (UN Women, 2013). Some have argued that the reasons behind this alarming phenomenon have been identified into; the rise of unemployment in Egypt and the need for men to experience their masculinity through harassing women (Peoples, 2008 and UN Women, 2013). Others see that sexual harassment is the result of a legitimate societal acceptance of men being more powerful and dominating than women (Farley, 1978 and MacKinnon, 1979).

According to the ECWR survey, in 2008, 13.4 per cent of Egyptian men admitted having participated in physical harassment, 43.6 per cent of which confessed having verbally harassing women in public, and 49.8 per cent having performed sexual gestures (Hassan, Komsan, and Shoukry 2008). With the Egyptian law being very vague, and the alarming figures of the intensity of the problem in Egypt, voices and
initiatives have raised calling for stricter laws and proper documentation of the problem (Hassan, Komsan, and Shoukry 2008). Several NGOs have worked on campaigns, reports, and programs to combat the painful issues.

Recent Sexual-Harassment-Related Developments in Egypt

In 2014, there have been several legal and political updates, laws and events regarding the problem. This part will present the events and developments of the issue of sexual harassment in Egypt along with the gains and the challenges of such events.

In June 2014, Adly Mansour, the then President of state issued a law that clearly states sexual harassment as a crime. The perpetrator if convicted can be punished up to 5 years in prison and pay a fine that does not exceed 50,000 Egyptian pounds (Abdel Aziz, 2014). In response to the anti-sexual harassment law one police official responded saying that the police will do their utmost to apply the law however, the problem is in the culture of the community (Kingsley, 2014). Although these amendments are considered a breakthrough in the epidemic issue of sexual harassment yet many human and women rights activists and organization saw the shortcomings and the limitations of the law as it is limited to stalking or following a women and communicating sexual terms (El-Rifae, 2014). This in itself is limiting to the whole issue and to other forms of sexual harassment. Another critique of the new law is that the focus is on the perpetrator’s intentions that are again limited and identified in the law and not on the harms that the victim experiences (El-Rifae, 2014).

A key incident was on the same day of the inauguration of President Abdel Fatah El Sisi where a large mob has sexually harassed at least 9 women (El-Rifae, 2014).
People around the world saw painful footage of violence as a victim was being transformed from the mob to the police (El-Rifae, 2014). El-Refai sees that the issue here was politicized where Sisi visited one of the victims and condemned such actions with large media attention on the incident (2014). Sisi described the accident as a new thing to the Egyptian society (El-Rifae, 2014). The opponents of such description such as El-Refai see that this undermines the problem that has been studied and documented at least in the last three years since the break of the revolution (2014). Sisi then ordered the minister of interior to strictly deal with the issue (El-Refai, 2014). Since then, the National Council of Women (NCW) has worked with representatives of the different ministries and representatives from civil society on the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women which was finalized and announced on April 28, 2015 (AswatMasriya, 2015).

In March of the same year, a girl was mob attacked while walking in Cairo University. After the incident was taped and gone viral on social media, Dr. Gaber Nasser; the president of Cairo University was faced with lots of criticism after explaining on TV that the victim was responsible of the assault due to her clothes that was provocative in his opinion and that the girl along with the boys will be punished (Kingsley, 2014). As a result, Cairo University worked on a sexual harassment policy that was a partnership between the university, NGOs, faculty and student bodies (Harassmap, 2014)

Since there has been “very little public discussion on the topic, and the state has typically denied the breadth and severity of the problem,” (El-Rifae, 2014) it is
important to see how civil society groups and initiatives have been involved in the process of policy making on sexual harassment in Egypt.

**Anti-Sexual Harassment Activism in Egypt**

The problem of sexual harassment is big in Egypt where women were seen assaulted in large gathering in public spaces and in front of people (Langohr, 2015). Many initiatives were created to combat this phenomena in the streets of Egypt where “new forms of activism have emerged that increase citizens’ ability to directly combat pervasive social problems and to successfully pressure official institutions to alter policies” (Langohr, 2015). In the past three years and after the outskirt of former president Mubarak, “Groups of male and female activists in their twenties and early thirties exhort bystanders on the streets to intervene when they witness harassment” (Langhor, 2015).

Taking these assaults to the media more groups were seen coming out to speak on satellite TV programs about the problem appearing on programs (Langhor, 2015). These media outlets “have extensively covered public sexual violence, directly challenging officials for their failure to combat it while featuring the work of anti-harassment and anti-assault groups in a positive light” (Langhor, 2015). These were great opportunities for these groups to come out and speak up about their values and the solutions that they have for the issue providing them with what Langhor describes as the “force multiplier for their message” (2015).

In addition these initiatives and NGOs have used social media such as Facebook and YouTube to document the incidents making the problem go viral where millions can access it online. “In March 2014, video of a Cairo University student subjected to
mob harassment was circulated by the group ShuftTaharrush (a volunteer based initiative of youth working on sexual harassment in the streets) and broadcast on several shows” (Langhor, 2015). The activities of these groups and their work with the media have contributed to the new policies that came out in 2014 previously mentioned. In addition we can see that these advocacy groups are contributing to the policy created in Cairo University” (Langhor, 2015). The combat on sexual harassment has been successful in the past three years where the pressure created from interest groups and the involvement of the media to promote for their cause has created policies and room for collaboration between state and NGOs.
III. Public Participation in Policy Making and the Role of NGOs: Review of the Literature

The literature review of this study will look at policy making, its impact, how the process of policy making is done, and the role of NGOs. Policies are made, but the process of making these policies could impact its effectiveness and legitimacy. Therefore the concept of participatory policy making is presented and analyzed. Since participatory policy making involves different stakeholders in the discourse, we apply this on NGOs to understand their role in policy making. The literature gives a background on what NGOs really mean in regards to civil society and their impact. Then it will map out participatory policy making and the relationship between state and NGOs.

Defining NGOs

NGOs are defined as an organization that is “not only non-governmental, but also non-for-profit” (Thomas et al, 2001). Representing a need of society, or attempting to address an issue that people are facing tends to be the main reasons for existence(Thomas et al, 2001). Unlike corporations, not aiming to increase the wealth of its shareholders, and not working to achieve the vision of a ruling government characterize NGOs. Therefore, being both non-for-profit and non-governmental, makes NGOs part of civil society (Thomas et al, 2001).

The World Bank (1989) defined NGOs as “private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development”. NGOs are
usually referred to in a collective manner, however, they are different in size, shape, issues of interest, activities, and the way they identify their problems (Cleary, 1997 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). However, others are representations of the state and are known as government-sponsored non-governmental organizations (GONGOs) (Fitzduff and Church, 2004) which would be most probably allies to the state.

**Defining Impact**

The identification of impact could be tricky when studying the role of NGOs in policy making. The impact of NGOs could be direct where they are being involved in or part of the policy negotiations. It could also be through lobbying and advocacy work. However way, it is important to note that impact is creating change from one state to another. “Impacting policy means; playing a significant role in affecting policy-related decision making and actions” (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

In order to understand the role of NGOs in impacting anti-sexual harassment legislation, we will need to look at what does policy making mean. This will help inform on where can NGOs participate in the policy making process. Policy making has always been seen as a process that consists of steps and stages for policy makers to be able to present policies and laws.

The literature review will consist of the following two sections that will be presented simultaneously. The first section is on the idea of policy making and how participatory policy making is a tool for legitimate and effective policies. The second section looks at the dynamics between state and NGOs and the concerns and challenges they face.
I. Public Participation in Policy Making

Public Participation in policy making is a tool that is used to ensure legitimacy and effectiveness of the process of policy making and the policies themselves. Understanding the need for participatory policy making, its definition, and methods will help build the framework for the study. This is further elaborated in the following points:

- Public participation as a method for Effective Policy Making
- Public Participation – What it really means?
- The Map for Public Participation (please change below too)
- A process of Deliberation

Before looking at public participation as an effective method for effective policy making, it is important to understand where does this idea comes from. Governance has been identified as the most important topic in policy making scholars where some referring to it as the “watch word for the millennium” (Bingham et. al, 2005). Governance has been identified as “not simply about elected representatives making policy; it is crucially about the processes that stake-holders use in determining what shape policy, its implementation, and its enforcement will take” (Bingham, et. al, 2005). Therefore, governance is the process where policies are created and implemented based on shared values from the different stakeholders (Rosenau, 1992). Since governance involves shared values and goals of the different stakeholders, it is therefore important to study public participation as process for policy making.
1. Public participation as a Method for Effective Policy Making

There has been a realization that policy making is initiated and practiced as a response to certain events (Hallsworth, 2011). Incidents, challenges and problems occur and interest groups call for policy changes so that the state responds to these calls. Hallsworth argues that policy making cannot take place on its own where the state is the only one responsible and controller of the problem as this might lead them to reaching decisions that are far from the needs and capabilities of both the state and the different interest groups (Hallsworth et al., 2014). He also highlights the complexity of all stakeholders and players (such as civil society, media, interest groups, and business) in being involved in the process to reach a 360 degrees accountability through transparency and learning (Hallsworth, 2011).

Looking at policy making as accurate consequential steps to be followed, is very basic and does not consider the complexity of the relationship between the issue and the stakeholders involved. “For some policy issues, an effective solution may emerge from the way different actors adapt and react to each other, rather than from a central government plan” (Hallsworth, 2011). A call for a more realistic approach to dealing with policy issues is very crucial to the success of the policy. Being realistic means; to be able to involve and work with all the different stakeholders in regards to what is really needed by the people and the level of attainability from the policy implementers. Policy making when thought of in a wholesome manner could result into more resilient change where better results could emerge from the way the different stakeholders and interest groups react and interact to and with each other (Hallsworth, 2011).
2. Public Participation – What it really means?

The main idea here is not to focus on the policy and evaluate its implementation, but rather to focus on the way the policy was created and to what extent it is inclusive. It is important to realize that policy making is not a one man show, but involves all the different stakeholders and makes best understanding and benefit from the dynamic relationship between all interest groups. This leads us directly to public participation; a tool for policy making that creates policies that are legitimate, effective and accountable (Bishop and Davis, 2002). When considering the needs and values of the different stakeholders, it legitimizes the policy making process and therefore the policy in itself (Renn, 2004).

There is a general belief that “individuals have the right to be informed, consulted, involved, and to express their views on matters which affect them personally” (Clark, 1994). Highlighting the importance of public participation in this section will look at the definition of public participation and will represent the different forms and mechanisms of involving the public.

Public participation can be generally defined as the “practice of consulting and involving members of the public in the agenda-setting, decision-making, and policy-forming activities of organizations or institutions responsible for policy development” (Rowe and Frewer, 2004). There is now a shift from the idea that policy making needs to come from the elite population downward to the public but it is rather a bottomup process (Rowe and Frewer, 2004). Due to the decrease in public confidence and trust in their elected policy makers and the need to represent the public interest, governments have started to move towards more public participation (Bishop and
Davis, 2002). The idea of legitimacy and more citizen control has become objectives for policy makers (Bishop and Davis, 2002). State is therefore now interested in sharing the control and responsibility with the people where the less the people are involved the more angry and dissatisfied they can become (Rowe and Frewer, 2004).

