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The American University in Cairo
School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

**EFFORTS TO INVOLVE YOUTH IN POLICY MAKING IN EGYPT
POST-2014**

**A Thesis Submitted to the
Public Policy and Administration Department**

**In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Public Policy**

By

Mohamed Hesham Mohamed

Spring 19

EFFORTS TO INVOLVE YOUTH IN POLICY MAKING IN EGYPT POST-2014

Mohamed Hesham Mohamed
Supervised by Professor Ghada Barsoum

ABSTRACT

Egypt has a large youth population; youth between 18 - 29 years represent one fifth of the population. Egypt has long faced challenges adopting serious national policies for youth inclusion and participation. There has been an absence of political commitment towards preparing youth for leadership in addition to promoting youth engagement in policy making. Reviewing youth participation literature reveals that the absence of such strategy can potentially contribute to social and political unrest in the society. Following the announcement of the year of youth in 2016 by the current political leadership, there were a number of initiatives and activities to engage youth in public discussions. These efforts involved the initiation of governmental leadership programs, such as the Presidential Leadership Program, National Youth Conferences and the establishment of the National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment. This study aims at understanding the recent governmental efforts in promoting youth inclusion and participation in public policy making. The study follows a qualitative methodology through conducting in-depth interviews with field professionals, in addition to desk review that draws on the guidelines of youth involvement. Interviews were conducted with representatives from the National Specialized Councils, National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment, in addition to young men and women who participated in governmental youth initiatives and are currently working in public leadership positions. Moreover, interviews were held with civil society representatives and youth volunteers in National Youth Conferences who shared their insights on the issue of youth participation in public policies and decision-making in Egypt. The analysis shows noticeable progress in the youth preparation for participation starting from 2016 in addition to governmental progress in raising the percentages of female participants in decision and policy making processes. The analysis shows that the establishment of the National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment as an independent institution is a promising indicator for the state commitment towards youth. However, there is a need to expand the youth representation in these initiatives through empowering civil society organizations and maintaining a comprehensive set of policies to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of these efforts and the re-establishment of trust between youth and the government.

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Chapter I: Introduction

This study attempts to understand the recent Egyptian governmental efforts in supporting youth participation and engagement in public policies. Youth participation is defined as the “process of involving young people in the institution and decisions that affect their lives” (Checkoway, 2011; p.341). The literature is concentrating on the universal approaches of socio-political youth participation and engagement with a specific focus on public policies. The study will target the efforts exerted in establishing an institutional tool in order to encourage youth participation in public policies on sociopolitical levels. Studies show that promoting youth participation has a relation to institutionalizing democracy, stabilizing societies by reducing marginalization and improving citizens’ interpersonal skills as well as developing high sense of belonging (Sabo, 2001; Checkoway, 2011; Head, 2010 and Checkoway, Allison, & Montoya, 2005).

Over the past few decades, the rising term of youth participation has been investigated by a number of researchers who are keen to study the political and social aspects of youth inclusion in public policies and decision-making. Määttä & Aaltonen (2016); Zani & Barrett (2012); Gökçe-Kızılkaya & Onursal-Beşgül (2016) and other researchers have tackled diverse aspects of youth participation. Some researchers focused in their methodology on community tools such as the non-governmental organizations while others investigated the governmental initiatives, municipalities, and councils in order to study youth participation.

This study aims at understanding the recent governmental efforts in this discipline following the rise of a new political regime, under the leadership of President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi, after two revolutions that have widely influenced the sociopolitical map of Egypt. The topic

of youth participation and the need for their containment and inclusion in institutional forms have been the focus of public discussions over the past few years. The reason for the growing interest in the youth profile is the extent to which they have influenced the sociopolitical life in Egypt starting from 2011 through their participation in political and social movements. Moreover, Egypt is considered a country with a huge youth population where youth from 18-29 years old represent almost a quarter of the population. According to CAPMAS, the demography of Egypt reveals that almost 70% of the population are under 40 years old¹. Relevant studies reveal that adopting youth participation and inclusion strategy is not a luxury since it protects the society from negative social and political implications. The absence of a serious political commitment to foster youth participation and engagement strategies can affect the stability of the socio-political system and contribute to possible socio-political unrest. Consequently, there is a need to study their recent commitments towards adopting a youth participation and inclusion agenda in policy making, besides analyzing the level of youth engagement in the policy making processes.

The thesis highlights the significance of youth participation in public policies in the conceptual framework section with detailed demonstration of the relevant youth participation variables. The literature review section demonstrates in detail the scholars' findings and arguments regarding youth participation and their inclusion in policy making. The background chapter presents a brief review of the most recent efforts of promoting youth participation in Egypt in addition to a review of the constitutional articles that support youth inclusion, followed by a brief presentation of the latest public policies announced: Egypt's vision 2030 and the role of the ministries in engaging the youth in this vision. These sections establish the foundation for

¹<http://www.eg.undp.org/content/egypt/en/home/countryinfo.html>

formulating the problem the research is tackling and its purpose while accordingly presenting the main research question and the adopted qualitative methodology.

A. Background

1. Significance of Youth Inclusion and Participation Internationally

National policies are designed by governments in order to achieve specific developmental goals. Since the early 2000s, countries worldwide are exerting noticeable efforts in aligning their developmental agenda with the global millennium goals. Three years ago, the United Nations announced the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that replaced the global millennium goals. The international organizations such as the World Bank and the United Nations agencies highlight regularly the importance of youth inclusion in the process of public policies formulation and implementation simultaneously. The inclusion of youth in the process of decision-making in general is highlighted as significant in all the national, regional, and international conventions (Gal, 2017).

The interest has grown over the past decades to promote youth participation and inclusion in the developing world as a result of the massive increase of youth population that globally reached 1.3 billion citizens aged 14-24 years old (Chabaan, 2009, p.1). Researchers highlight that the level of youth participation and inclusion in the public sphere reflects the level of the state commitment towards handling the youth profile as a priority (Ibrahim, 2014). As the youth portion of the overall demographic group increases, the need for adopting a serious agenda for youth inclusive policies rises in order to meet the requirements of the new demographic group (Barsoum, 2013, p.2).

Many Scholars argue that empowering youth and boosting their participation cannot be perceived as a luxury or a governmental privilege since they are social obligations that are essentially required to avoid consequent social and political negative implications. Chabaan (2009) introduced empirical studies that demonstrate the fact that countries which include young population of 15-29 years old, representing at the same time 30 percentage or more of the population, are more vulnerable to violence and consequently political unrest regardless of the economic conditions (Chabaan, 2009, p.1). The Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Dr. Natalie Kanem, said in the Youth Day of 2017 that “If we want a more peaceful world, we can no longer afford to leave young people behind. We must listen to and work with them”². According to Dr. Kanem, establishing peace in the world is highly correlated with engaging young people in relevant policies (ibid).

According to the World Bank, civic participation is labeled as one of the five levels prescribed as vital for youth besides health, education, employment, and family formation (Barsoum, 2013, p.5). In its World Development Report 2016, the World Bank emphasized that both the level of social integration and civic participation are correlated with the level of public education, health services, and employment opportunities provided (World Development Report, 2006).

The World Bank's Participation Source Book (1996) offers a definition that identifies participation as a “process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decision and resources which affect them” (Ezema & Ezeah & Ishiwu, 2015, p.34). Youth participation according to the UNICEF is taking part in the decision,

²<http://egypt.unfpa.org/en/news/peace-depends-participation-young-people-statement-unfpa-acting-executive-director-dr-natalia-0>

activities and what is introduced as the “Influencing Process” (Ibrahim, 2014, p.39). This influencing process was briefly demonstrated as enabling the youth to “get access to information, express the views, taking part in activities, and being able to make choices”(ibid, p.30). In its Enhancing Youth Political Participation report, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) perceives youth participation as an essential factor for achieving social change and political stability (UNDP, 2013). The international community and the United Nations (UN) agree on the importance of supporting youth inclusion. Various UN conventions and resolutions tackle youth matters and support institutional efforts for youth participation (ibid). The European Union promotes participation and social inclusion as key pillars in its youth strategy 2010-2018³. The objective of the European Youth Strategy is engaging the youth in the whole process of public policies starting from formalization, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (ibid). The increasing interest in youth inclusion is obvious in the plan adopted by the UN Secretary-General in 2012 to promote social, economic, and political integration of youth, which reflects the significance of this field for policy makers. (Osman & Girgis, 2016).

2. Youth Participation in National Policies - Egypt Profile

In 2014, a brief report issued by the UNICEF raised the need of the government to foster policies that reflect the challenges faced by the youth⁴. The UNICEF reveals that the UN agencies in conjunction with the ministries promote inclusion and civic participation as well as skills development (ibid). Wardany(2014, p.37), in his study on youth in Egypt, specifically before the revolution of 2011, argues that throughout the 2000s the political leadership lacked the existence of serious national youth policies as well as the “the instability of the

³https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy_en

⁴https://www.unicef.org/egypt/eg_adolescent_fact_sheet.pdf

organizational structures supporting youth affairs”.A study supported by the Euro-Med demonstrated that the National Youth Policy that was introduced in 2003-2004 was not implemented despite its approval by the government and the parliament⁵.

The Egyptian Constitution of 2014 in its 81, 82, and 87 articles raised important points related to youth, civic, and political participation. In Article 82, the state is committed to empower youth, support their participation in the public life, “guarantee the provision of care to the youth and youngsters shall endeavor to discover their talents; develop their cultural, scientific, psychological, physical and creative abilities, encourage their engagement in group and volunteer activities and enable them to participate in public life”⁶. Article 81 emphasized that political rights should be provided equally to citizens:“The State shall also ensure their exercise of all political rights and integration with other citizens in compliance with the principles of equality, justice and equal opportunities”(ibid).