3. A Map for Public Participation

This takes us into looking at the different ways that public participation can be applied. In reference to the “ladder of citizen participation” (Arnstein, 1969 and Bishop and Davis, 2002) a map of public participation was presented by Bishop and Davis displaying the different methods for public participation, the variables that need to be considered, the objectives of public participation and a description of participation. Public participation is cored to transferring power to the people (Arnstein, 1969) where the ladder of participation is categorized into three levels starting with manipulation; at the bottom and is considered non-participation, followed by informing, consultation, and placation; in the middle as degrees of tokenism and finally partnership; delegated power and citizen control at the top of the ladder representing high levels of citizen control (Bishop and Davis, 2002).

When “nobodies become some bodies with enough power to make the target institutions become responsive to their views, aspirations, and needs” (Arnstein, 1969) this is true participatory policy making. The argument presented here from these theoretical views of participation, is giving power to the people and therefore becoming accountable for their choices. In that sense, giving power to the people is directly linked to the 360 degrees of accountability in the strategic systems leadership (Hallsworth, 2011). For participation to be meaningful and have the required effects,
people need to be part of decisions on important issues (Johnstone, 2000). Public participation is measured on a ruler where sharing information and consultation are forms of minimum participation, and partnership, delegation and control consequently provide maximum participation (Bishop and Davis, 2002).

4. The Process of Deliberation

Further on participatory policy making, Renn presents the concept of deliberative decision making, which means that decisions need to be based on a discussion between different viewpoints (2004). This discussion is essentially a discourse where all different stakeholders have equal opportunity to express their viewpoints and discuss that of others without any domination (Habermas, 1970). Renn (2004) identifies a discourse as successful if its participants fulfill the following points:

- Stakeholders need consensus on the method that they would use for decision making (voting, consultation, focus groups..etc.)
- Make sure there is representation of all stakeholders
- Interpret the facts and evidence based on an agreed logic
- Sharing and communicating clearly the agendas of each stakeholder and what they want to reach out of these discussions
- Ensuring the transparency of the process

In the case of the sexual harassment legislation, a representation of all the stakeholders from state, policy implementers, NGO workers, victims and harassers need to be part of the discourse agreeing on the goal they want to reach and the method (ibid.). They also need to be clear on their intentions of being part of this discourse, and transparent with their process (ibid.). Having everyone on the same
table to fully understand the problem, offer and discuss solutions could be very utopian. This view has been considered very idealistic where it is very hard to implement in real life because it discards the reality of power struggles and the political social contexts of policy making (Renn, 2004). When applied to participatory policy making there appears to be a gap between state and NGOs in regards to policy making. However, Hebermas’s (1970) view has created a benchmark for what is considered the best process for decision making and discourse (Renn, 2004).

In reality, Renn (2004) argues, it is always those who are able to articulate and express themselves and their problems that end up participating in such discussions. These are usually related to the elite society who are well connected and properly educated (Cleary, 1997, Fitzduff and Church, 2004 and Reem, 2004). This results into more exclusion of those who are concerned with the problem leaving them outside of the discussions that will eventually create policies that would directly affect them and their future (Cleary, 1997, Fitzduff and Church, 2004 and Reem, 2004). “It is therefore mandatory that those whose interests and values are affected by the respective policy action not only included in the discourse but also given all assistance possible to make their voice heard and convincingly framed before entering into the exchange of arguments providing equal opportunities” (Renn, 2004).

Renn goes on and presents the benefits of deliberation in participatory policy decision making:

“enhance understanding, generate new options, decrease hostility and aggressive attitudes among the participants, explore new problem framing,
enlighten legal policy makers, produce competent, fair and optimized solution packages and facilitate consensus, tolerated consensus and compromise” (2004).

To conclude this section, public participation is important to ensure shared responsibility, (Hallsworth, 2011) build more trust and legitimize the policies presented (Bishop and Davis, 2002). In order to ensure the effectiveness of public participation, it needs to be a process in which the people are encouraged to express their concerns and opinions regarding the policy issues (Clark, 1994). It also needs to ensure that those expressed concerns and opinions are taken into consideration in order to build trust (Bishop and Davis, 2002) and shared accountability and responsibility (Hallsworth, 2001).

II. Dynamics, Concerns and Context for NGOs and Policy Making: A Review of the Literature

The previous section for the literature review has highlighted the importance of participatory policy making. To build on this, this section will present a review of the literature on the dynamics, concerns, and context for NGOs in policy making. It also studies the relationship between state and NGOs through the following:

- The Relationship between State and NGOs
  - NGOs are Knowledgeable about the Issue
  - A Gap between State and NGOs
  - Lack of Trust between State and NGOs
  - State and NGOs have Different Views on Legitimacy
- Concerns and Considerations for Collaborative Work
1. The Relationship between State and NGOs

With the growing role of NGOs globally as important partners in policy making, it is essential to identify their current status, where they stand in regards to policy making, and the potential they have that could inform their future endeavors. Moving from the situation of having no influence in policy making, NGOs have become active players where their role grew and governments have started to change their attitude towards them (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). NGOs have formed partnerships with state on several topics becoming their consultants on policy issues (Fitzduff and Church, 2004) which has led to relocating policy players on the map of policy making. These collaborations have led to opening channels of information sharing. Sharing of information between state and NGOs as consultants to state, NGOs have loosened their inferiority status (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

With the growing impact of NGOs on the map of policy making in general, it is important to see their role in decision making. Since NGOs are part of civil society, then it is critical to bring them to policy discussions and decision making based on the literature of public participation (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Public participation not only empowers stakeholders and ensures commitment in the implementation stage; it provides legitimacy to the policy and the process of reaching such policies (Bishop and Davis, 2002). “NGOs design a unique type of public sphere to enlist popular participation suitable for developing countries” (Ghosh, 2009). Since they are considered the representation of civil society and the conscious of state, involving
them in the process creates credibility to state and the policy itself (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

**NGOs are Knowledgeable about the Issues**

Another dimension of the importance of NGOs is the great amount of local information and lessons learned from their direct work with the people (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). NGOs working closely and on a daily basis with victims of sexual harassment in Egypt give them great access to information about the problem. Due to this access, they are able to come up with creative and innovative solutions contrary to those of the state that usually have a bureaucratic nature (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). To better present the dynamics between state and NGOs come the question: Who has the right to decide upon the future of the people determining what is right for them, especially when these decisions could have a great impact on society (Renn, 2004). This highlights the importance of NGOs representing the needs of the people where decisions are not based on opinions of the elite individuals working in the NGOs.

**A Gap between State and NGOs**

From the above it seems that the dynamics between NGOs and state and the levels of cooperation and communication between the two has developed over the years. However, there are still some gaps between the two. “Government technical personnel undermine NGOs’ capacity in policy analysis, while NGOs criticize government personnel concerning the delivery of services, accusing them of being corrupt and bureaucratic” (Nabacwa, 2010). NGOs participate differently in policy making depending on the context, type of policy issue, and the activities of the NGO.
difference in the way each view the role of the other could be creating a gap. NGOs see themselves as the ultimate access to the people and are most aware of the needs of the people more than the governments they operate under (Cleary, 1997). This gap is large where both sides complain that they are exclusively the group that has the solution to the problems (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

**Lack of Trust between State and NGOs**

The issue of lack of trust between state and NGOs is also important to understand. While NGOs see themselves as the ultimate representation of the people, state does not trust the intensions of NGOs (Cleary, 1997). Governments are suspicious that NGOs and their donors are here to take over their role of providing public service (Cleary, 1997). There are several reasons that lead to this lack of trust; some due to the activities of the organization and its financial sources (Cleary, 1997). NGOs are seen as opponents to the ruling of the government, instead of stakeholders in society (Cleary, 1997). States see that NGOs cannot manage development independently (Cleary, 1997). They also see that by always working with a certain working group alone – unlike state that serves the public – this means that they can risk bypassing others (Cleary, 1997). When applied to the topic of sexual harassment, NGOs working only with the victims might not serve everyone else affected like; the families, the future generations; and the harassers themselves, unlike state who is accountable to serve the public.

On another dimension of the gap in the relationship, state tend to monopolize information due to their belief that they alone know what is best for the country (Cleary, 1997), on the other hand, NGOs see that they are the ones who have the
solutions for the problems due to the expertise and their grass root work (Cleary, 1997 and Thomas et al., 2001). Like state, NGOs see that their on-the-ground work gives them access to information about the needs of the people (Cleary, 1997). Access to information is usually limited to the elite in the developing countries making it hard for creating participatory policy debate leading to the inability for the public to determine their future, which then highlights the importance of NGO legitimacy in public presentation (Cleary, 1997).

**State and NGOs have Different Views on Legitimacy**

State sees that they have the legitimacy and the power to create policies, and that NGOs are usually concentrating only on the issues they are working on and are unable to see the big picture (Cleary, 1997). On the other hand, NGOs see that they too are able to represent the problem and find its solutions. They also see that “state officials are in-flexible to new approaches” (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Fitzduff and Church in their book on NGOs role in peace building policy making, see that “NGOs have a great role in identifying the course of policy making if they are both strategic and astute” (2004). NGOs see that their legitimacy in representing the public comes from their proximity to the people they serve (Cleary, 1997) and therefore the experience they have gained from working closely with the needs of their target groups making them feel they are more aware of the needs and ways for providing them (Thomas et al., 2001). However, it has been argued that NGOs in developing countries are part of the elite society as they need to have the human and financial resources to manage projects such as language and education which is naturally available to the privileged in society (Cleary, 1997). This could mean that NGOs which are truly representing the people could impact whether state considers them as legitimate partners in policy.
making. In consideration to this argument, there are NGOs that work closely to the people and therefore are able to represent their needs and solutions to their problems which legitimizes their position in policy making, and there are NGOs that are elitist and do not represent the people making their legitimacy in policy making weaker.

2. Concerns and Considerations to a Collaborative Work

In addition to the gap between government and NGOs, there are several concerns and considerations. These considerations challenge possible collaborations between the two parties. State is concerned about becoming vulnerable and exposed to NGOs while the later have concerns regarding their loyalty to their supporters, agendas, and independence (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). It is very important to understand the challenges when implementing public participation to be able to understand how best these challenges can be overcome (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

State has some concerns regarding the participation of NGOs in policy making:

- They fear that they would lose control over their own agendas and priorities to those of the NGOs, which could mean that NGOs will introduce values or working strategies different than that of the state (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). NGOs working with state need to have a certain direction that they both agree upon. The concern here is that state will not be able to continue work on its agenda and will be required to take on the agenda and values of the NGO (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

- Another concern when working with NGOs is the risk of scrutiny where NGOs might not respect the confidentiality of the conversations with state due to their fear of not becoming committed to their beneficiaries (Fitzduff and
Church, 2004). In many cases, it is very difficult for NGOs to ensure exclusivity of the process of policy making (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Feeling responsible and accountable to their supporters, NGOs might not be able to keep the confidentiality of the matters being discussed with state or policy makers (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

- Governments question the accountability of NGOs to the public as it is not seen as equal to that of state. Government officials are held responsible to the general public whereas NGOs are accountable only to their beneficiaries and funders (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). This could mean that the interests between state and NGOs are different and therefore might lead to challenges in their problem identification and approaches for solutions.