The Population Council (2014) conducted a survey that aimed at studying the level of youth inclusion civically and politically in addition to other relevant topics, such as unemployment. The survey showed that the Egyptian youth believe that the internet could play a major role in their participation in national policies in the current time (Osman & Girgis, 2016). According to the published statistics, 90% of the youth agree that internet will influence the citizens to interact positively with the governmental policies whereas 87% think that internet helps citizens in understanding government vision and plans (UNPF& Population Council, 2014). In their recommendations, based on the survey and research, Osman &Girgis (2016) argue that new platforms for youth participation should be available in order to transfer

⁵http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Egypt_2010_Youth_Policy_Profile.pdf

⁶<http://www.sis.gov.eg/Newvr/Dustor-en001.pdf>

constitutions' articles into a reality and to raise the percentages of civic and political participation.

3. Promoting Youth Participation and Gender Equality in Policy Making (Egypt's Strategic Plan 2030)

Egypt announced its long-term strategic vision, Egypt 2030, in conjunction with the global sustainable development goals SDGs 2030. According to the official governmental website of Egypt 2030, the vision consists of four main pillars which are: Social Justice, knowledge andInnovation, Economic Development, and Environment⁷. The main outlines of the strategic vision are inspired by the SDGs where Egypt is among 22 countries who are committed to report on the progress of the SDGSs' objectives⁸.

The Egypt 2030 website demonstrates the vision in the following sentence:“The new Egypt will possess a competitive, balanced and diversified economy, dependent on innovation and knowledge, based on justice, social integrity and participation, characterized by a balanced and diversified ecological collaboration system, investing the ingenuity of place and humans to achieve sustainable development and to improve Egyptians' life quality”.According to the Egyptian Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, each pillar of the four pillars was broken down to main objectives, sub-objectives, key performance indicators and then policies, programs, and projects⁹.For instance,health policies included adopting inclusive health coverage and enhancing preventive procedures and health programs (ibid). One of the SDGs'policies that Egypt is committed to is “increasing political participation of citizens of all

⁷<http://sdsegypt2030.com/?lang=en>

⁸<http://www.eg.undp.org/content/egypt/en/home/sdgoverview/post-2015-development-agenda.html>

⁹http://mcit.gov.eg/Upcont/Documents/Reports%20and%20Documents_492016000_English_Booklet_2030_compressed_4_9_16.pdf

ages and of putting in place laws to help achieve this” (Osman and Girgis, 2016, p.2). This policy is formulated from the social pillar that aims at supporting the citizen participation based on efficiency and reinforcing social mobility based on skills¹⁰.

Promoting youth participation and inclusion in the current public policies is highlighted as important by a number of state officials. The Egyptian Ministry of Planning, Monitoring & Administrative Reform is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the strategic vision 2030 and has accordingly launched a mobile application in order to enable the Egyptian youth to review policies and to share their opinions regarding the announced vision¹¹. In her talk in the third annual conference of the economy department in Sadat Academy, Dr. Hala El-Saeed, the Minister of Planning, Monitoring, and Administrative Reform discussed the mobile application initiative that has the name “Sharek2030”. According to Dr. El-Saeed, Sharek (Participate in Arabic) was launched under the supervision of President Al-Sisi to engage the Egyptian youth in the national vision and its policies¹².

Sharek (Participate in Arabic) is an online platform that provides detailed description of the policies listed on the governmental agenda till 2030¹³. The online platform and the mobile application enable the citizens to comment on the projects and to provide insights and recommendations. In March 2018, a further survey was circulated online by the Ministry of

¹⁰http://mcit.gov.eg/Upcont/Documents/Reports%20and%20Documents_492016000_English_Booklet_2030_compressed_4_9_16.pdf

¹¹<https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/3/35082/New-tech-app-to-allow-youth-participate-in-Egypt-Strategy>

¹²<http://mpmar.gov.eg/Media/newsdetails/3334>

¹³<https://vision.sharek.gov.eg/2013/topic/economy/#econ6>

Planning among youth through the social media platforms. The survey aimed at updating the vision and engaging the citizens in the process of policies formalization and implementation¹⁴.

The importance of women engagement in policy making is a scope of ongoing discussions and research of various international organizations, such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). In 2013, the UNDP issued a report that discussed challenges facing women in social and political inclusion. The raised Challenges could be summarized in the following: unequal access to education, training and information, lack of awareness on social rights, lack of awareness on political rights through biasness against women in decision-making positions, inequality between men and women in power sharing and decision-making¹⁵. In 2018, the Egyptian cabinet witnessed the largest number of female ministers in the Egyptian history with 8 ministers out of 16 representing 25% of the Egyptian ministers¹⁷. Moreover, in 2018 as well, women represented more than a quarter of the governors' reshuffle especially with regard to the positions of deputy governor. In August 2018, 18 women were appointed as deputies; 3 of them are young women alumni of the Presidential Leadership Program¹⁸. Earlier in 2017, the first ever Christian female governor in Egypt Manal Awad Mikhael was appointed by the president¹⁹. In addition, the refined constitution of 2014 gave women a quota of 25% for the local legislatures. International organizations, such as the UNDP, acknowledge the progress in

¹⁴<http://agrfac.mans.edu.eg/news-events-17-18/4447-questionnaire-updating-strategy-sustainable-development-vision-egypt-2030>

¹⁵[http://www.eg.undp.org/content/dam/egypt/docs/Women%20Empowerment/Women_Empowerment_Swedish_Proposal_26Nov2013%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.eg.undp.org/content/dam/egypt/docs/Women%20Empowerment/Women_Empowerment_Swedish_Proposal_26Nov2013%20(2).pdf)

¹⁶<https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/2/52152/For-the-first-time-8-female-ministers-in-Egypt-s>

¹⁷<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/features/2018/06/14/For-the-first-time-in-Egypt-Eight-female-ministers-in-the-new-cabinet.html>

¹⁸<https://www.elwatannews.com/news/details/3624742>

¹⁹<http://www.africanews.com/2018/08/31/egypt-s-first-coptic-christian-female-governor-manal-awad-mikhael/>

engaging women in public dialogue and decision-making process in Egypt²⁰. In 2016, the percentage of women elected in the Egyptian Parliament was the highest ever in history when 89 women, 75 elected and 14 appointed by the president, became parliament members²¹. Correspondingly, the youth parliamentarians in general who are under 35 years old are 60 members²². According to Article 11 of the 2014 constitution, “The state commits to achieving equality between women and men in all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution”²³.

4. Institutionalization of Youth Dialogue & Participation

Since 2016, the current Egyptian political leadership was keen to organize communication tool with youth through the National Youth Conferences. Starting with the year of the Egyptian youth in 2016 (Osman&Girgis, 2016), the first youth conference was organized in SharmEl-Sheikh with the presence of the president, government officials, and the promising youth leaders to discuss the challenges, plans, and the priorities of the government in the upcoming years²⁴. Throughout 2016 and 2017, four National Youth Conferences were held in different governorates: Aswan, Ismailia, SharmEl-Sheikh, and Alexandria. The conferences discussed Egypt’s vision 2030 and the national, social, political, and economic policies in the

²⁰<http://www.eg.undp.org/content/egypt/en/home/ourwork/gender-equality/overview.html>

²¹<https://www.egyptindependent.com/women-s-representation-new-parliament-highest-egypt-s-history/>

²²<https://www.youm7.com/story/2016/1/3/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B9%D8%AA-%D9%82%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%84%D9%80-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A3%D8%A9-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AE%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86/2521496>

²³https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt_2014.pdf

²⁴<https://egyouth.com/en/home/>

vision's agenda²⁵. The last national conference was held at Cairo University and attended by 3000 students from different universities and governorates. The sessions of the conference were conducted by youth where they discussed the development of the health insurance system and education challenges with government officials in addition to “Ask the President” discussion panel²⁶. According to the State Information Service, the sixth National Youth Conference resulted in a set of recommendations²⁷:

- i. Declaring 2019 Egypt's “year of education”;
- ii. Launching the national project for developing the Egyptian education system;
- iii. Allocating 20 percent of the scholarships in Egypt and abroad for teachers for ten years;
- iv. Establishing a body for approving the vocational education programs to be compatible with the international standards;
- v. Establishing a training center for the teachers of the vocational education programs to be compatible with the international standards;
- vi. Assigning the cabinet and other bodies concerned to link the researches and plans in the universities with the state's needs;
- vii. Assigning Egyptian universities to find solutions to problems;
- viii. Assigning the cabinet and the Supreme Council of Universities to develop a comprehensive plan to restore the sports, artistic, and cultural activities to the campuses.

²⁵<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/274058/Egypt/Politics-/Egypys-fourth-National-Youth-Conference-to-start-i.aspx>

²⁶<http://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/133433/6th-National-Youth-Conference?lang=en-us>

²⁷²⁷<http://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/133433/6th-National-Youth-Conference?lang=en-us>

The presidential leadership program's (PLP) members and alumni are an important component of the dialogue established in the National Youth Conferences. The program is a presidential initiative that was announced in the Year of Youth 2016 and aims at targeting “young future leaders and enable them to acquire the skills they need to learn about governance, administrative and political fields and most importantly to develop their ability to attain critical and analytical thinking”²⁸. According to the criteria published on the PLP official website, the program is open to Egyptian youth from 20 to 30 years old from all governorates to apply and to follow a selection process that starts with an online application, language test and an interview. Following the selection phase, 500 participants are chosen to study topics of governance, administrative and political fields for around 8 months (ibid).

As part of the institutionalization of youth capacity building and empowerment, a presidential decree announced in late 2017 the establishment of the National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment (NTA)²⁹. According to the State Information Service, the academy aims at developing the skills of youth in order to empower them so as to achieve development in all state sectors (Ibid). Based in 6th of October city and under the direct supervision of the presidency, the mission of the academy will be training the youth for public service³⁰. On the other hand, lately in August 2018, President Al-Sisi appointed six young people from the alumni of the Presidential Leadership Program (PLP) as deputy governors³¹. This initiative was part of the national strategy concerned with engaging youth in decision-making starting from 2016. Another batch of youth, following their graduation from the PLP, were selected as assistants to

²⁸<https://plp.eg/en/home/>

²⁹<http://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/117399?lang=en-us>

³⁰<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/276209/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-Sisi-issues-decree-forming-academy-to-train.aspx>

³¹<http://massai.ahram.org.eg/NewsQ/50/263777.aspx>

ministers, such as the case of the Ministry of Planning³² and are now exposed to high levels of decision-making and policy engagement.