- It is usually elite NGOs that have large financial and administrative resources that get to be involved in the policy making due to their size and impact (Cleary, 1997 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). This could lead to the exclusion of small grass root organizations that work directly with the people on a daily basis (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). In addition, the origin of the NGO can raise concerns in regards to agendas and affect legitimacy. If the NGO is foreign or receives foreign funds, then questions on their representation and motivation arise (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

- Another concern is that NGOs operate in an informal and un-organized manner, working with great flexibility to meet the needs of the people (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Advocating for a certain cause like sexual harassment might challenge the neutrality of NGOs where they would feel loyalty to the needs of the victims they advocate for.
NGOs have concerns in collaborating with state and becoming involved with policy making:

- Becoming partners with state officials might risk the independency as NGOs (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). This could make NGOs need to respond to the need of government and not that of the people, and their values they represent (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).
- It can also lead to scrutiny, where their work and activities would be observed from state officials (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). In addition, they can lose their flexibility and freedom which is a core for their existence (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). It is seen as a concern when NGOs understand and empathize with state officials and that is because it may cause diversion from the needs of their beneficiaries to those of state especially if NGO funding is depending on state (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

Being exposed by state, compromising on their flexibility, and sacrificing their values and mission to the people that support them; are concerns that NGOs have when working with state. In some cases, NGOs working on advocacy and during their struggle for their cause, may become more concerned about the victory and oversee opportunities to reach common ground with state (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Becoming on the opposing side of state in fear of losing loyalty to their representatives can turn the process into a competition to prove the other is wrong and therefore miss out on windows of cooperation.

An understanding of the different perspectives from both state and NGOs is important to ensure that they are addressed during policy making. It is challenging yet
achievable to create a balance between the NGOs’ mission and values on one hand, and on working with policy makers on the other hand. Working together is key to the success of a policy. Both state and NGOs have similar concerns and expectations from the other, yet an understanding of how to reach co-operative and collaborative work for policy making is needed.

3. Context for Understanding NGO Influence

NGOs have a growing influence as presented in the previous sections. This section will present literature on the context that helps NGOs to become more influential. Thomas, Carr and Humphreys (2001) identified the following indicators for the ability of NGOs to impact policy making. They applied it to NGOs to help analyze their influence on policy making. It was applied to NGOs in Africa with a focus on environmental policies. They outlined three points for the context of impacting policy making:

1. The political context and degree of democracy in the country that the NGO is working in
2. The policy that the NGOs are trying to impact
3. The particular activities that the NGOs do that could help them succeed in influencing policy

The degree and level of democracy that is in a country will not have a direct effect on the ability of NGOs to impact policy (Thomas et al., 2001). The level of democracy in a state can identify the amount of freedom and flexibility that NGOs have (Thomas et al., 2001). For example, in an authoritarian state it is usual to find that NGOs become in support of the state and in other cases a direct representation of government. Due to
the uncertainty and lack of trust between the NGOs and the state (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004), this leads to a more careful approach from NGOs and avoiding any confrontations. However, the case studies used in their book showed that NGOs can have influence on policy making in different political contexts (Thomas et al., 2001).

Democratic flexibility from state to NGOs is not a direct determent of the level of impact on policies (Thomas et al., 2001). In other words, NGOs due to their flexible characteristics are able to re-strategize to fit the context that they are in (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). The status of the democracy of the country the NGOs are operating in might not stop them from creating policy change but would only guide its strategies and opportunities they have (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

The second outline relates to the policy issue that the NGOs are trying to impact. The type of policy they are approaching could affect their level influence on policy making (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). The writers have looked at this from three main considerations; the level of interest on the topic from the different stakeholders, the characteristics of the organizations targeted by the NGO, and the timing of approaching the policy in its different stages of policy making (Thomas et al., 2001). The findings were that NGOs can be most successful in impacting policy making when the topic is not a main area of interest for the state (Thomas et al., 2001). The more the topic is peripherally to the government, the more it is easier for NGOs to impact (Thomas et al., 2001).

Second, NGOs have a strong impact when they target areas where state is unable to control on their own, where the issue is large and it cannot be contained by state
solely could be easier for NGOs to become part of the solution (Thomas et al., 2001). Finally, they found out that the timing that the NGOs approach a policy issue, defines whether or not they will be participants where the agenda setting and the implementation stages of policy making are the best stages to strategize policy impact (Thomas et al., 2001). This leaves NGOs two windows of opportunities, first during the agenda setting through their advocacy work, and finally during the implementation stage whether they become partners in the implementation or part of the policy evaluation (Thomas et al., 2001).

Finally, the activities that the NGOs choose to carry out have a direct effect on the level of impact they have on policy making (Thomas et al., 2001). The more NGOs work with their beneficiaries, the more they gain expertise and knowledge, therefore become legitimate players in the policy making (Thomas et al., 2001).
Building on the previous literature review, the study proposes the following theoretical framework which consists of eight proposed strategies and activities that NGOs do to influence policy making. The theoretical framework is based on previous scholarly research by Thomas et al. in 1996, and Fitzduff and Church in 2004 who have presented several case studies for NGO strategies that have been used to impact policy making. Below is a presentation of the theoretical framework for strategies that NGOs have to impact policy making. This framework guided the qualitative research with the interviewed NGOs.
1. Collaborators and Not Critics

In this strategy the following three points are presented as activities and approaches for NGOs to become collaborators and not critics:

- Providing alternatives and positive suggestions,
- Re-framing the issue in a way that does not criticizes state solely, and
- Focusing on implementation

(Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004)

Becoming part of the decision making is very challenging, therefore alternatives for approaching policy change could be seen in the way NGOs approach the policies. Instead of becoming critics of the state, NGOs can become contributors to the policymaking through providing alternatives (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Presenting policy reform should not be in opposition to the state but rather presented in a form that is positive suggestions (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Through the expertise of the NGO’s daily work with the people, they can provide new perspectives and these need to be presented as alternatives. Being on the opposition risks them becoming excluded completely from the process (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

The way that NGOs frame the policy issue can influence policy makers (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Research on the issue can provide further information and findings that can change the course of policy making (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). For example, identifying that the problem of sexual harassment is not in the policies themselves but in the amount of freedom that women have can change the course of action. Reframing the problem by doing research to understand the
problem fully and from different perspectives helps give new insights for policy making (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

Another approach is focusing on the implementation of the policy and trying to create innovative ways to solve it rather than focusing on changing the policy or creating a new one. This is another form of working with state and avoiding confrontation (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). By focusing on the implementation and the framing of the policy, NGOs can become collaborators and not critics to the state, ensuring some level of impact and influence.

### 2. Building Legitimacy

Building legitimacy for NGOs as a strategy to influence policy making is represented in the following points:

- Representing the people,
- Having knowledge and expertise about the issue, and
- Open channels of communication with their beneficiaries.

The idea of NGO legitimacy is an important theme that comes up when looking at the organizations’ ability to impacting policy making. The legitimacy referred to from previous scholarly research, is not that of the NGO being a legal or a registered entity but rather from the activities it runs (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). NGOs are either representing all the public in a general issue or are representatives of a specific group that is affected by an issue (Thomas et al., 2001). It can come from the memberships from the local population that they are advocating
for (Thomas et al., 2001). “NGOs increasingly come to a bargaining position with the state when they enlist popular participation” (Ghosh, 2009).

A source of legitimacy to some NGOs, is; having information and expertise about the issue (Thomas et al., 2001). The relationships created during the work done at the grassroots by the NGO staff are also a source of legitimacy (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). These relationships give NGOs the knowledge and expertise on the issues of those they serve. Knowledge gained from expertise – this is important to identify what needs to be done and can inform state with the information on successful approaches for policy (Cleary, 1997).

Having open channels of communication between the organizations and their beneficiaries contributes to their legitimacy (Cleary, 1997). The more organizations operate in a cell structure of management the more this would lead to enhanced communication where the local interests of the people could be directly reaching the management of the NGOs therefore defining the activities that need to be carried to serve them (Cleary, 1997). In addition, the proximity of the NGO to its people and means to reach them will inform the NGO with the needs of the people (Cleary, 1997).

### 3. Connecting and Partnering with Policy Makers

Personal relationships between NGO staff and state officials, is an important strategy for NGOs that creates a space for both to communicate and discuss the issues (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Face to face meetings have a powerful impact on policy making, where it helps create a common understanding of the problem to be able to put it on the agenda of policy makers (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Giving the credit
to the policy makers (Fitzduff and Church, 2004) is again a successful tactic where it meets the needs of the policy maker of being recognized for their success during their post and that of the NGO in finding a solution to the problem (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). This presents a new approach for NGOs in handling their strategies and activities and in the way they perceive their role in policy making. This is a common strategy where the connections, collaborations and relations that individuals from the NGO have with state (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004) help them speak to them about the issues and bringing them to their attention.

Adopting a partnership approach to influence strategy is a very internal approach through the projects that are done together with state (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). NGOs can have a direct impact on influencing policy makers and promoting for their agendas (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). However, collaboration with government could not be controlled by NGOs because it requires a degree of agreement on the issue and the ways to approach those issues (Thomas, 1996).

4. **Keeping Press Attention**

This is an outward approach where NGOs involve press and media with the issues they are advocating for (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). When the issue highlighted both on the ground and on the media, it creates eventual pressure on the state (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). This pressure is what is referred to agenda setting where the state notices a need for the people and therefore feels the responsibility to respond (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

5. **Spaces for Community Inclusion**

In creating spaces for community inclusion NGOs tend to do the following:
• Create coalitions with other NGOs and
• Connect state with the community and facilitate policy discussions between them.

Creating opportunities where projects between state and NGOs have representatives from the communities that are affected from the policies created. This will help inform all stakeholders of the problem and provide insights for the solutions (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). In addition, small scale and grass root NGOs might not be heard or given attention from state even if they decided to endeavor policy making (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Therefore, coalitions are an important strategy to involve other stakeholders. Teaming up with several NGOs or initiatives could lead to a stronger representation and serious response from state (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

This could also be referred as inclusion strategies where NGOs work on creating spaces and forums for stakeholders to come together and work on policy negotiations (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). These could ensure that the voices of the community can reach the state. Here NGOs play a more mediation and facilitation role between policy makers and the people they serve (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

6. Advocacy and Campaigning

Doing multifaceted, integrated and focused campaigns to raise awareness about an issue is another strategy for influencing policy making (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Similar to keeping the press engaged, NGOs can impact communities and the public about the issues that need attention, highlighting the issue for policy makers which can lead them to take action (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Spreading awareness on an issue can be a long term process that can create public
awareness and therefore pressure on policy makers (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). This works during the agenda setting phase (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). These conscious-raising activities can redefine what is acceptable and what needs action (Thomas, 1996). However, it is argued that advocacy work is mostly voluntary representation which makes NGOs bias to the group they are representing (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

In developing countries, NGOs are challenged to make advocacy a main activity where fulfilling the needs of the people they serve becomes their main concern by providing the services that the state was unable to deliver (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). This makes advocacy work and involvement in policy making not a priority in comparison to the necessity to respond to the people (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Working on advocacy requires a lot of resources both financial and administrative, which can be costly for NGOs in developing countries (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

7. Confrontation

Opposition or passive resistance might not have direct results but is an option that is used when there is complete disagreement between the state and the NGO (Thomas, 1996). This risks NGOs becoming excluded from any possible negotiations because state can consider them opponents (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). NGOs have done so through reaching out to international agencies and foreign governments to put pressure on their governments (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). In some cases due to the need to be understood and supported, NGOs refer to international and outside country support which usually leads to enlarging the gap between state and NGOs rather than
having everyone on the same table (Thomas, 1996). This is a choice that if done can risk the credibility and legitimacy of NGOs by involving outsiders in the internal issues which could mean that they are implementing a foreign agenda and their loyalty is no longer to the people they represent but is to their international supporters (Cleary, 1997, and Thomas et al., 2001).