B. Problem Statement

Before 2011, there was a lack of serious political willingness to engage youth on different socio-political levels of policy making. There was an absence of serious national youth participation and inclusion policies while the institutions oriented to youth affairs were suffering from instability. The formulated policies that targeted youth back then lacked the serious implementation willingness from the authorized institutions in addition to the obstacles faced in fostering policies that could tackle the huge youth population in Egypt. That was a key factor that contributed to the social and political unrest in January 2011. Accordingly, in order to maintain a socially stable society, there is a need to empower youth and boost their participation through sustainable national strategies. In light of the demonstrated international organizations' youth participation literature, youth participation is vital in achieving social change and political stability. International organizations, such as UNDP and World Bank, stated that youth participation starts with a process of preparation and empowerment by having access to information and learning to express views in relevant activities. Youth, according to Checkoway (2011), are recommended to participate in the decisions and the institutions that affect their lives. Participation takes place through activities intending to influence government policies through either conventional or unconventional forms. Conventional forms are institutional tools where

³²<https://akhbarelyom.com/news/newdetails/2565027/1/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D8%AE%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%AC%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%AC-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A6%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%A3%D9%87%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%84%D9%84%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%85%D8%B9>

youth participation directly affect the formation or implementation of public policy starting from formalization and moving to implementation (Gökçe-Kızılkaya & Onursal-Besgül,2016, p.98).Therefore, following the rise of a new political regime in Egypt in 2014 along with a refined constitution in the same year, there is a need to understand firstly the challenges facing the promotion of youth participation in the public domain from the side of the engaged experts and institutions and secondly the recent efforts of the Egyptian government in this field following two revolutions in 2011 & 2013 and a new constitution.

C. Research Objective

As discussed in the introduction, this research aims at understanding the recent governmental efforts in promoting youth participation in public policies as part of their overall engagement in decision-making. The previous section highlighted the significance of youth participation and the importance of its support through national strategies. Egypt announced its recent social, economic, and environmental strategies in 2015 under the name of Egypt 2030. Starting from 2016, the Egyptian government announced a number of youth-oriented initiatives through the presidential institution and relevant ministries. Governmental officials raised the importance of youth participation in the Egyptian policies. For instance, initiatives supported by the presidency such as the National Youth Conferences engaged youth with governmental officials to discuss policies and various social, economic, and political challenges. The research will accordingly attempt to understand the relevant youth participation efforts in order to stand on the level of youth participation in Egypt and to examine the sustainability of the current tools aiming at analyzing the findings and producing policy recommendations, if required.

D. Research Question

What are the recent efforts of the Egyptian government and political leadership exerted in encouraging the youth participation in the processes of policy making?

Accordingly, this main theme includes sub research questions in order to establish a well-structured analysis as per the following questions;

- 1- What are the strategies adopted by the government to increase youth participation in policy making?
- 2- What is the role of the youth relevant institutions in promoting youth participation in policy making?
- 3- How is the role of youth portrayed in Egypt's 2014 constitution?
- 4- What are the insights of the engaged youth on the level of youth participation in national policies in Egypt and their views on the current challenges and the possible recommendations?

Chapter II: Literature Review

The literature agrees on the importance of promoting youth participation on both political and social aspects. Youth participation is highlighted as a significant concept because of its linkage to developing democratic societies. Scholars (e.g. Bourn, 2017; and Gal, 2017) argue that youth participation in an active way should be encouraged and developed at early stages through education as it supports the succession of the process. Moreover, scholars (e.g. Checkoway, 2005; Kızılkaya & Beşgöl, 2017) claim that local councils, municipalities, and initiatives fostered by government influence the institutionalization of youth participation as well as the matter of raising its efficiency and effectiveness. Technology and digital platforms play a vital role nowadays in attracting the youth to review policies and engaging them in policy making. However, youth face challenges in the dynamics of their relationship with adults that can negatively influence their engagement in the whole process of participation, so the governments should adopt clear youth participation policies in order to foster an effective adult-youth partnership as introduced earlier in the conceptual framework.

Youth participation is critically important for achieving democracy on a societal level in addition to developing the competencies of the individuals (Checkoway, 2011). The study focuses on introducing a hypothesis that links the socioeconomic status of the youth to the levels of participation within their communities. Checkoway (2011), accordingly, argued that low socioeconomic factor affects the percentages of youth participation in the conventional participation forms; nevertheless, youth with low income are more motivated to mobilize in groups in order to influence decisions on local levels. This study raises some questions that need further investigation by researchers about youth participation in policy making field, such as what

are the skills and competencies required by youth for active participation? What are the strategies needed for inclusion? And how to handle a multicultural youth community in the engagement process (ibid)?

Checkoway, Allison, & Montoya(2005) studied youth participation by focusing on municipalities as an institutional tool to promote youth inclusion and engagement in public policies. The scholars argued that this tool promotes democracy in the society and supports the process of making the decisions more participatory since it “draws upon their expertise and improves institutional decisions of municipalities of which they are members”. Kızılkaya and Beşgöl(2017, p.109) studied city councils and the efforts of youth participation by arguing that local municipalities are important in encouraging institutional youth participation: “We treated city councils as inclusive institutions, which would enhance participation in theory”. City councils support youth community and strengthen the society on the basis of “the rule of the people” (ibid, p.1150). The study of the aforementioned two scholars investigated the role of “youth commission” in San Francisco through conducting in-depth interviews in order to discover the experience of youth engagement and to what extent this experience can benefit the improvement of the decision-making process. This youth commission was a youth initiative that was formulated and managed by youth who are engaged in public policies through presenting proposals and analysis to government officials and advocates to support the highlighting of issues and policies. The commission is involved in various social concerns and documented that more than 1300 youth were engaged in establishing the 5-year development plan for children and youth by the Mayor of San-Francisco. This experience reflects a positive form of partnership between youth and adults through documented cooperation between youth and government institutions. In this model, there was support in providing the needed information for conducting

research and assessing policies as well as the support of the officials in allocating fund for the commission's activities.

Frank (2006), through studying planning and youth participation, raised an argument concerning the lack of efficiency in the engagement of youth in an institutionalized activity, such as planning and decision-making activities. One of the challenges facing youth participation and inclusion is the lack of knowledge and understanding of what the youth need and concerned about. The study argued that the institutions that are supposed to serve the interest of youth and work on their engagement in planning activities are more “adult-oriented”. Power dynamics and politics within these institutions play a negative role in the process of youth participation making it more theoretical rather than a practical concept (ibid). Kızılkaya and Beşgül (2017) have concluded that there are challenges facing the city councils in making the partnership between youth and adults effective, such as the paternalistic structures and the absence of seriousness in engaging youth in decision-making process.

A qualitative study was conducted by Havliech and Curry (2018) on Youth Advisory Boards YAB in order to examine the approaches of participation using participatory tools and levels of promoting youth participation in decision-making. The scholars interviewed YAB representatives through audio taped telephone calls after classifying these youth institutions following the theories of ladder of participation: “Adult Led”, “Adult Driven Youth”, “Youth Adult Partnership”, and “Youth Led”; the main finding of the study was that there is a critical need to spread the knowledge of the different forms of youth participation in public policies. Some methodologies that are implementing paternalistic structures in youth participation, such as Adult Led, potentially result in discouraging the youth from participation (ibid). One of the

challenges facing youth participation that is raised over the study is the lack of engagement in planning activities: “When facilitators make decisions about program activities, rules for participation, and member roles with minimal inclusion of members, there is an increased potential for programs to be misaligned with the needs and interests of youth, which may lead to member disengagement” (ibid, P262). Another qualitative study by Cushing (2015) investigated some youth plans that were formulated in the United States on local levels, using a mixed approach by analyzing documents and conducting interviews. The study findings revealed that mobilizing youth and promoting their engagement in planning and implementation efforts positively influence the level of seriousness of policy makers and their commitment to its implementation (ibid).

Bourn (2017) studied youth participation in a global context that highlights the importance of developing education systems which support the encouragement of youth participation in decision-making processes. According to Gal (2017), the personal characteristics of the family and the engaged adults in the youth's childhood are critical factors that affect youth participation. Bourn (2017) raised the importance of engaging participation skills and informal youth activities in the educational curriculums. Bourn's study focused on what is effective in youth participation and whether Youth-Led initiatives are fully effective or not. Forms of active participation that include activities and “learning by doing” trends tend to attract the youth to engage in sociopolitical topics, for “effective participation and engagement are most evident when there is a clear and direct relationship to the interests, lifestyle and culture of young people” (ibid, p.12).

Active youth participation was approached by other researchers, such as Kahne and Middaugh (2012), by highlighting the role of digital media in encouraging youth inclusion in public policies. Both scholars, while studying the American context and the role of social media in supporting active participation, highlighted the role of these media tools in informing youth about the recent social, political, and environmental issues. After reviewing the statistical data of youth and social media, the study concluded that there is a need to encourage creating online platforms and hubs to support the mobilization of youth participation efforts in relevant matters of public policies (ibid).

In an ecological model introduced by Gal (2017), the concept of participation starts at early stages before adulthood so as to prepare youth for the process of decision-making participation. Active participation on sociopolitical levels should be structured and institutionalized from childhood to include “family, neighborhood, schools, the public care, courts, children's and youth organizations, commercial settings, public policy institutions, non-government and community-based organizations” (ibid, P62). Social Integration on multiple social levels was raised by Head (2010) in addition to the youth participation approach of Gal (2017). In his study, Cushing (2015), argued that it is essential to develop youth leadership skills in order to empower youth to express their views and to mobilize themselves so as to participate in the public domain, for “youth lack the knowledge and skill to work within an adult structure. In addition, scholars encourage the development of youth leadership skills and community planning knowledge as an important way of building capacity and enabling youth to participate effectively” (ibid, p.53).

Dodd and Boyd (2000) investigated the potential community and the governmental strategies that are focused on sustaining the participation in the decision-making processes. The study investigated the relevant experiences in the developed countries and recommended that there is a need for maintaining an organized association concerned with empowering youth with the required knowledge and skills for engagement in the policy making process. Furthermore, the study recommended that access to information is the foundation for an effective policy participation. Accordingly, governments should foster setting down strategies with the aim of encouraging citizen participation and ensuring high levels of engagement reflecting on the ladder of participation (ibid, p.16,17,18);

- “Commitment to use community input in a meaningful and transparent way”,
- “Capacity for open and consistent communication”,
- “Knowledge of best practices on policies that are most effective in addressing a particular issue and a willingness to listen to community expertise on best practices”,
- “Ability and willingness to assess the impact of policies in reference to gender, age, culture, income levels and other factors”,
- “Facilitation skills to support collaborative processes for working across sectors and outside of traditional government silos”,
- “Willingness to integrate more traditional forms of expertise (such as epidemiological studies) with qualitative and quantitative community-based research”.

As per the aforementioned, promoting youth participation within participatory approaches requires national strategies and the existence of a political will. Many scholars studied youth participation according to different perspectives and areas of interest. Some studies

emphasized how it is important to take into consideration some vital factors such as the socioeconomic status and cultural diversity in reference to the approached youth. Meanwhile, other researchers focused on the Youth-Adult relationship through the process of youth participation, the nature of this relation and whether there is a mutual understanding or a struggle with regard to communication and common integration in decision-making. Formal and informal educational curriculums as well as the need to identify the necessary skills for supporting youth participation in public policies were an argument raised in the literature. Correspondingly, technology exists in literature emphasizing its role in encouraging youth participation and disseminating the needed information so as to establish the knowledge required for participation in public issues. Finally, it is argued by many scholars that supporting youth participation influences interpersonal skills, develops leadership capabilities, and introduces organized and institutional models of citizen inclusion to the societies.

Chapter III: Conceptual Framework

The “Conceptual Framework” section is focusing on the important terminologies used in this study aiming at establishing a rational academic linkage between youth participation terms. First of all, the term “participation” is used extensively by scholars in the relevant literature. In this section, the researcher is investigating the abovementioned term’s importance in all relevant aspects of public policies with a precise focus on youth. This section is also critical in establishing an academic understanding of the terms that will be used throughout the study as well as their significance that will be reflected in the analysis chapter by linking the ideas together and introducing a concrete argument in light of the recent academic concepts. In this “Conceptual Framework” section, the ladder of participation theory, the relevant academic reflections on this theory, and the relation of youth participation to important concepts such as the institutionalization of decision-making, participatory approaches in public policies, promoting democracy, and active participation will be highlighted. In the meantime, these concepts are argued to be the variables affecting the youth participation in public policies and the decision-making processes within this framework.

Firstly, policy is defined as “the guiding principle or a plan of action agreed by a group” (Devon. and Hébert, 2000, p.8). According to Mackay & Shaxton (2007), public policy is the course of action that guides a range of related actions in a given field. Cochran (1999) defined public policy by arguing that it “refers to the actions of governments and the intentions that determine those actions” (Ibrahim, 2014, P18). A policy is the plan set by individuals who has the authority of its implementation (Devon. and Hébert, 2000) and it is supposed to influence citizens. According to Peters' (1999) definition of public policy, “Public Policy is the sum of

government activities, whether acting directly or through agents as it has an influence on the life of citizens.”

Defining participation in policy making requires firstly the differentiation between politicians and bureaucrats. Scholars (e.g. ALESINA and TABELLINI, 2007) argue that the understanding of policy making as formulated only by politicians and implemented by bureaucrats lacks deep analysis since both players influence each other in decision-making. Schnose (2017) argue that bureaucratic institutions influence the politicians in the process of policy making through experience and knowledge factors. For instance, some parties in UK and Germany prefer to hire bureaucrats who are “knowledgeable and well trained in policy making process” instead of politicians who just share the same ideology (ibid, p.344). The role of both players is intersected, for “Policies are chosen and implemented by both elected representatives (politicians) and non- elected bureaucrat” (ALESINA and TABELLINI, 2007, p.169). Consequently, politicians as traditional as policy makers and as bureaucratic as the executives are approached simultaneously in participation theories in order to enhance the policy outcome in general. The youth participation discussed below tackles the process from the preparation phase till the engagement and influencing phase.

The participation theory is a process where the stakeholders of a relevant policy have an influence in its formulation and execution while playing a role in the decision-making process and the utilization of resources (Ezema&Ezeah, 2015). Moreover, Checkoway (2010) demonstrates that participation consists of strategies that involve the mobilization of youth socially and politically where the formalization of policies and tracking its implementation are vital tools for participation enhancement. Participation is classified into “conventional and

unconventional forms” (Gökçe-Kızılkaya & Onursal-Beşgöl,2016) where conventional is the activities that include interaction with the governmental policies and decision-making processes whether through the traditional political tools or the participatory dynamics (ibid).

Määttä and Aaltonen (2016) discussed the concept of youth participation and argued that its definition varies from one context to another. Some studies discuss socio-economic challenges and social service tools, such as the Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). However, others highlight political participation, conventional forms of participation, the significance of political rights, and the need for youth inclusion in decision-making processes under the theme of “youth participation”. Participation, according to Zani and Barrett (2012), is “the engagement of an individual with the interests, goals, concerns and common good of a community”. On another note, participation is defined in a political context as the “activities intending to influence government policies; either directly by affecting the formation or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of policy-makers” (Gökçe-Kızılkaya & Onursal-Beşgöl, 2016, p.98). Thus, the term “youth participation” has many representations on social and political levels. According to the paper published by Checkoway (2010) on youth participation, it is essential to adopt a common understanding of the terminology “participation” as there is an obvious note that the definition of the word varies according to the scope of interest of either the study or the research.

In an earlier publication, Checkoway & Guitierrez (2006) defined “youth participation” generally as a “process of involving young people in the institution and decisions that affect their lives” (Havlicek, Curry, 2017, p.255). Hence, participation basically targets encouraging the engagement of the youth in initiatives and mobilizing their efforts in order to influence “policy

proceedings of public agencies” (Checkoway, Allison, 2005). Furthermore, the importance of establishing an intergenerational relationship between adults and youth in the processes of public policy was highlighted in the literature (ibid). Bourn (2017, p.11) defined “youth participation” as the “informal forms of engagement and action in or out of school but outside the curriculum, such as after-school clubs, school councils, youth groups and more informal forms of activity, whether individually or in social groups”.

Many researches discussed an interesting concept that was firstly introduced by Arnstein (1969) identified in literature as the “ladder of participation”. Ladder of participation is a theory that describes the different possible forms of citizen participation in relation with the governments. According to Arnstein (1969, p.216), “participation is a cornerstone of democracy”. Levels of citizen participation reflect the distribution of power within the society in all fields. The theory reveals the dynamics of the governments' interaction with citizens in the process of decision-making through demonstrating the possible norms of participation, according to Arnstein's argument, starting from marginalization till the ideal proposed case of citizen inclusion. In this theory, Arnstein (1969) classified citizen participation into eight rungs within a virtual ladder that starts with non-participation, followed by the degrees of tokenism, and ends with the degrees of citizen power. (Huxley and Andrews 2016).

According to Arnstein, the non-participation phase consists of two rungs: the “manipulation” of citizens and “therapy”, the second stage of “degrees of tokenism” includes: informing, consultation, and placation while the final stage, that is the “degrees of citizens power”, introduces: partnership, delegated power, and citizen control (Arnstein, 1969). The aim behind Arnstein's theory is that societies reach the participatory forms in planning and development

which ensure the engagement of citizens in decision-making and power sharing in the last three stages: partnership, delegated power and citizen control (Kopetzky, 2009). Arnstein regards informing citizens as the basic level of citizen participation in decision-making: “Informing citizens by providing useful information can be a crucial first step towards legitimate citizen participation” (ibid, P54).

On the other side, Dorsey (1994) worked on developing the theory of ladder of participation and proposed new segmentations. The scholar started with informing the citizens, being the lowest level of participation, when there are low levels of trust moving to increasing the level of involvement when the level of trust increases (Hurlbert & Gupta, 2015). Dorsey started with informing citizens and recommended that the communication between citizens and governments improves and evolves into a two-way communication when the level of participation increases (ibid). The proportional relation between trust and participation, according to Dorsey (1994), begins with educating, informing, and gathering information as a basic level in the participation ladder between citizens and governments. The improvement of participation from this basic level into engagement in defining socio-political issues and seeking advice develops the trust within the citizens. The sustainability and development of participation result in achieving high levels of trust, which is the top level of his proposed ladder of participation (ibid).

Concurrently, Roger Hart (1997) proposed modifications to the last three levels of Arnstein's ladder of participation. The first stage in Hart's model of the ladder is when adults initiate decisions and share them with youth; the second stage takes place when decisions are initiated and managed by youth; the third stage is the highest level of participation when both

youth and adults share decisions regarding public matters while the management and implementation of such decisions are fully delegated to youth (Ibrahim, 2014). The objective of each stage was demonstrated by Funk and Borek (2012). Whereas the first stage aims at empowering youth with the relevant experience needed in research projects, the second stage's goal is to enable youth to get engaged in the whole process of creating and managing decision-making (ibid). Lastly, the third stage level's objective is to achieve full coordination between adults and youth where an "equal partnership" is established (ibid, p.4).