8. Complementary Activities

The projects and programs executed by NGOs away from policy making and government can become successful putting indirect pressure on state to change policy or implementing it nation-wide (Thomas, 1996). “In Bangladesh, the emergence of NGOs as agents of development renders state to the backseat, and NGO performance on health has pressurized the state sector to perform well” (White, 1999). NGOs being flexible in nature can come up with unique programs that could then lead to people requesting high quality services from the state creating benchmarks for public service (Thomas, 1996).
V. Study Methodology

The methodology used in the study is qualitative. Interviews were conducted with Egyptian NGOs working in the field of sexual harassment to understand their work and the role/s they play in shaping and or impacting policy making. Purposeful sampling (Marshall and Rossman, 1989) was adopted to reach out to NGOs who have worked on the issue. Initially, the researcher targeted the National Council of Women (to represent a governmental NGO), UN Women (to represent an international organization working on sexual harassment in Egypt) along with other NGOs that were eventually interviewed. However, the National Council of Women and the UN Women office in Egypt were not responsive and un-reachable. Therefore, the interviews were conducted with only Egyptian NGOs to identify what they did/do in regards to strategies and activities and the reasons behind their choice of actions to impact policy making. The interviews helped understand from the NGOs what they saw as points of strengths and points of challenges that they faced during their work on sexual harassment. From the point of view of the NGOs, the study was able to understand what course of action did the NGOs take to impact the policy making process. In support to the interviews with the NGOs, the research refers to statements from the state or from interviews previously conducted with government representation working on the issue either through government statements, media, and/or news. In the study state and government are used in reference to several entities such as the cabinet, national institutions and organizations.

The qualitative method is appropriate to this study for the following reasons. First, the number of NGOs and initiatives working in the field of sexual harassment is very
minimal where it is valuable to have answers on what they did to impact policy making and why they took the course of action that they have. It has enriched the research to learn from those working on the ground what it entails to impact policy making on an issue such as sexual harassment. In qualitative research it is important to understand the details of the issue (Marshal and Rossman, 1989) to be able to analyze the strategies and activities of the NGOs.

Second; the research is very specific to certain policies created in a very specific time period (ibid). Therefore, the intention is to study the role that the NGOs played in impacting the policy making process and understanding their relationships and dynamics with the different stakeholders and to analyze the role of NGOs based on the theoretical framework for NGOs to impact policy making. The research being very specific in terms of the policies and the time frame will help NGOs identify specifically what their role was either directly or indirectly in the policy making.

Third; the research looked at understanding “what the NGOs do to impact policy making?” and “why they did what they did?” which requires qualitative research as each NGO might have had different course of actions and context that have affected their work. Using qualitative research gives an in depth understanding of how NGOs can impact policy making as a representation of the needs of the people that they serve. It also contributes to documenting the process to create knowledge that could be used as references for interest groups in future policy making.

The study follows common ethical considerations in research by anonymizing data and not disclosing identification information about the interviewees and the NGOs.
they represented. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has granted approval for the study research prior to any data collection.

**Sample Composition**

The research was selective where the NGOs interviewed had to have worked on the issue of sexual harassment in Egypt. The method used in sampling was snowball sampling where the research depended on referrals. Interviewed an NGO and the staff of the NGO would connect me to other NGOs working in the field of sexual harassment. Interviews were conducted with several local Egyptian NGOs that are working on the issue of sexual harassment in Egypt. Some of these NGOs have focused their activities on sexual harassment only, while others work on several issues such as women rights and violence in general and have programs or departments working on sexual harassment. NGOs were referred to as NGO officials 1-5. Here are some details about each of the included NGOs;

1. NGO Official 1 – Its goal is to create a community that does not accept sexual harassment. Therefore they do not focus on neither the victim nor the harasser but work with the community to help it change its view on the issue.

2. NGO Official 2 – Its goal is to abolish sexual abuse through education and creating a new generation of Egyptians who are able to protect themselves and will not accept sexual harassment.

3. NGO Official 3 – Their aim is to support women in leadership. They do several trainings and workshops to empower women along with their work in supporting sexual harassment survivors.
4. NGO Official 4 - They have a goal to ensure that all women are free and that their freedom is not conditional through; fighting for women rights and help create leader women in their positions.

5. NGO Official 5 - provides psychological and legal services to victims of any sort of violence. They provide support to victims of sexual harassment.

**Analysis**

Interview data related to the strategies for these NGOs on the issue of sexual harassment was analyzed in reference to the theoretical framework of the study. Interview data consisted of their; views on and reactions to the 2014 policy of criminalizing sexual harassment in Egypt, strategies in regards to approaching policy makers, ideas on legitimacy and people representation, connections to the media, and programs and activities. Their responses were applied to the conceptual framework to understand what strategies and activities they have and why they took this course of action. This then informed the research on the strengths and opportunities that these NGOs have. It also shed light on the idea of context that these NGOs are working in and the qualities they have to influence anti-sexual harassment legislation in Egypt. I refer to the interview data by NGO officials in an anonymous manner where they are referred to NGO officials 1-5.

**Limitations of the Study**

NGOs interviewed for the research all their offices in Cairo. Although several of them have work in all or some of the different governorates of Egypt, yet they are all located in the capital. This could mean that they might not be representatives of all the work that is done on sexual harassment in Egypt. However, this was balanced out by
selecting NGOs that have diverse strategies and different activities diversifying the findings of the research.

The sensitivity of the topic of sexual harassment as a taboo topic and security pressures as human rights organizations, which could mean that the NGO representatives might not have been able to share freely all details regarding the work and interactions with different stakeholders.

Results presented in the case of sexual harassment cannot be generalized to other issues in Egypt. However, this study is important for touching upon one of the key changes in the approach of state to the issue of sexual harassment in Egypt, the law modification in 2014 criminalizing and defining sexual harassment, and the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women finalized in April 2015.

**Reflections on the Research Process**

The data collection process revealed that there is some security stresseson some of the NGOs. As soon as I would arrive to the street in which the NGO was located, I would receive voluntary support from individuals on the street directing me to their office. Coming up to me and asking; where I was going and pointing out the name of the organization and helping me reaching there.

During the interviews, the interviewees spoke about some of the cases of sexual harassment that they have been involved with. These stories that the staff of the NGOs are dealing with on a daily basis has made them emotionally attached to the issue. In every interview I conducted, the interviewee would give examples of the stories that they see every day. This added to the dynamics and context that these
NGOs work in, where some of them expressed how difficult it is to cooperate with state. The interviews revealed the sensitivity and complexity of the issue. It showed that theory might sometimes miss out the context and the social aspect when it comes to policy making. On the other hand, being an Egyptian woman, it was comforting to see the work that these NGOs are doing. It was also rewarding to contribute to the issue and to the hard work they are doing.
In the following sections presents the responses from the NGOs based on the theoretical framework on which my analysis is built upon. For each of the strategies and approaches from the theoretical framework, a summary of the responses and an analysis will be presented. For some of the strategies, the NGOs interviewed have been classified into two groups, in which the analysis will refer to as Official NGO Group 1 and Official NGO Group 2. Those in Official NGO Group 1 are NGOs who have had partnerships with governmental institutions and have focused activities on sexual harassment only. NGOs in Official NGO Group 2 are those who have not had direct partnerships with governmental institutions and are working on several programs where sexual harassment is one of them. The findings have been divided into two sections; section one; lists all the strategies suggested in the theoretical framework, and section two; which gives context and further analysis to the idea of NGO flexibility.

**Section One of Analysis: Approaches to partnership between State and NGOs**

This section presents analysis for the different strategies used by NGOs to impacting anti-sexual harassment policy legislations. The strategies presented in the theoretical framework are applied to the interview responses and analyzed.
1. Collaborators and not critics

Collaborating with the state will most probably increase the chances for NGOs to become part of the policy making process (Thomas et al., 2001). This could be done through re-framing of the problem, providing alternatives and focusing on the implementation (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

Framing of the Problem

Since the way the problem is framed will identify how NGOs will approach policy making, questions on how they saw the problem of sexual harassment were asked;

“The problem is in the definition of the sexual harassment and that the public does not want to admit that it exists and how they look upon women.” (Official NGO 1)

“We see the problem is in the community and the acceptance of sexual harassment so we worked on an anti-violence school program and implemented it in private schools.” (Official NGO 2)

The other three NGOs identify the problem in the policies and therefore focused all their efforts and programs on sexual harassment policy reform.

“The problem is in the law and how it does not guarantee the rights of women in several issues.” Official NGO 3

“We draft and re-write policies and represent them to the state.” Official NGO 5
Identification of the problem is a strategy that NGOs take to play a collaborative role in the policy making (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Identifying where the problem lies can dictate the approach the NGO takes and therefore its activities that could determine the level of influence and participation it will have (Fitdzduff and Church, 2004). As per the case studies presented it seems that identifying the source of the problem could indicate what approach the NGO is taking. When Official NGO 1 identified the problem of sexual harassment in the way that the community deals with the issues, it automatically shifted focus from the state to the community. Providing alternatives to the problem through innovative solutions (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004) such as the programs that targets the society has positioned Official NGO 1 on the collaborative side. It is also a shift from focusing on policy reform that Official NGO 3, 4 and 5 are focused on and are calling for, to focusing on the implementation (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

Likewise, Official NGO 2 framed the problem in regards to the community by fighting how it accepts sexual harassment. In the hope to be able to create a generation that is able to be safe and not accept sexual harassment, they came up with a school program to educate children on ways to keep safe and refuse sexual harassment. This has changed the way the organization looks at the problem where it is pointing fingers at the community instead of the government (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

Providing Alternatives and Focusing on Implementation
Official NGOs 1 and 2 determined a collaborative approach by providing alternatives for solutions, focusing on implementation of programs, re-framing the problem, and providing positive suggestions (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). On the other hand, Official NGOs 3, 4 and 5 focused all their efforts on policy reform through drafting laws and policies that they present to state and send to the parliament. For them the challenge is in getting state to see its flaws and work on developing them (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Since the identification of the problem lies in the policies of the state, this puts them in a more critical stand than a cooperative one (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

The following table combines the findings from the above strategy where NGOs with collaborative strategies were able to form partnerships with state.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Collaborators</th>
<th>Critics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identified the problem in the society</td>
<td>Identified the problem in the policies/government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided alternative for solutions to sexual harassment</td>
<td>Criticized policies and government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked on projects to solve the problem</td>
<td>Worked on drafting policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were able to form partnerships and joint projects with state</td>
<td>Were unable to partner as their work is only focused on policy reform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Building Legitimacy

Building legitimacy as presented in the theoretical framework is based on representation of the people, having knowledge and expertise of the problem, and creating open channels of communication between state and the people (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). When asked about whether or not they saw themselves as legitimate players in the policy making process, they all believe that
due to their work, experience, and knowledge they are legitimate partners for state when it comes to policy making for sexual harassment.