Roger's Hart Ladder of Young People's Participation	
Level 8	Rung 8: Youth and adults share decision-making
Level 7	Rung 7: Youth led and initiated action
Level 6	Rung 6: Adult initiated shared decision with youth
Level 5	Rung 5: Youth consulted and informed
Level 4	Rung 4: Youth assigned and informed
Level 3	Rung 3: Youth are tokenized
Level 2	Rung 2: Youth are decoration
Level 1	Rung 1: Youth are manipulated

Source: Funk, A., Borek, N. V., Taylor, D., Grewal, P., Tzemis, D., & Buxton, J. A. (2012). Climbing the "Ladder of participation"

The ladder of participation and the common ideas introduced by scholars highlight the linkage between encouraging citizen participation and supporting the growth of democracy. By

reviewing the paper of Boldt (2017) on Institutional Youth Participation, there is also a noticeable connection between encouraging participation and democracy. It is argued that the absence of youth participation has negative influence on establishing a positive democratic system. Määttä and Aaltonen (2016) argue that poor participation affects the sociopolitical environment, and hence “jeopardizes the democratic system”. European institutions, for instance, are keen to integrate basic democratic knowledge into youth programs so as to deliver mandatory set of skills which are: “critical thinking, communication skills, increasing the sense of belonging to the society” (Bourn, 2017). However, Bourn introduces another argument in his paper claiming that effective participation and youth engagement in the European programs is more efficient when it is linked to the interests and culture of youth through technology that plays a vital role in promoting participatory approach in policy making (ibid.). After studying the modern ways of engaging youth in the public domain, Kahne and Middaugh (2012) argue that participatory political tools attract youth to participate in the public domain rather than the fundamental political tools, such as the political parties. In the meantime, online platforms tend to further encourage youth to engage in public matters since they are currently considered a main source of information for young people (ibid). Both scholars argue that technology tools enable youth to express their opinions and mobilize themselves effectively to tackle public sociopolitical matters.

Participation is important to youth as it contributes to influencing the “sense of belonging to the local communities” (Koutouki and Farget, 2012). Recent studies focus on participatory public policies where policies are formalized from bottom to up through enabling wide range of stakeholders to engage in the process (Wodschow and Cerutti, 2016). Moreover, participatory approach in public policies is argued to develop ownership and contribute to legitimatizing the

policies (ibid). Participation in public policy process is argued to make the citizens feel that they are powerful and capable of making changes while the sense of being excluded from decision-making process promotes frustration and negative feelings within the individuals regarding the power in the society (Devon. and Hébert, 2000).Hence, participation is the method of“strengthening the abilities of people, groups and systems to plan, develop, implement and maintain healthy communities” (ibid, P1).

Youth participation is argued to improve the inter-personal skills of the engaged youth. According to Sabo (2001),youth participation improves the self-esteem and the personal skills of the engaged youth (Head, 2010).Määttä and Aaltonen (2016) concluded that youth participation develops the decision-making skills, critical thinking capabilities,the management of expectations regarding the challenges facing the society, and high monitoring and evaluation skills. (Checkoway and Allison, 2005:1150) agreed that participation has a positive influence on “strengthening their knowledge, practical skills, social values, civic competencies”. A set of personal capabilities were also highlighted by (Devon. and Hébert, 2000) as mandatory to policy processes, such as enhancing communication skills, respecting diversity, and developing strong leadership skills. From the perspective of youth, it is argued that embracing and encouraging participation play a vital role in developing the civic capacity (Frank, 2006). Youth participation supports raising the awareness of different socio-political challenges in addition to introducing the concerns of youth to different ecological levels (ibid). In a relevant youth literature, Cushing (2015) emphasized that active youth participation has benefits on both the individual and societal levels.

To summarize, youth participation is important to be tackled on both social and political aspects as both aspects influence each other in policy making. Participation consists of strategies that involve the mobilization of youth socially and politically in the formalization and implementation of public policies. Maintaining an institutional and sustainable tool for youth participation is recommended so as to engage youth effectively through participatory means. Promoting engagement in decision-making is a critical factor of promoting youth participation in policy-making and youth preparation for leadership. It is important to establish an intergenerational relationship between adults and youth in the processes of public policy. The extent of citizen participation in policy making reflects the distribution of power within the society and contributes to holding the public policies legitimate and hence the stability of the socio-political domain. On the other hand, absence of youth participation can negatively influence democracy and affect the sociopolitical context.

Chapter IV: Methodology

This thesis is adopting a qualitative research method in the process of data collection. According to Marshal & Roman (2006), in-depth interviews are considered a primary method for data collection. The main tools of qualitative data collection are “participating in the setting, observing directly, interviewing in depth, analyzing documents and material culture” (ibid). In the scholars’ opinion, in-depth interviewing is regarded as “construction site of knowledge” (Marshal & Rosman, 2011, p.142). Therefore, the data collection will depend mainly on in-depth interviews with relevant governmental officials and youth leaders in addition to reviewing and analyzing the current policies, laws, and governmental publications related to the topic of youth participation in the public sphere and public policies’ implementation. The interviews will be designed to answer the main research question and to include various perspectives of stakeholders for the same topic in order to set the foundation for a well-structured data analysis and a positive set of recommendations.

Informed consent forms are essential for ethical reasons as it shows the respect of the researcher to the ethical requirements of the qualitative research methodology (Marshal & Rosman, 2011). Ethics is related to the principle of respecting the participants’ beneficence and justice, so, accordingly, there should be solemn respect to “privacy, their anonymity, and their right to participate or not. (ibid, p.47). In their argument, Marshal & Rosman have strongly linked trustworthiness to ethics, reliability of the research, its validity, objectivity, and generalizability to ensure an ethical formulated research and to eliminate possibilities for fraud and data fakeness. As for sampling, it should be following a logical and systematic schema. Researchers highlight that there are dynamics and correlations between data collection and sampling since

data helps the researcher at the early stages in narrowing down his/her scope of sampling and focusing accordingly on particular sites, populations, and questions to approach (ibid, p.106).

According to Miles and Huberman(1994), there are three major approaches that can be used in analyzing the collected data which are:“the interpretative approach, social anthropological approach, and collaborative social research approach”. Data collected from interviews and policies analysis will be combined and interpreted in light of the conceptual framework and the research question in order to establish a dynamic linkage so as to develop a better understanding of the topic in a written text. Marshal &Rosman (2011) highlighted the importance of specifying a period of time for organizing the collected data so that data can be classified and arranged through notes or even software in order to facilitate the analysis process later on and to overcome any possible obstacles, such as missing the collected data or causing a thematic confusion. Coding data could be through abbreviations of key wordsor colored dots and numbers (ibid, p.212,213). In this particular study, the coding technique will be through abbreviations of key words in order to organize thoughts and to direct the data to main concepts so as to be used later on in the analysis section.

Moving to the limitations of the study, the major one is the lack of academic writings on youth participation in the Egyptian context which affects the literature section. Moreover, the research focuses on the recently published public policies in Egypt, so there is an absence of the richness of data necessary for the topic. The main source of literature review, herein, is through reviewing the official governmental websites, the officials' announcements, and the state initiatives for youth. Nonetheless, the existed data on youth and their participation focuses either on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) or the political parties and movements. Some of the literature in that part is biased towards specific

political ideologies, so it is not easy to rely on all the available data in this topic. One more limitation is the difficulty in reaching high profile governmental officials so as to gather useful and credible data, for scheduling a meeting could take up to months.

To engage youth-oriented institutions in Egypt, a total of eleven interviews were conducted with the following bodies: National Specialized Councils, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Planning, Monitoring, and Administrative Reform, National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment and Civil Society representatives. The researcher used a purposive sampling approach for selecting the participants in the study. Robinson (2014, p.32) demonstrated that researchers who apply purposive sampling “assume, based on their a-priori theoretical understanding of the topic being studied, that certain categories of individuals may have a unique, different or important perspective on the phenomenon in question and their presence in the sample should be ensured”. The aforementioned purposive sampling includes significant factors, such as the knowledge of the identified individuals or groups for research participation, experience in the topic, and willingness to participate (Palinkas, 2015). The researcher, accordingly, identified the experienced individuals who have good understanding of the topic and its updates, whether they are from the governmental field or the civil society, as well as the engaged youth who participated in a number of recent initiatives and were empowered on a later stage in public service.

A total of eight governmental representatives (from National Specialized Councils, Ministry of Youth & Sports, Ministry of Planning, Monitoring, and Administrative Reform, Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, and one of the deputy governors) were interviewed throughout the study. The researcher interviewed four youth government officials from the Ministry of Planning, Monitoring, and Administrative Reform,

Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, and Ministry of Health and Population who worked in organizing a number of National Youth Conferences and are Presidential Leadership Program (PLP) alumni. The selected youth are acting as the ministers' assistants or serving at different managerial positions in the ministers' technical offices.

The researcher interviewed an official from the Ministerial technical office of the Ministry of Youth and Sport, a young female official and a PLP alumni who is currently acting as the first young female deputy governor in her own governorate, and a representative from the National Specialized Councils, a presidential affiliation that has been managing the Presidential Leadership Program and the National Youth Conferences prior to the establishment of the National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment. Lastly, an interview also was held with a young employee working in the National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment (NTA).

The interviewed eight governmental representatives are youth who are engaged directly in decision-making within their institutions and are part of the youth participation activities in policy making. The questions focused on their different insights on the recent exerted efforts with regard to youth participation in public policies. In addition, the investigation tackled the challenges facing the promotion of youth participation in policy making and aimed at identifying the potential recommendations for sustaining youth participation and engagement in policy making.

The researcher interviewed three Civil Society Representatives (CSOs) (from a youth oriented national NGO, and a research center in a private university) and one of the National Youth Conferences participants. Firstly, there was an interview with the director of a national Non-Governmental Organization that is working on youth related topics, civic education

and promoting youth participation. The second interview was conducted with a youth project coordinator in a research center at a private university that is working in collaboration with a number of Egyptian National Universities on implementing youth leadership projects. Lastly, an interview was held with a young man who participated in two National Youth Conferences. The interviews focused on the non-governmental perspective of the level of youth engagement and the recent efforts exerted in youth participation in public policies in order to obtain a wider perspective on the status of youth participation in the public policies in Egypt. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained by the researcher in August 2018 after submitting the required documents and the Review Board application.

Chapter V: Study Findings

A. Introduction

The research reveals a growing number of governmental initiatives to promote youth participation in the public domain after announcing 2016 as the year of Egyptian youth. The understanding process included the main stakeholders and the relevant youth institutions in order to stand on the current status of youth participation, challenges and areas of development. Before 2016, the Ministry of Youth used to supervise and implement directly all the youth-related activities in Egypt, however starting from 2016 multiple youth initiatives were conducted under the direct supervision of the Egyptian presidency through the Presidential National Specialized Councils. These Councils were committed to the implementation of the presidential initiatives as the Presidential Leadership Program for Youth, National Youth Conferences starting 2016 and World Youth Forum 2017 and 2018 in Sharm El-Sheikh.