**Duration of Experience:**

“We have been working on the issues of violence since 1993.” (Official NGO 5)

“We have been working for a long time.” (Official NGO 4)

Years of experience seems to be a source of legitimacy for NGOs in Egypt. Being invited by the NCW meetings was a point that they elaborated on; where some saw that they were invited because they have been working for a long time. Official NGOs 4 and 5 explained that they were the first to do what they were doing in Egypt. From their point of view being initiators with long years of experience has built their legitimacy to become part of policy making in Egypt.

**NGOs with Focused Anti-Sexual Harassment Activities:**

“We are the most focused on the issue with a large team.” (Official NGO 1)

“We are working always on projects and programs to tackle the issue, when a crisis happens, we are going to be the ones who have applied something that state can take and implement right away.” (Official NGO 1)

This response presents how Official NGO Group 1 saw that their legitimacy came from their ability to focus on the issue of sexual harassment alone making them more equipped with knowledge and expertise. Unlike Official NGO Group 2 who is concerned with other issues as well as sexual harassment such as violence, torture,
and women rights. This makes Official NGO Group 1 unique where they have projects that could be adopted and implemented by state.

Through their large team and volunteer network which is located in several governorates in Egypt, Official GO 1 is able to represent the people. For them it is a multiplied representation, where each volunteer is equipped and trained to train others in her/his areas.

Knowledge versus Experience:

NGOs having information and expertise on the issue, give them legitimacy to become part of the policy making (Thomas et al., 2001). All of the five NGOs interviewed work with sexual harassment victims directly on a daily basis, such as the psychological or legal services that they support them with. Their direct contact equips them with both the knowledge and the expertise (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004) about the problem of sexual harassment. They are able to identify what needs to be done and have expertise and information on what are the possible best approaches to the problem (Cleary, 1997).

“We have experience and work on the ground. We don’t represent all women in Egypt nor does any other organization…. no exclusive representation for Egyptian women….Therefore, we all need to work together.” (Official NGO 3)

“We are working on the ground on daily basis, state needs to come to us and we should all work together collaboratively.” (Official NGO 2)

All NGOs agreed that they have solutions and approaches to the issue of sexual harassment in Egypt. However, Official NGO Group 1 has focused activities and
programs that gave them the expertise in implementation. Open channels of communication between NGOs, their beneficiaries and state builds on the legitimacy of NGOs as partners in policy making (Cleary, 1997). As per the responses, we can differentiate between the knowledge collected from the open channels of communication between the NGOs and their beneficiaries represented through research, reports and testimonies, and that of their practical experiences through program implementation. In that sense experience means the actual projects and programs that the NGOs are implementing to fight sexual harassment on the ground. These projects give those NGOs opportunities to inspire policy makers through their programs that have been implemented, proven successful, and could be adopted by state (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

Three out of five NGOs suggest that years of experience and having focused activities are sources of legitimacy where it provides the organization with the knowledge and expertise in the topic. It is also important to identify the difference between knowledge and expertise as sources for legitimacy. On one hand, knowledge presented in the form of research, reports and testimonies due to the open channels of communications between the organizations and their beneficiaries make them knowledgeable about the problem and would have recommendations as to how to solve it. On the other hand, expertise in programs and project implementation provides NGOs with the advancement of having a project that is ready for application by state.

Other factors were identified as sources of legitimacy where NGOs are able to build legitimacy through their work, enabling them to become partners in policy making.
Factors for building legitimacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration of Expertise</th>
<th>Highly Legitimate</th>
<th>Less Legitimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duration of Expertise</td>
<td>Medium to long</td>
<td>Short to medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>Focusing on sexual harassment</td>
<td>Wide scope including human rights, women rights, …etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Expertise</td>
<td>Expertise in program implementation</td>
<td>Expertise in policy reform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Connecting and Partnering with Policy Makers

Building relationships with state officials and working as partners on projects helps build trust and opportunities for NGOs to be able to bring their issues to the policy making agenda (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

Personal Relationships with Members of Policy Making

When asked about their personal relationships with policy makers they gave the following responses;

“We have several connections to different ministries. These connections have helped us talk to policy makers, however this does not work all the time and it is something that we will not focus on entirely.” (Official NGO 1)

“Since we have been running for a long time, the leadership in our NGO is connected to policy makers and therefore is invited to meetings with the National Council of Women…. In 2012, we reached out to a politician—a parliament member at that time- and he presented a law that we have drafted to combat sexual harassment.” (Official NGO 5)
As for Official NGO 2 and 4, they do not have any direct relationships with state officials. They are connected to UN Women and the National Council of Women who sometimes invite them to attend meetings that other policy makers attend.

Personal relationships with policy makers have always been a straightforward strategy for influencing policy makers. From the responses that will follow referring to the meetings for the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women, the personal relationships have helped Official NGO 1, 3 and 5 to participate. Yet, these meetings were not considered fruitful from the point of view of the interviewed however, it still proves that personal relationships can open windows of opportunities for state and NGOs can come and sit down to discuss the issues (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

**Partnerships with State:**

When asked whether or not they would partner with state and to explain any previous experiences of partnerships;

“*We have a clear strategy of collaborating with anyone ....... But in the same time we are clear about our values where we can disagree with anything that we feel might not represent us. We were asked by the ministry ....... to support them in their media messages of fighting sexual harassment, but we did not agree with all the messages....... We made our comments clear and refused to include our logo to any message that does not meet our values*” (Official NGO 1)
“We don’t have partnerships with state officials, but we sometimes work with the NCW on rewriting policies.” (Official NGO 5)

“We wish to be collaborators with the Egyptian government. We had a project proposed ….. but it was rejected although we were going to partner with five Egyptian ministries.” (Official NGO 4)

Challenges for Collaborative Work

Official NGOs 1, 4 and 3 were invited from the National Council of Women (NCW) to discuss the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women that was finalized on April 28, 2015. However, all of those organizations did not continue working as they expressed how challenging it was to be still discussing the basics of women’s rights. In addition, the NGOs feel frustrated from the resistance of state representatives to the work they present. Lack of transparency and clarity of the intentions are also concerns for NGOs as they explain below;

“It was hard for us to discuss the basics of the women issues of freedoms and equality. We disagreed on several points…. I think they thought we were very spicy for them. At the end they stopped sending us invitations and we have not received any drafts and are therefore unaware of the developments of the strategy.” (Official NGO 4)

She also adds that: “We feel that we are invited for the international image. However, no matter how much we attend those meetings, our work is not considered.”(Official NGO 4)
“It was challenging to be able to work together as there were a lot of disagreements on definitions and we did not continue to attend” (Official NGO 1)

“We are in contact with the NCW as they are very impactful and have great reach. However, we are careful in our contact with them because we do not agree with all the values of the NCW.” (Official NGO 5)

“We met with the ministry …… where we presented our ideas and drafts but nothing really happened and there was great resistance to changing any definitions.” (Official NGO 5)

NGOs feel challenged to balance between their own values and that of state. This is directly linked to the gap between policy makers and NGOs. The gap is large where each side sees that they have the exclusive responsibility for policy making (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Due to their day to day access and work on ground, NGOs see themselves the most aware of the needs of the people more than the government (Cleary, 1997). Likewise, government personnel undermine the role of NGOs and their capacity to come up with solutions (Nabacwa, 2010). Since policy makers see themselves as the official actors for policy making (Birkland, 2005) then when NGOs tackle policy reform it is as if they are blaming state and saying that the problem is in state (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

The NGOs expressed that they were faced with several challenges. The inability to communicate shows that each party was on a different wave length enlarging the gap between them. The NGOs fear losing their commitment to their cause and their
beneficiaries (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). They also fear losing their freedom and flexibility which are core to their existence (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Not standing up clearly for what they believe in can make NGOs respond to state and not to their values (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). The challenge here is creating a balance between what they want to achieve and their values in a way that makes the best use from opportunities of participating in policy making such as that from the NCW. “Governments are large, complicated and sometimes frustrating institutions” (Birkland, 2005). However, giving up and not trying to reach some common ground can risk any opportunities to performing one’s duty (Birkland, 2005).

**Importance of Creating a Balance between the NGO’s Values and their Goals:**

Creating a balance is very challenging when “state officials are as well in-flexible to new approaches” (Fitzduff and Church, 2004) When state officials refuse new definitions for sexual harassment this could be due to state’s concern of losing control over their own agendas and priorities over that of the NGOs (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). It is important to shed light on the idea of discourse of the ability to have discussions with different players without domination (Habermas, 1970) and process of deliberation (Renn, 2004). Official NGO 1, 4 and 5 were unable to disagree with approaches of state and still continue conversations. In order to ensure success of the process of deliberation stakeholders need to agree on the process, represent all viewpoints, base discussions on data, share the agenda clearly of each player and ensure complete transparency (Renn, 2004). It is true that there were different point of views in the meetings at the NCW, but there were also common points that both state and NGOs could have invested on such as creating a policy to fight violence
against women. Finding consensus and building on it is critical for effective deliberation (Renn, 2004). From the responses and the literature, it is suggested that change is a long difficult process. Expecting to have everyone on the same page, could lead to disappointments, confusions and frustrations that can enlarge the gap between state and NGOs.

On the other hand, Official NGO 2 and 3 were not invited to the meetings for the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women.

“We were not invited to the meetings for the national strategy..... We would discuss all forms of violence against women both in private and public spaces which is something state would not accept.” (Official NGO 3)

Insisting on reaching all of the organization’s goals all at once can challenge any opportunity to partner with state. NGOs can sometimes become concerned about the victory and in proving the other wrong, making them miss out on opportunities to reach an understanding with state (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Official NGO 3 expressed that they would discuss all forms of violence whether in private or public, or governmental spaces. This in their opinion, they see that state would not accept discussing all forms of violence and that is why they are not included in policy discussions. This example could be linked to the idea of context – that will be further elaborated in the proceeding section- where NGOs need to be aware of the context that they are working in and strategize accordingly. If stakeholders such as state are not willing to discuss all forms of violence, it does not necessarily mean to discard any form of discourse entirely and missing out any opportunity to reaching consensus on other points.
4. Keeping Press Attention

Keeping press engaged is a strategy that NGOs uses to be able to raise awareness of the people and to bring the issue onto the agendas of policy making through media pressure (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). This has been discussed in the interviews with the NGOs where they were asked about their relationship with the media;

NGOs and Media are Connected and Reachable

NGOs and media have direct connections to each other. NGOs can reach out to media to share with them their statements and commentary on events related to sexual harassment. They are aware of the power of media and use it to promote their messages and work to the people.

“Media has access to our reports and statements... and can reach us all the time.” (Official NGO 5)

“Media is an indirect tool that we use to promote for our work and invite possible partners.” (Official NGO 1)

“We distribute our statements among the media outlets.” (Official NGO 3)

“We believe in the power of the media and the TV.... We produced a documentary on harassment and a book documenting ten stories of the survivors. We will involve media to promote for our work.” (Official NGO 2)

All five organizations are connected to media. Although there seems little interest from the media now on their work and the issue of sexual harassment, yet they are still connected.
Victim Privacy Concerns and Journalist Training

NGOs saw that media was unable to protect the privacy of sexual harassment victims. Therefore, they are taking steps such as; refusing to share contact details with the media, and are providing training and guidance to journalists on how to present the incidents to the public. They are also documenting the stories themselves ensuring complete protection for the victims, publishing it whether in books, documentaries, or on their websites for the public.

“We sometimes have some issues with the confidentiality of the journalists and their ability to keep the victims protected.” (Official NGO 5)

“We have connections with journalists and train them on how to handle the issue of sexual harassment in a way that is protective of the victim.” (Official NGO 1)

“We conduct trainings for journalists ...... we do not share the contacts of the survivors as we insist on presenting the story in a way that protects the girls.” (Official NGO 3)

Although some responses refer to media as an indirect tool for their work, yet NGOs use media to promote for its projects and activities, such as NGO 2 who is about to present a documentary and book on the stories of the victims.

“I am planning to make them more involved after the launch of the book and the documentary.” (Official NGO 2)
The relationship between media and the interviewed NGOs is currently quiet as explained from their responses.

“We have been in direct contact with the media in the last three years and now not so much is going on.” (Official NGO 2)

“Media tend to be interested in our work only when the topic is hot... they need to be involved ongoing and nonstop.” (Official NGO 5)

Currently, there are some media figures accusing us of treason. .....We are trying to choose carefully who we talk with so as not to risk becoming a media target.” (Official NGO 4)

Since the topic of sexual harassment is not hot these days then the relationship with the media seems to be still. This implies that keeping press engaged as a strategy for NGOs in Egypt working on sexual harassment is very relative and depends on the time and the activities of the NGO. It is also interesting to find that; since media is not interested nowadays with the topic, NGOs are not working on bringing the topic back on the TV screens and in the newspapers. Some NGOs shared a concern about the way some media outlets are accusing NGOs of treason which shows that the relationship is not stable and is continuously undergoing change. The relationship changed from being very connected and accepted by media in the past three years to becoming sensitive and disconnected. This shows that the relationship between media and NGOs working on sexual harassment is conditional to the times, the degree of hotness of the topic, and the activities of the NGO.
5. Spaces for Community Inclusion

Creating spaces for community inclusion is through forming coalitions with other organizations or by playing the facilitator role between state and the people. However, the interview data has shown that NGOs refer to different activities that create spaces for community inclusion ensuring that their voices reach everyone.

The societal sensitivity and all the taboos around the topic of sexual harassment in Egypt, makes it almost impossible for NGOs to facilitate meetings between community/victims and policy makers. In addition, this can cause psychological stress to the victims due to the nature of the experience of sexual harassment. Therefore, NGOs use reports, testimonies, and researches that display the issues of the victims for both state and the public.

“We make sure that the voices of the victims reach the people through testimonies and stories that we publish every six months..... Without risking the privacy and safety of the victims.” (Official NGO 5)

“Testimonies from the survivors are published on our website anonymously.” (Official NGO 3)

“We do this through the documentation through our psychological and legal services.” (Official NGO 4)

Social Media and Online Applications are Innovative Ways to Community Inclusion:

The interview data showed that NGOs used innovative tools for community inclusion and participation such as social media and online programs where they are connected to their followers 24/7.
“We depend a lot on our social media networks to be able to connect and interact with the people.” (Official NGO 5)

“We have an online program where people can report any sexual harassment incident that they experience themselves or witness. Sometimes these turn into online discussions where the community online interact together.” (Official NGO 1)

Open Spaces and Sessions:

In addition, NGOs have spaces for community inclusion where they hold sessions or create open spaces for the public to come together and discuss their issues. The open-micsessions are a good example of a community coming together and are discussing the issue of sexual harassment while expressing themselves, their stories, views and what they need openly to the public.

“We do open-mic sessions where students come together and discuss sexual harassment. Our strategy in opening up these discussions is bringing out the different point of views.” (Official NGO 1)

“We women or groups working on women issues come to our office and discuss their issues.” (Official NGO 3)

Forming Coalitions:

Another form of community representation is coalitions which strengthens the stand points of organizations.
“We participate with other NGOs and work collaboratively on law projects.... joint campaigns and statements to pressure for change.... We collaborate on research and documentation as well.” (Official NGO 5)

“We work with our sister organizations and do coalitions and joint statements together.” (Official NGO 1)

“We do joint statements and publish them.” (Official NGO 3)

Being able to represent a large group through coalitions and joint statements has a great impact on policy making. NGOs such as the ones interviewed for the study have worked together on joint statements and responses to the state and commenting on events of their concern. Joint campaigns help increase reach and representation and therefore “enlist popular participation” (Ghosh, 2009). Representing a large group when making joint statements can help put pressure on state (Thomas et al., 2001).

6. Advocacy and Campaigning

Advocacy and campaigning are activities that raise the conscious of the public to make them change their views on a specific issue making them see what needs to be done, and therefore pressuring policy makers to take action (Thomas, 1996).

Advocacy through Testimonials, Sessions, Trainings, Campaigns and Workshops:

“Our work through the media, trainings, statements, documentation and published research is our advocacy and campaign work.” (Official NGO 5)

“In our programs we train others to initiate activities in their communities.” (Official NGO 1)
“We worked on several campaigns...... that aimed at changing the mindset towards sexual harassment. We partnered with other NGOs and initiatives.” (Official NGO 1)

“In a campaign we used comics, plays, digital storytelling, and storytelling sessions. We worked with other NGOs working on sexual harassment” (Official NGO 3)

“We made a campaign targeting schools and religious figures.” (Official NGO 2)

All five NGOs have engaged in advocacy and campaigning activities. Being able to raise awareness about the issue of sexual harassment can help change attitudes of the people towards the issue and put pressure on the government to take action (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Raising awareness through advocacy work and campaigning is a tool that has a long term effect on agenda setting (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). However, these campaigns were not “multifaceted, integrated and focused campaigns” (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004) where they seem to be very simple and basic. This conclusion was reached as per the inability of those NGOs to measure the impact of their campaigns on public awareness. When asked about their reach and whether or not their work on raising awareness has really made a difference, no one was able to respond explaining that they have not done any studies to measure their impact and reach.

Limited Administrative and Financial Resources affect their Advocacy Work
“We do not have a mechanism to measure whether the campaigns worked or not.” (Official NGO 1)

“I cannot depend on campaigning as a tool because the time spent with a person in training for two hours, or the moments it takes one to read a message on a post or a flyer is very limited and will not change behavior.” (Official NGO 2)

“Since our main activities are not advocacy and campaigning, we were very satisfied that we had over a million views on one of our campaigns.” (Official NGO 3)

“Since we not have capacities to work on campaigns, our main work is to provide psychological support to the victims.” (Official NGO 5)

This shows that advocacy and campaigning are not the core activities for those organizations. Being concerned with serving the people directly seem to be the strategy that they all have. Their inability to track and measure the impact of their advocacy work could mean that they are not interested in such activities or that they do not have the resources to be able to do such measurements. However, not being able to measure the impact does not mean that their work did not have any influence on the public in identifying what is acceptable and what is not (Thomas, 1996). Due to the limited resources and capabilities for NGOs in filling the gap and responding to the immediate needs of the people, this can make advocacy and campaigns a less important strategy (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Therefore, several of them referred to their reports and studies published on their website as tools for advocating for
stopping sexual harassment. They also considered trainings, workshops and open-mic discussions as a means to advocate for their cause; yet again its impact is not measured.

In addition, when they speak to the public about sexual harassment the questions on representation arise and whether or not they are representing everyone. As the examples mentioned above show that they are representing the victims in their messages to the public. According to the literature they are bias to the category they are representing and therefore not representing other view points on the issue (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

7. Confrontational Strategies

NGOs use confrontational strategies when they feel that they are stuck and cannot reach their goals with state. It could be in the form of depending on foreign agencies or governments to put pressure on state. From the responses there were no direct confrontational strategies as those presented in the theoretical framework. However, there were other forms of confrontational activities as expressed in their responses such as; receiving foreign funding, expressing personal views on social media, and calling for demonstrations. This shows how the context can change how NGOs viewed the strategy as presented below;

On one hand, some NGOs were clear in not wanting to engage in any confrontational strategies:
“We never reach out to anyone external and we do not want to collaborate with any foreign funds. We don’t want to jeopardize our credibility due to the taboos against such agencies.” (Official NGO 1)

“We refrain from expressing our personal and political opinions in public to avoid any indirect confrontations with the state.” (Official NGO 1)

“We never called for demonstrations nor will we ever confront or challenge the government. We refuse anything that can cause harm to our work, volunteers, and staff.” (Official NGO 1)

On the other hand, some NGOs see that confrontational strategies are part of their mission;

“We sometimes call for small marches……or receive support from international organizations for our petitions however we refuse any funding from international governments.” (Official NGO 5)

“We believe in challenging state as a strategy and we see ourselves as confrontational…. We work with external coalitions to make pressures.” (Official NGO 3)

Looking at the responses, it shows a discrepancy in the reactions of some NGOs. Some are very careful to ensure that they are not in any way confrontational to state. They are very meticulous in ensuring that their funding is from organizations that are not linked to foreign governments to ensure that they do not lose their credibility (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).
Others see that their role is to challenge state all the time. They see that their main strategy is confrontational where they partner with external entities for their causes and coalitions that could make pressure on the state (Thomas, 1996). Having a confrontational strategy has risked their credibility by involving outside players to pressure the government where their loyalty can be seen as only to foreign agendas (Cleary, 1997, and Thomas et al., 2001) which can be linked to the fact that they were not invited to the meetings with the NCW. These NGOs who see their role as confrontational and critics only to the state, were not called upon to meetings at the National Council of Women for the National Strategy for Combating violence against women in Egypt. From their responses, there seems to be a link between confrontational strategies for NGOs working on sexual harassment in Egypt and their level of involvement in policy discussions. With that it can be concluded that NGOs using confrontational strategies through putting pressure on the government risk partnering with state as the table shows below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities that puts pressure on and confronts state</th>
<th>Partnering with state</th>
<th>Confronting State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calling for demonstration to pressure government</td>
<td>Refrain from organizing or calling for demonstrations</td>
<td>Organize and call for demonstrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of personal political views of staff on social media</td>
<td>Very careful not to post anything that could harm partnerships between their NGO and government</td>
<td>Share personal political opinions, making their views known to the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive support from foreign NGOs on their issues</td>
<td>Reject any foreign support</td>
<td>Accept support from foreign agencies to their statements and stands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Complementary Activities

In several cases NGOs have worked on programs and developed them. These programs were a success in the limited scale of the NGO and when considered from policy makers, they could become implemented on a larger scale or on a nation-wide level. From the interviews that were conducted, Official NGO Group 1 have worked on projects that proved success and could be adopted by state and implemented on a national level.

Official NGO 1 has worked on drafting a policy for combating sexual harassment on a university campus. After an incident of sexual harassment on campus the leadership of the university invited them to help them create a policy that included trainings for faculty and university staff on the issue and the policy. The project was a success and the NGO is aiming at repeating it with other public universities.