Based on the conducted research and the in-depth-interviews, the study findings can be classified into two main themes;

1. Preparing a Cadre of Youth Leaders

- 1.1. Main Challenges facing Promoting Youth Participation in Policy Making
- 1.2. Governmental Efforts in Promoting Youth Participation in Public Policies
- 1.3. Civil Society & Universities Role in Supporting Youth Participation in Public Policies

2. Engaging Youth in Policy Making.

- 2.1. Governmental Youth Engagement Efforts in Policy Making
- 2.2. Institutionalization efforts of Youth Participation

B. Preparing a Cadre of Youth Leaders

1. Main Challenges facing Promoting Youth Participation in Policy Making

There is an initial need to discuss the main challenges that were raised regarding the status of youth participation in Egypt. Three main challenges were common concerns among all the interviewees and can demonstrate the state of youth participation so that the further data can be comprehended rationally. By the end of the findings section there is a separate chapter discussing the challenges raised over the study in details. According to a young man who participated in two National Youth Conferences in 2018, the three main challenges are;

- 1- Lack of awareness of the importance of youth participation.
- 2- Lack of the qualification of youth to engage in the policy making process.
- 3- The absence of trust between youth and officials in the presence of a commitment for promoting participation and engagement in policy-making.

“The main challenges that are facing youth participation are the low qualifications from basic and high education, lack of awareness and the relying on trust rather than experience.”

(National Youth Conference Participant, 2018)

A number of challenges are facing youth participation on sociopolitical level that will be demonstrated in detail over the findings. Firstly, the lack of sufficient preparation and capacity building; low knowledge of socio-political challenges and low interpersonal skills, in the various educational levels is the main factor contributed to the lack of awareness on the importance of participation in the public domain and poor qualifications. Moreover the absence of a tool that

supports the potential youth calibers in addition to relying on the trusted calibers in policy-making and decisions instead of investing in the huge youth demography.

According to the interviewed Deputy Governor, youth suffered from the lack of inclusion and engagement before 2011 and there was an absence of hope in the possibility of youth contributing to positive change.

“In my opinion youth were ignored before 2011 and that turned them from a constructive tool for their societies into a destructive tool. Even after 2011, I decided to leave the public affairs although I was active because I did not feel represented or contribute to positive change.”

(Deputy Governor, PLP alumni, 2018)

One of the challenges is the absence of committed strategies to engage youth in policy making or relevant decisions. This challenge contributed to a lack of trust in the existence of a plan or a tool for connecting youth with policy-makers. That was a key factor that contributed to the social and political unrest that took place post-January 2011. Many youths including the interviewee decided to withdraw from the public domain and focus on their personal life due to the absence of the feel of a real change taking place on the national level.

2. Governmental Efforts in Promoting Youth Participation in Public Policies

There was a need to conduct studies to understand the scientific methods to approach youth after the revolution in 2011. In 2015, the government believed that it is essential to understand the youth and their needs through governmental research centers. The National

Specialized Councils according to its young official was involved in the process of investigating the needs of youth and managing the initiatives announced starting 2016.

“After the revolution in January 2011, the youth raised demands and the state recognized the fact that studies should be implemented in order to understand the youth more so in late 2015 the state government assigned a task to national social research centers to conduct research on the Egyptian youth.” (National Specialized Councils Young Official, 2018)

The Egyptian government started to adopt a new strategy in approaching youth groups especially post the revolution of 2011. National research centers were approached by the political leadership in order to understand the needs of youth on social and political levels. The recommendations of the research centers drew the guidelines of the youth strategy. The study concluded that the youth need the following;

- i. The need to be heard and have an opportunity to express opinions and ideas,**
- ii. The need for a comprehensive model of empowerment on social and economic levels,**
- iii. The need to focus on capacity building and empowerment opportunities.**

The National Specialized Councils representative demonstrated that based on these presented recommendations, president Sisi declared that 2016 is the Year of Youth to approach them on social, economic and political aspects.

“The president declared January 2016 as the year of youth. The reason was that the political leadership wanted to approach the youth inclusively from various aspects.”

(National Specialized Councils Young Official, 2018)

The youth initiatives that emerged in 2016 targeted various aspects; educational, economic and capacity building;

1- **The Presidential Leadership Program (PLP)** is a presidential initiative to prepare youth leaders with different specifications for various governmental and non-governmental institutions. The program targets building a technical database of Egyptian youth to connect them after intensive training program with leadership positions.

2- **The 200 Billion Egyptian Pound loans** announced by the Egyptian Central Bank to fund the enterprises at a small and medium levels and encourage youth private businesses.,

3- **The Egyptian knowledge bank**, which is an initiative managed by the national specialized councils. The knowledge Bank is one of the largest national projects that is concerned with education in Egypt, it aims to provide a huge and diversified source for knowledge and culture for free, to all Egyptians³³.

The findings discuss in detail the PLP in light of its relevance to promoting the sociopolitical participation of youth. In addition to its influence in the initiation of activities as the National Youth Conferences and institutions as the National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment (NTA). The Presidential Leadership Program is one of the initiatives that

³³<https://www.ekb.eg/about-us>

play a key role in establishing a dynamic relation between the youth and the government recently.

According to a PLP alumni who is working in the ministerial office of the Ministry of Health, the aim of the PLP is to establish a comprehensive database that includes the skills and the resumes of the youth in order to make an efficient use of the youth capabilities according to the country's requirements.

“The Presidential Leadership Program targets the capacity building of the youth to be beneficial to the state and be an effective and added value to the country and establish a technical database of the Egyptian youth which was not available before.”

(Ministry of Health Official, PLP alumni, 2018)

The Presidential Leadership Program targets developing the capabilities of youth and eventually improving the ability to link them with the ongoing needs and requirements of the Egyptian government. The program aims at achieving this mission through assessing the youth profile and documenting the youth various specializations besides tracking their ongoing career development. Accordingly, the governments can reach out easily to experienced young calibers and improve the youth-state relationship.

However, early PLP Applicants were skeptical about such a program and whether there is a governmental initiative to prepare youth for leadership and participation in policy-making. The young deputy governor who is a PLP graduate, shared that during the application phase there was some skepticism towards whether this program is really supported by the presidency institution or not.

“I found an advertisement on social media platforms for the Presidential Leadership Program, I submitted the PLP application I was skeptical towards the credibility of the program and whether such thing supported by the presidency institutions exists or not.”

(Deputy Governor, PLP alumni, 2018)

The marginalization of youth before 2011 and the following years affected the trust towards the credibility of the governmental initiatives. The interviewee shared that after participation in the revolution of January 2011 many youths suffered from depression and withdrawal from the public domain because of some emerging groups with certain ideologies and agendas that took over the youth demands. The lack of youth sociopolitical engagement affected the trust in a state commitment to engage youth in policy-making and public concerns. The quotes retrieved from the interviewees reflect and emphasizes that there was an absence of trust in a real adults' commitment to initiate an engagement program or a discussion platform.

According to a PLP first batch graduate; who is working after graduation from the program at the Minister of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform's office, the PLP targets Egyptian youth from different social backgrounds aged between 20-30 years old who finished their higher education and have no criminal record in addition to the existence to the thrive to learn.

“The criteria for the program are simple, for submitting the application the applicant has to be a graduate from higher education with clear criminal record besides the Egyptian Nationality and willingness to learn and engage and these criteria are written on the program's website.”

(Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Official, PLP alumni, 2018)

The program accordingly targets a huge sector of the Egyptian youth with no requirements for a specific major or a certain governorate. In the first batch, second and third batches of the program 500 students were accepted each year and are subjected to topics of governance, administrative and political fields for a period of around 8 months

The interview with the National Specialized Councils representative highlights that there are two main components in the curriculum of the presidential leadership program; **academic** and **interactive**.

“The Presidential Leadership Program consists of two vital components academic and interactive.”

(National Specialized Councils Young Official,2018)

Based on the global methodologies and curriculums of youth engagement, the program adopted an academic and interactive approach to prepare the youth for leadership and engagement in decision-making. According to the official from the Ministry of Planning, the interactive aspect enables the participants to interact directly with state institutions' and be able to access various ministries in order to be familiar with the governmental system.

“The interactive component includes field that gives the youth an overview on the reality of the Egyptian state and see the national projects and have the chance to evaluate the performance of institutions as the parliament and different ministries and institutions.”

(Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and AdministrativeReform official, PLP alumni, 2018)

Besides building the academic capacity, the program focuses on the importance of developing its interactive component through;

- i. Encouraging the interaction between the participants of the program and learning team work skills through group projects and social, economic and political research assignments.
- ii. Organizing field visits to national projects and the parliament and ministries to assess and evaluate state institutions" performance.
- iii. Raising the awareness regarding the methodology of government and bureaucracy functionality.

The program on the academic level consists of modules that covers the following disciplines;

1-Protocol awareness training program.
2-fundamentals of politics & international relations.
3- Macroeconomics & financial principals.
4- Introduction to legislationand law.
5-Marketing principles & Human resources management.
6- National security, managing crisis and negotiations.
7-Decision-making within governmental institutions.

The PLP alumni and Ministry of Agriculture young womanemphasized that the program created athrive for learning new sciences.

"The program motivated me to study other disciplines besides my specialization as human resources and change management."

(Ministry of Agriculture Official, PLP alumni, 2018)

The program provides a comprehensive set of management skills regardless the specialization of each participant. The curriculum triggers the need for knowledge and investigate more disciplines as the human resources, marketing disciplines, economics and political science and law. The program as well contributes to raising the ability of communication, dealing with different personalities and handling different situations.

The interview conducted with the young employee at the National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment highlighted positive indicators for promoting gender equality and young women representation in the PLP. Young women representation was approximately between 35 to 42 percentage out of the overall youth participants in the first two batches and increased to around 50% of the overall students of the program in the third batch.

“There is no pre-identified quota for young female participation in the program however the percentage of female enrollment in the program over the previous batches approximately were within 35 - 42%. In Batch 3 of the program the percentage of young women were almost 50%.”

(National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment Employee, 2018)

The average percentage of the female young women enrollment at the start of the program was from 35 to 42 percent and it is subjected to an increase in the upcoming programs. In the third batch the percentage of female acceptance and enrollment reached more than 50 percent. There is a plan in the upcoming cohorts to set a quota for governorates to cover Egypt and expand the enrollment and outreach to youth in border provinces.

According to the deputy governor experience, the program gives an exposure to various disciplines as management and public administration that is applied through the program in the graduation project; the Egyptian State Simulation.

“After eight months studying in the PLP, I found myself aware of management and public administration and implement the knowledge in the first Egyptian State simulation, my field of specification is far from economics and political science and I found myself presenting papers of investment and formal and informal economies.”

(Deputy Governor, PLP alumni, 2018)

The academic aspect of the program is applied in a graduation practical project supported by the president. The simulation of the Egyptian State is one of the key activities of the interactive component of the program. Following studying the economic, social and political challenges of Egypt, the interactive component aims at widening the scope of the students regarding the social, economic and political challenges, besides empowering the students with the knowledge baseline needed to interact effectively with different disciplines and social sciences. In addition to strengthening the social benefit of the interaction of 500 students from different cultures and social backgrounds together.

The Egyptian state simulation is a model implemented by the presidential leadership alumni to simulate the Egyptian state institutions'. In this activity that is attended by the president, ministries, parliament members and civil society organizations, youth represent the executive and legislative institutions of the state. The first simulation was conducted as an activity of; The first National Youth Conference in Sharm-ElSheikh October 2016 followed by a

second simulation in April 2017 in the third National Youth Conference in Ismailia April 2017 and the third simulation in July 2017 in the National Youth Conference in Alexandria.

Following the Ministry of Planning young official who participated in the first simulation, the Egyptian state simulation contributed to the establishment of a dynamic link with the officials to discuss ideas, challenges and recommendations from youth perspectives.

“In the simulation of the Egyptian state the student of the Presidential Leadership Program simulates the position of a minister and starts with identifying a problem, analyze it and present solutions in front of the minister him/herself, and they were commenting live on the presentations of the youth.”

(Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Official, PLP alumni, 2018)

The simulation creates an interactive platform between the youth and the government's officials; including the president, ministers, parliament members and governors. The youth play the roles of prime minister, ministers and parliament members. The Egyptian State Simulation was mentioned various times over the interviews and that reflectshow influential this component was on the development of the youth participants.

The Presidential Leadership Program participants expressed that prior the participation in the leadership program there was a lack of awareness regarding how the government works? And what is a governmental agency?

“I had no awareness of what is a governmental agency.”

(Ministry of Agriculture Official,PLP alumni 2018)

The Alumni emphasized that the program motivated them to learn and introduced them to new disciplines besides their majors. Having a wider scope of relations between governmental agencies and institutions is beneficial for getting engaged effectively in decision-making and formulating national policies for a country.

. The interviewed Ministry of Health official supported that the modules and curriculum of the presidential program and the simulation of the Egyptian State influence the skills of youth and prepare them for leadership positions.

“The academic and interactive components result in a skilled youth who are ready to work at a leadership positions in the state.”

(Ministry of Health Official, PLP alumni, 2018)

The academic and interactive components contributed to raising the awareness of the institutions of the government in addition to building the leadership capacity of the alumni that qualified them to apply for positions at the National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment (NTA), ministries and other leadership positions as public servants.

However, before the establishment of the National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment (NTA), the curriculum of the presidential leadership was divided among several governmental institutions which affected to an extent the consistency of the academic content. The interviewed employee from the NTA raised an important challenge regarding the synchronization of the educational curriculums and the need for an institutional dedication to youth participation and engagement profile.

“If one institution is assigned to the program it will make the curriculum more developed and effective.”

(National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment Employee, 2018)

The dedication of the NTA to the management of the whole program following the third batch of 2018 will potentially contribute to the consistency of the curriculum and the raise its level of effectiveness. The participants of the third batch of the program (2018-2019) will receive a training program at the NTA that signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA) to stand on the most recent experiences in youth participation and capacity building fields.

The participation of the president and the government officials in the Egyptian State Simulations reflects the existence of a governmental commitment in establishing a state of discussion. Additionally, it creates the motive for non-participated youth to exert effort in participation, present and get engaged. This interactive aspect of the presidential initiative positively supports raising the awareness of youth to the challenges facing their own societies. These kinds of interactive and participatory approaches are useful in strengthening the youth-adult partnership in decision and policy making and considered an initial move where both hear each other.

Moving to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the interview attempted to understand the efforts of the ministry and its role in encouraging youth participation in light of Egypt 2030 vision, in addition to comprehending the recent youth governmental initiatives following its strategic vision of (2013-2017).

The (2013-2017) strategies of the ministry of youth according to the official websites are as following;

- i. Design the policies and the execution plans to engage youth and maximize their participation in the political, social and cultural life. In addition to initiate programs to empower youth and invest their potentials.
- ii. Build the capacity of youth and improve their skills and competencies.
- iii. Improve the communication channels between youth and the government.
- iv. Coordinate all the agencies and institutions that support youth movements.
- v. Organize the youth initiative and entities under the umbrella of the ministry.
- vi. Activate the role of the youth centers and rehabilitate it to achieve the strategies of the ministry.

The main department that is focusing on supporting the youth participation and preparing youth for decision-making is the central administration of parliament and civic education. This department includes several youth-oriented programs that provide workshops and curriculums in political empowerment and preparations for political and parliament life and citizenship.

According to the Ministry of Youth official, the central administration of parliament and civic education coordinates with Egyptian universities especially the political science faculties to conduct training programs for youth with the cooperation of international relevant organizations.

“The central administration works with faculties of economy and political science to train youth and prepare youth staff in cooperation with international organizations as the United Nations.”

(Ministry of Youth Official, 2018)

The central administration includes three general administrations that are working on sociopolitical youth engagement and participation in cooperation with Egyptian Universities and international organizations. The three administrations are;

- 1- Administration of the youth and pioneer's parliament,
- 2- Administration for the civic education and youth leaders,
- 3- Administration of the civic education centers and youth forums.

The Ministry according to the interview is keen on incubating civic education in its youth programs aiming at increasing the sense of belonging of the Egyptian Youth.

“Civic education is a vital component of this administration as it teaches citizenship that develops the sense of belonging to their communities and Egypt.”

(Ministry of Youth Official, 2018)

Civic education is an emerging terminology in the Middle East. Number of conferences were held in Egypt starting 2013 to promote the importance of the civic education. Goethe Institute for instance conducted its first civic education conference with the presence of civil society organizations and research centers and in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Alexandria Bibliotheca in 2013. The Ministry is concerned with civic education as it contributes to the following objectives:

- 1- Promoting the youth awareness with different national and international concerns.
- 2- Encouraging active citizenship and participating positively in the community.
- 3- Collecting information and knowledge from reliable sources.

According to the interviewed Ministry of Youth and Sports official, four main challenges were facing the ministry to expand the outcome of the offered programs to build the capacity of youth and promote their participation;

- i. The awareness of the youth of the significance of these programs;
- ii. Challenges in the reach out to the wide youth demography in Egypt;
- iii. Redundancy in youth participants in the ministry programs and the need to maintain a sustainable recruitment of youth from all over the governorates.
- iv. Some of the programs and forums are instructed in very academic way that is not attractive to youth.

Over the past two years the Egyptian presidency institution was directly supervising and supporting the youth profile. Most of the initiatives and programs discussed in the findings section was directly coordinated by the presidential councils. Through over the interviews conducted with the engaged youth officials, the Ministry of Youth & Sport was rarely mentioned as a key institution in managing and coordinating youth engagement activities following the year of youth 2016. However, one interview with the youth working at the ministry of planning mentioned the youth parliament conducted by the ministry. The interview conducted at the Ministry of Youth highlighted the need to coordinate with the current recent initiatives as the National Youth Conferences and the PLP along with increasing the outreach to the huge youth demography of Egypt. The main challenges that were demonstrated through the interview are the poor outreach to youth, lack of awareness and the traditional academic approach in the ministry's programs that is not attractive for a wide range of youth. The young official emphasized that the ministry is working on improving its methodologies and that the youth nowadays need modern

teaching participatory tools to interact with concepts as belonging and the importance of positive participation in their societies.

One of the recent initiatives to address these challenges was the launch of a digital platform under the name of Egypt platform for youth and sports in October 2018. The platform targets;

1- Expanding the reach to the Egyptian youth,

2-Marketing the programs and the projects of the ministry,

3-Establishing a media digital platform that covers all the youth movements and activities in Egypt.

The platform aims at marketing the youth initiatives that the government are conducting in the youth centers and the civic educations centers, besides marketing its joint-programs with the regional and international organizations and highlighting the opportunities available for youth. The platform also includes around 50 radio programs managed by youth who are students in mass communications faculties. It is essential to promote cooperation between the entire youth initiatives in the Egypt and introduce the academic and interactive components in youth leadership and participation programs to attract youth and build the trust. Despite the challenges the ministry has logistical resources that can support the outreach to youth. Technology and social media platforms are an essential tool that can support the achievement of this objective. There is a need to study the influence of the recently launched online platform of the ministry on facilitating the outreach to youth groups, subscription to the ministry updates and promoting more engagement in public domain.

3. Civil Society & Universities Role in Supporting Youth Participation in Public Policies

Civil Society is highly important in promoting youth participation and engagement in any society. One of the key advantages for civil society organizations is the ability to access areas that the governmental may have challenges in reaching to due to lack of resources. In this part two organizations were interviewed, one is a national Non-Government Organization NGO working in youth development in Old Cairo and the second one is a research center at a Private University that implements youth leadership programs in cooperation with public universities and United Nations agencies. The interviews focused on the perspectives of these organizations on the current level of participation and what is needed to promote youth participation and its importance.