Official NGO 1 has also worked on a program to create areas that are free from sexual harassment. They do this through raising awareness of the people on the definition of sexual harassment and what they can do to create safe spaces for everyone. Official NGO 1 sees that this program could be adopted by state and implemented in all public spaces.

"Safe Areas is a ready program that could be applied by state to public spaces." (Official NGO 1)

Similarly, Official NGO 2 has worked for several years on creating and developing a program that could be part of school year schedules. The program is aimed at helping children learn what sexual harassment means and what they can do to protect
themselves. The program will start with children from their early years at school until high school.

“By the time they graduate, they would have had the message repeated throughout their school years. The program is very experiential to ensure engagement from kids. It involves games, books and arts throughout the life span of the program.” (Official NGO 2)

Based on their experience and knowledge gained from their work with private schools, they approached the ministry of education. They suggested implementing the program in 20 schools but the minister gave them 33 schools to begin with. This is a huge dream come true for those working in the organization since their goal is to be able to make all children safe and are able to protect themselves from sexual harassment. Their hope is to prove success in the 33 public schools and that their program is later adopted by state transforming it into a required subject in all schools in Egypt.

As for the Official NGO Group 2, there is no program that they have focused on to challenge the services of the government that could raise the benchmarks of the services (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). Programs such as the presented above are projects that have been applied away from policy making and proved success. These projects can be adopted by government and applied on a nation-wide level (Thomas, 1996).

By introducing new ways to tackle the issues of sexual harassment, Official NGO Group 1 was able to create benchmarks for state of what the community needs.
Official NGO 1 has created a benchmark with its partnership at the university where they are now receiving requests from other educational institutions both private and public to partner on similar projects. Official NGO 2 made use of their experience from working with private schools and was able to portray the need to the government and will implement their program at national schools as well.

In conclusion, NGOs can influence policy makers when they have a project or program that they have already implemented and proved successful. Their activities can become either adopted by state or raise the expectations of the public in regards to quality and service type making policy makers wanting to adopt those new projects (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

Section Two of Analysis: NGO Characteristics and Context they Work in

This section will present the different themes that came up from the discussions with the NGOs such as; flexibility, the context of their work and their reactions to the 2014 law modifications for sexual harassment in Egypt.

1. NGOs are Flexible in Nature

These examples mentioned above are proof of the uniqueness of NGOs in their flexibility (Fitzduff and Church, 2004) and their ability to become creative in the way they contribute to the issues of sexual harassment. NGOs that have not been able to look beyond the strategies and activities that they have been already doing, might not be able to inspire themselves and state of other activities that could be successful and impact policy making.
“An opportunity that we have is our flexibility. We need to be so and become aware that these times are very special and no country has been through this before. We need to revisit our strategies to see what we can do differently now. What used to work in the past may not necessarily work in the present. We need new perspectives of what is happening and consider the concerns of the people. This will help inform our strategies and activities.” (Official NGO 4)

To conclude this section, in the case of sexual harassment in Egypt specifically, it is important for NGOs to realize their unique quality of being flexible (Fitzduff and Church, 2004) Being flexible helps break limits that might have been put upon them, making them see opportunities for change and influence policy makers.

2. The Social Context that NGOs Work in:

It is very important to look at the context and framework that these NGOs are working within. Several NGOs faced challenges from the societal acceptance for their work.

“When we start our trainings participants refuse to admit that there is sexual harassment, however, when we start defining the term they start sharing incidents of sexual harassment themselves.” (Official NGO 1)

“Society challenges our work all the time. It is hard for our activities to be accepted because the topic is very sensitive is not accepted easily by society. Educational institutions refuse to admit that there is a problem and therefore it takes a lot of effort to be able to implement the programs.” (Official NGO 2)
“The society feels sorry more for the harasser than the victim. The leadership of an educational institution that we were working with, refused to take action against a teacher who was sexually harassing the students because they wanted to protect the reputation of the school and felt sorry to cause reputational harm to the teacher.” (Official NGO 2)

NGOs are faced with community resistance to the issue due to the nature of sexual harassment being a taboo. In the literature there is reference to the level of interest from different stakeholders which can affect the ability of NGOs to influence policy makers (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). The literature argues that the less the stakeholders are interested in the issue the easier it is for NGOs to be able to work on their projects (Thomas et al., 2001). However, this has been identified as one of the challenges that the NGOs face when working on the issue with the public. The topic of sexual harassment itself is very sensitive for the community as explained by the responses. Fear of reputational harm for the person or the institution creates resistance. When a school protects its teacher who is sexually harassing its students in fear of reputational harm, then the level of interest of the people as a stakeholder is not so great, creating a challenge for Official NGO 2 a hard time to implement their program.

3. General Reactions to the 2014 Anti-Sexual Harassment Legislative Modifications

When asked about their thoughts regarding the anti-sexual harassment law modifications there were two themes in the responses; some were satisfied with the developments and other felt that there is still a lot to work on:
“The amendments that happened in 2014 are good news because for the first state admitted that there is a problem of sexual harassment. In 2006 when for the first time we saw a mob sexual assault against women in the street during the feast, the state denied that there is a problem of sexual harassment. Now, reactions have differed.” (Official NGO 1)

“In 2014 it was for the first time to see a state statement on the issue. For the first time we saw an Egyptian President going to visit the victim. The leadership of Egypt has finally admitted there is an issue. President Sisi spoke to the people condemning what happened, mentioning the vocabulary of sexual harassment for the first time, feeling sorry and honest remorse for the incident. Therefore, other governmental institutions reacted and supported the girls. As a result the state started work on the national strategy against violence.” (Official NGO 4)

“A great opportunity that we have now and did not have before is that awareness about the problem is growing, where people who did not know before now know.” (Official NGO 4)

On the other hand, some NGOs were not very satisfied with the anti-sexual harassment law and feel that there is much more work to be done;

“What happened in 2014 was not a policy on sexual harassment it was only modifications of two laws that already existed. It is good but still not enough.” (Official NGO 3)
“What happened during the inauguration was a great representation of political will. The leadership visiting and supporting the victim was able to get the men convicted. It was a decision that the state took to make a change.” (Official NGO 3)

“In 2014 they only took a small part of what we have suggested years before and the rest of the law was not taken into consideration” (Official NGO 3)

There is general satisfaction towards the new law amendments that took place in the year of 2014. Although some are not entirely satisfied with the law amendments yet they seem to see that it is a positive step towards the cause they are fighting for.

In reference to the literature, the timings that the NGOs approach the issue can impact their level of involvement in policy making (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). It is suggested that working during the policy agenda setting and the implementation stages are the most times that NGOs have opportunities to inspire policy making (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). As per the above responses, NGOs have worked collaboratively in the past on drafting new laws to tackle the issue of sexual harassment. They have represented it to state and to the parliament before but it was not considered.

However, during the 2014 inauguration celebrations in Tahrir square when images of a naked girl being mob attacked was seen on the media, state took action. State referred to the laws presented by those NGOs way long before the crisis happened. Although they only took a small part of what those NGOs had proposed, yet they referred to their work at the time when they needed to do something. Although NGOs
might feel frustrated because not everything they have aspired was not reached, yet is proves that NGOs do have impact during both the agenda setting and the policy implementation. Yes, they were not part of the decision making however, their efforts did not go in vain. There is a lot of work that needs to be done in regards to sexual harassment issues, but policy reform is a complex process that takes time.

**Summary of Research Findings**

There have been major themes used in the qualitative research to identify which strategies do NGOs working on sexual harassment in Egypt use to become players in the policy making;

1. Collaborators and not critics
2. Building legitimacy
3. Connecting and Partnering with State
4. Keeping Press Attention
5. Spaces for Community Inclusion
6. Advocacy and Campaigning
7. Confrontational
8. Complementary Activities

The findings for the above strategies are as follow:

1. **Collaborators and not critics**
   - The framing of the problem in a way that does not blame state solely on the issues put the NGOs in a collaborative position where they are able to see the problem from a different perspective, conduct research and come
up with solutions that can complement the work of the state. This strategy is more effective than identifying the problem being in state putting the NGO in a critical position by pointing fingers at state.

2. Building Legitimacy

- NGOs working on sexual harassment see themselves as legitimate players for policy making due to their knowledge and expertise through their daily work with the issue and the people on the ground.

- The research found out that there is a difference between knowledge and expertise as sources for legitimacy. Knowledge of the issue, its causes, challenges and ways for improvement through day to day services for the victims of sexual harassment is different from the practical expertise that an NGO attains when it has worked on a program or a project and therefore has the expertise in implementation. Professional expertise is a good source for legitimacy where state could refer to these projects when needing to find a solution.

- Years of experience was identified as a source of trust and therefore legitimacy. The older the NGO has been operating the stronger its reputation would be.

- Likewise, the more the NGO has focused activities on an issue such as sexual harassment in Egypt the more it would have expertise and knowledge which are sources for legitimacy.
3. Connecting and Partnering with Policy Makers

- Personal relationships do have a role in providing NGOs with opportunities to become part of policy making. Knowing state officials personally could increase the possibility of NGOs being invited to policy discussions. However, this is not a strategy that NGO depend on or look up to due to the lack of trust and transparency between state and NGOs working on sexual harassment in Egypt.

- NGOs working on sexual harassment welcome working and partnering with state. However, they face challenges in doing so where they are afraid of losing their own values and commitments to their beneficiaries. The more the NGO is clear about its goal as well as its values the more it will be able to balance this equation and will not miss out or reject opportunities of collaboration.

- Lack of trust between NGOs and government challenges the process of participatory policy making. Expectations form NGOs that state will be on the same wave line and have the same values leads to frustration and more distrust.

4. Spaces for Community Inclusion

- Reports, testimonies, open-mic sessions, social media, online applications engaging the people, sessions, workshops, trainings, are all forms and spaces that NGOs working on the issue of sexual harassment in Egypt use to ensure they have open channels of communication with the people they represent.
Coalitions and publishing joint statements is a strategy that NGOs working on sexual harassment use to strengthen their point of views and magnify its reach.

5. Advocacy and Campaigning

Advocacy and campaigning are not the main strategies for NGOs working on sexual harassment in Egypt. This is because it is financially consuming and they do not have the resources to be able to measure the impact of the advocacy and campaigning work.

6. Keeping Press Engaged

Keeping media involved has and is still a strategy that NGOs use. Due to sensitivity of the topic of sexual harassment and the concern that media outlets cannot protect the privacy of the victims, NGOs provide training to journalists and protection to the victims. The priority of keeping press involved as a strategy depends on the times and activities of the NGO. Where they were very engaged with the media in the past three years, while now there is no media interest in them and in the topic of sexual harassment. New form of reaching out to people such as using online media to promote NGOs’ work, producing documentaries, and publishing books.

7. Confrontational Strategies:

Confrontational strategies lead to more exclusion. NGOs working on issues of sexual harassment in a way that is confrontational and
challenging to state lead them to more isolation and widening of the gap between state and the organization.

- Policy reform is a process that is complex and takes a lot of time to see its results. NGOs that are aware of their goals and values, and are able to appreciate their flexibility to come up with new perspectives for their policy reform strategies are more likely to become part of policy change than organizations who see their role solely as critics who oppose and challenge state.

8. **Complementary activities**

- Activities, projects and/or programs implemented by NGOs could increase awareness, need, and create benchmarks that forces state to respond. These activities become available for state to use or implement on a nation-wide scope. Through this NGOs become influencers and inspirers to policy change.

**Context and Flexibility**

- The flexibility of the NGOs in changing their course of work to accommodate the context they are in helps them overcome those limitations.

- Community’s interest in the issue does impact the ability of the NGO to influence policy making. NGOs working on a socially sensitive topic can be very challenging unlike what the literature suggests.
VII. Conclusion and Recommendations

For the first time a mob sexual assault was taped and aired on TV during the 2014 inauguration celebration for President Sisi at Tahrir square and getting large media attention. The issue of sexual harassment in Egypt is intense where alarming numbers of 99.3% of women reported having experienced at least one form of sexual harassment throughout their life (UN Women, 2013). Law modifications in 2014 criminalizing sexual harassment and identifying its definition, and seeing the leadership of Egypt calling for solutions; are new newspaper headlines for Egyptians. Sexual harassment is an issue on the agendas of policy makers with the announcement of the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women on April 28, 2015 (AswatMasriya, 2015).

These developments in anti-sexual harassment legislation are worth a stand for reflection to understand what role did Egyptian NGOs play in order to influence policy making. With women rights organizations and initiatives working on the ground to fight the painful phenomena, comes the need to see where these efforts fit in regards to anti-sexual harassment legislation in Egypt.

To have impact NGOs need to “play a significant role affecting policy-related decision making and actions” (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). The research looked at the definition of NGOs and their role as growing players of policy making around the world. With the growing trend of consulting and bringing NGOs to the discussions of policy reform (Fitzduff and Church, 2004), a literature review on participatory policy making was presented. Policy making was presented focusing on the process and not the policy itself. In the literature, policy change happens when a crisis or a problem
occurs, people then pressure the government to take action and the state responds (Hallsworth, 2011)

Therefore, involving different stakeholders is important to ensure the legitimacy, support from the people, and effectiveness of policy implementation which is translated into more resilient change (Bishop and Davis, 2002 and Hallsworth, 2011). The literature suggests that state needs to consider the needs and values of the people affected and involved in the issue to ensure true policy change can happen (Renn, 2004 and Rowe and Prewer, 2004). This is true however, form the research findings it is suggested that NGOs as well need to consider the needs and priorities of the different stakeholders. Insisting on reaching one’s own goals and out seeing those of the other stakeholders can make NGOs miss out on opportunities of cooperation (Fitzduff and Church, 2004).

What seems to be happening in the issue of anti-sexual harassment policy making in Egypt is what Bishop and Davis refer to as “minimum public participation” where state shares information and consults NGOs (2002). This is evident from the responses of the NGOs; where they were initially invited to the meetings with the National Council of Women but later, they were no more invited, nor did they receive drafts for the policy. Disagreements with members working on the National Policy to Combating Violence against Women was a theme presented from the interview responses, highlighting the need for considering Renn’s criteria for successful policy making discourse (2004). Agreeing on the process and agendas from the beginning, allowing everyone equal opportunities of expression and space for disagreements are all components for successful discourse (Renn, 2004). Therefore, both NGOs and
state need to have space for their ideas to move across, to be transparent about their agendas, to give opportunities for discussions and agreements (Renn, 2004). According to research findings, the responsibility is shared for both state and NGOs, where blaming one stakeholder over the other is not the intention of deliberation.

In reference to the literature, the gap between state and NGOs is large. Although the role of NGOs and their importance in policy making is growing -due to their knowledge, expertise and their innovative ways to tackle the issue- yet, some concerns exists in the relationship between them. Both state and NGOs see themselves as the sole legitimate player for policy making (Thomas et al., 2001 and Fitzduff and Church, 2004). State sees that it is its responsibility alone and NGOs see that they are more knowledgeable and experienced (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). State is concerned that NGOs will take over its work and forces upon it their values (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). The state is accountable to all the people, whereas, NGOs are loyal to their beneficiaries and funding agencies (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). On the other hand, NGOs fear that when working with state they would lose their accountability and commitment to their own values and that of their beneficiaries by empathizing with state officials (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). This was evident when NGOs decided not to continue working with state on the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women, after realizing that their values were not aligned with those of state representatives.

To be able to understand the framework and context that NGOs operate in, the literature sees that societal acceptance for the topic of sexual harassment challenged NGOs in having an impact, unlike the suggestions in the literature; where the less
people are interested in the topic the more chances NGOs have impact on policy making (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). The interview data presented suggests that the societal resistance is due to the society’s lack of interest in the issue and their fear of any reputational harm due to the taboo nature of the issue. Nowadays the situation has changed, where awareness on the topic increased and the interviewed NGOs are hoping that this would support their efforts for the future. The potential that NGOs have in regards to their flexibility and ability to make a change was supported by the research findings where they used a variety of innovative methods in their campaigning such as media, comics, plays, and publications.

The conceptual framework used to identify the strategies that the NGOs working on sexual harassment in Egypt used to be able to influence policy making guided the interviews and brought out the following findings and recommendations:

1. **Collaborators and Not Critics**

The way NGOs frame the issue has a direct effect on how they see their role, how they strategize and the activities that they implement. Blaming state continuously and refusing different perspectives to the problem puts NGOs in a confrontational position. Since the framing of the problem helps identify the course of action, NGOs who want to be able to partner and collaborate with government need to be able to do it in a way that does not point fingers at state causing them to feel vulnerable and protective (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). The re-framing of the problem can guide NGOs to do research on possible solutions other than those used before. Providing alternatives to the problem and focusing on the implementation puts NGOs in a collaborative position with government. They are also encouraged to be clear about
their values and goals to be able to create a balance between what they want and their collaborative strategies to influence policy making.

2. Building Legitimacy

Knowledge and expertise were identified as sources of legitimacy for NGOs working on sexual harassment to become partners in policy making in Egypt. Through day to day activities and research conducted, NGOs become knowledgeable about the problem of sexual harassment. In addition their expertise from the implementation of programs has made them ready to present solutions to state. Differentiating between knowledge and expertise as sources of legitimacy proposes that the more NGOs have expertise from on the ground application of projects and programs the more they would become consultants to state. Therefore, NGOs are encouraged to focus on implementing programs tackling sexual harassment to be able to present their experience to policy makers. Years of experience and focused activities were also identified as factors for building legitimacy. The findings recommend that the more NGOs have focused activities on the issue of sexual harassment the more likely they will be referred to when policy makers need solutions as legitimate partners.

3. Connecting and Partnering with State

Personal relationships were found to have an impact on whether or not NGOs were included in policy discussions. Although NGOs do not depend on it entirely, yet it is a very important strategy to work on and build, to be able to work with policy makers and bring their attention to the NGO’s efforts.
NGOs fear that by working with state they would lose their commitment to their beneficiaries and their values. However, being aware and clear of their values and what they want to achieve in regards to policy can help NGOs create a balance that would not make them miss out on opportunities of working with state. Lack of trust builds on the gap between the NGOs working in Egypt and the government. The study recommends that during the process of deliberation, NGOs have an equal responsibility like state to be open and accepting of different opinions, giving space for disagreements, and sharing their agendas in a transparent manner. This will ensure that any opportunity to work with state would be more effective, resulting in thinning down the gap between the two.

4. Spaces of Community Inclusion

NGOs were able to find creative and innovative ways to create spaces for community inclusion such as; reports, testimonies, open-mic sessions, social media, online applications engaging the people, sessions, workshops, and trainings. Forming coalitions and publishing joint statements are also used by NGOs working on sexual harassment expressing their views collectively and not as individual organizations. Collaboration with other NGOs and stakeholders is includes community and ensuring that the voices of the people reach policy makers.

5. Advocacy and Campaigning

Due to limited resources, NGOs work less on advocacy and campaigns. However, they use online media outlets to reach people. They also use creative ways to reach the people through theatre and comic books. NGOs are encouraged to keep using
these mechanisms in advocating and campaigning for their cause since their administrative and financial resources are limited.

6. Keeping Press Engaged

In regards to press and media, NGOs face challenges with the way media is unable to protect the identity of the victims. NGOs offering training to journalists and insisting on protecting the victims should continue doing so. The relationship between media and NGOs is dormant since the topic of sexual harassment is not considered a hot topic nowadays. Therefore, NGOs need to think of ways to engage media again in the topic so as to continue building awareness and need in the people to create pressure on state. Using new forms of media such as documentary and TV program productions and promoting it through online channels, is another way to make use of the resources they have.

7. Confrontational Strategies

NGOs need to be aware that confrontational strategies are only going to lead to more isolation and rejection from state to the organization. NGOs are encouraged to continuously look at areas of common ground with state and work on expanding them to ensure they are impacting policy making. The process of policy making is very complex and slow therefore, NGOs are encouraged to make use of their flexibility and creatively strategize to make the best of any opportunity they seize.

8. Complementary activities

Activities, projects and/or programs implemented by NGOs could increase awareness, need, and create benchmarks that put pressure on state forcing it to respond. These
projects and programs become available for state to use or implement on a nation-wide scope. Through this NGOs become influencers and inspirers to policy change.

**Context and Flexibility**

NGOs working on sexual harassment in Egypt are not addressing issues that are of priority and interest of society. Due to the taboo nature of the issue; societal resistance to the topic and fear of any reputational harm can make NGO’s work difficult. NGOs are encouraged to look beyond those challenges and identify creative means to reach their goals making use of the flexibility they have.

Working in a community that still blames the victim for sexual harassment and protects the harasser is very challenging. Understanding the needs and concerns of community and addressing them in their work is very critical. NGOs cannot work on their own ignoring the context they operate in. NGOs wanting to become part of policy reform need to make the best of their flexibility in achieving their aspirations.

With all the above it has been found that NGOs either do one or more of the above strategies (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). There is no only one right or wrong way for NGOs to follow, which shows how flexible they are and that they can do all, some or only one of the strategies presented. Flexibility being a unique characteristic of NGOs makes its options greater with different opportunities to impact policy makers based on the context that they are in.

NGOs are an important part of policy reform through their knowledge and expertise and for being legitimate actors of policy making (Fitzduff and Church, 2004). However, working on their own, focused only on their agenda, and excluding the
needs and values of other stakeholders, can risk them becoming isolated. NGOs in Egypt need to be aware that they are operating in special and different times for Egypt than before the 25th of January Revolution. NGOs need to be identifying how they will converse the current status that Egypt is undergoing and how will they face all the challenges and the needs of the people.

NGOs working on reforming and becoming part of anti-sexual harassment policy making, need to start relooking at their strategic plans and see things with the new perspectives of the times they are operating in. Continuing doing the same thing over and over again will not change the outcomes. Considering the needs of the people and the priorities of the country as important stakeholders will help in the reform and developments of sexual harassment policies in Egypt.

NGOs are a vital component of civil society and public life. Through serving the people they have the expertise and knowledge to provide important inputs for policy reform regarding sexual harassment. Partnering with state and the people is critical to reach their goals. NGOs exist for a reason and they have a role that they need to play. Making the best out of their strengths and the context they are operating in is important for their success.
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