According to a young woman who is the director of a youth-oriented national NGO, the civil society is highly important for engaging the youth and supporting the national policies of youth participation and introducing new experiences and education techniques for youth.

“The civil society can develop and provide youth with new experiences and education and that achieves balance in the society because civil society has the potential to contain the youth.”

(Youth Oriented Non-Governmental Organization Director, 2018)

Civil Society organizations have the potential and resources to support the process of enhancing and promoting youth participation. The society can achieve balance and stability when all the engaged sectors are involved in decisions and policies. The civil society has the

human resources and the creative idea and less bureaucracy to implement youth participation projects.

Civil society representative argued that communication and dialogue are vital for the whole process of youth empowerment and have positive implications on youth participation and overall social stability;

Communication and dialogue is so vital for developing youth participation so the “different members of the society can deal with each other not fighting.

(Youth Oriented Non-Governmental Organization Director, 2018)

The interviewee explained that there are a set of required skills needed for youth to be skillful and knowledgeable for effective participation process in the public sphere and decision-making processes. Communication and dialogue skills are required for enhancing the communication between the whole societies and to prevent wrong messages that may cause conflicts and misunderstanding of intentions and interests. Youth should receive training on curriculums of debating, negotiations and introduction to public policies and political awareness as what are elections and how to participate. In addition to improving critical thinking and analysis skills in order to enable youth to analyze social, economic and political challenges and provide innovate and creative solutions.

As a result of the engagement in youth activities, the civil society director shares concerns on the Civil Society LawNo.70 of 2017 regarding its flexibility and some areas for improvement;

“The new law of the Non-Governmental Organizations should be amended and be more flexible and include of the perspectives of the relevant civil society practitioners.”

(Youth Oriented Non-Governmental Organization Director, 2018)

The law according to the insights and the feedback of the interviewee needs modifications. There are serious challenges and boundaries for instance regarding approving civil society projects by security institutions. The time frame for receiving an approval from the government is quite long and may affect the performance of the organizations who have objectives and reports to deliver to donors and partners.

A young man who is working in a research center in a private university and engaged in multiple youth inclusion, leadership and participation activities said that promoting youth participation is effective to provide creative solutions to various problems in the society.

*Youth participation increase could lead to development and provide out of the box “
”solutions for many problems.*

(Research Center Employee, Private University, 2018)

Youth ideas and creativity contributed to solving various social problems in the private sector as in the case of mobile applications who were launched overcome transportation challenges for example. Empowering youth could potentially lead to developing solutions to social, economic and political challenges.

. The research center representative raised as well the need to encourage research centers and universities in the outreach to youth so the improvement of their research and analytical skills will be beneficial for effective youth participation.

“Encouraging research centers within universities to reach out to students to build up the research and analytic capacities.”

(Research CenterEmployee, Private University, 2018)

Research centers should function within a national strategic plan to activate their role in reaching out to students and contributing to building the research skills of the undergraduate students. Challenges facing youth participation in Egypt are poor research skills and low ability to work within teams. These two challenges affect negatively problem identification, writing, analytical and presentation skills in addition to working within groups to address a challenge or offer a policy recommendation.

C. Engaging Youth in Policy Making.

1. Governmental Youth Engagement Efforts in Policy Making

Organized by the National Specialized Councils, National youth conferences started to take place in October 2016 under the direct supervision of the Egyptian president. The Egyptian president launched an initiative and asked all the youth centers in all governorates to start a discussion between youth and officials on national topics. The initiative that started through the Ministry of Youth developed later from separate discussions in governorates to the first national youth conference that in Sharm Sheikh October 2016 followed by five national conferences;

- i. The first regular National Youth Conference, Cairo 2017,
- ii. The second regular National Youth Conference, Aswan 2017,
- iii. The third regular National Youth Conference, Ismailia 2017,
- iv. The fourth regular National Youth Conference, Alexandria 2017,
- v. Fifth regular National Youth Conference, Cairo 2018,

- vi. Sixth regular youth conference, Cairo University 2018.

National Youth Conferences are designed to become an interactive platform that engages youth with officials, private sector and civil society representatives. The National Specialized Councils representative shared that the aim of the conferences is to establish dynamic platforms between youth and government officials with the presences of the private sector and civil society organizations.

“The National Youth conferences was created as an interactive platform not only for the government but it includes private sector, civil society.”

(National Specialized Councils Young Official, 2018)

The National Youth Conferences played a role in enhancing the communication between the government and citizens due to the absence of the role of the political parties in reflecting the needs of the citizens. The National youth Conferences is introduced as the political tool for communication between the state and the citizens for sharing opinions regarding social, economic and political concerns. Moreover the National Youth Conference functions as a social platform where the president honors the youth with outstanding performance in various fields as education and innovation, in addition to promoting and supporting artistic talents within youth.

. Based on organizing and participating in a number of National Youth Conferences, the official at the Ministry of Agriculture said that National Youth Conferences enabled youth to express their opinions in more organized tools.

“The National Youth Conferences created a better tool for the youth to share their opinions rather than demonstrations.”

(Ministry of Agriculture Official, PLP alumni, 2018)

The National Councils give the opportunity for youth to share success stories to public and raise social, economic and political recommendations. The interviewees share that this platform is important for youth to express themselves even if not all the recommendations are implemented or adopted through a governmental agenda.

Number of recommendations that were announced through the previous National Youth Conferences were translated to national plans and policies. According to the interview conducted with the National Specialized Councils employee, the most important recommendations that were announced through-over the previously conducted conferences are;

- i. The initiative of forming a committee of presidential amnesty to investigate and release imprisoned youth. Four batches of imprisoned youth were released since this announced recommendation in 2016.
- ii. Recommending the establishment of the National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment (NTA) as an accredited academy to train the potential youth leaders in the Egyptian government.
- iii. Recommendations for improving education and activating the role of the political parties and developing Upper Egypt.
- iv. Holding an international youth discussion forum known later as the World Youth Forum.
- v. Announcing 2019 as the Year of Education.
- vi. Launching the National project to develop the education.
- vii. Establish a Center to build the capacity of the Egyptian teachers according to the latest international standards.
- viii. Addressing the High Council of Universities to activate the sports, arts and cultural activities in the Egyptian Universities.

- ix. Establishing a program to prepare the potential youth leaders working in the Egyptian government over 30 years old (Advanced Presidential Leadership Program).
- x. New comprehensive health insurance system.
- xi. Model of the African Union 2018.
- xii. Engaging the youth in updating the vision of Egypt's public policies 2030 that resulted in launching the mobile application Sharek2030 by the ministry of planning, planning, monitoring and administrative reform.

According to the young man official at the Ministry of Planning who attended the first youth conference, the recommendations of the first conference included the need to a regular implementation of the youth conferences to ensure participation of more youth.

“By the end of the conference there was a recommendation that this conference should be held regularly to guarantee the participation of youth on a larger scale.”

(Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform Official 2, 2018)

The conferences are implemented on regular basis in different governorates and give an opportunity to interaction between officials and youth leaders. According to an official at the Ministry of Planning, the first National Youth conference and the simulation of the Egyptian State encouraged his governorate in Lower Egypt to start adopting initiatives to communicate with youth.

Political parties are argued to be ineffective in Egypt and unable to transfer the needs of youth through an organized tool. The conferences resulted in recommendations that were implemented by youth as the world youth forum or adopted by the government as the

establishment of the National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment (NTA). However, on the other side there are arguments as demonstrated in the civil society role section that the conferences are a way to ensure that certain pre-selected youth are participating in the dialogue with the government. Besides the role of the conferences, it is important to empower the political life in Egypt and support the establishment of more than one platform. The criteria of the youth participants in conferences are asked to be clearer and to ensure the representation of various youth from different social and cultural levels for increasing the trust between youth and these governmental initiatives.

Moving to Egypt 2030 public policies, the vision consists of four main pillars according to the official governmental website of Egypt 2030 which are; Social Justice, knowledge & innovation, Economic Development, Environment³⁴. A technological platform of participation has been released early 2018 by the Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative reform under the name of “*Sharek 2030*” (Participate in Arabic) that aims at enabling the participation of youth in updating Egypt's vision following the recommendations of the National Youth Conference in Alexandria to engage youth in Egypt's public policies and its updating according to changing contexts.

Through close coordination with the ministries, the representative of the National Specialized Councils emphasized that youth groups participated in the designing process of the Egypt Public Policies 2030 and youth are monitoring the progress of Egypt 2030 in relevant ministries.

³⁴<http://sdsegypt2030.com/?lang=en>

“There was an involvement of youth in designing Egypt National Policies 2030 from the early beginning, there is an office from youth in every minister to monitor the implementation of Egypt2030.”

(National Specialized Councils Young Official, 2018)

Youth are highly connected with new technological updates and have the opportunity to be open to new existing experiences, researches and have the ability to suggest creative solutions. Most of the technical offices in the technocratic ministries following 2016 are consisted of youth who graduated from the PLP.

According to the PLP alumni and current Ministry of Agriculture employee, the PLP motivated young officials establish taskforces to monitor the implementation of the policies identified from the four pillars of Egypt 2030 strategy according to the description and interest of each institution.

“In the ministry of agriculture, I formed a task force who have MBA and Presidential Leadership Program alumni to track the Egypt 2030 vision indicators.”

(Ministry of Agriculture official, PLP alumni, 2018)

The interviewed official at the Ministry of Agriculture formed a youth task force as an initiative to monitor the Egypt 2030 vision. The taskforce focused on the implementation of the agriculture projects and specifically the national project of million and half acres in addition to tracking the project's budget and whether the program is working efficiently or not. Moreover, the task force monitors projects that support the strategic agriculture national objectives.

According to the young man in the minister of planning office and who is engaged in amendment of Egypt 2030, the minister met with youth groups to amend the policies of 2030.

“During the process of improving Egypt 2030 policies, the ministry met a group of youth part of them from the presidential program and the discussed the improvement means of the vision and that will be issued in the amended document.”

(Ministry of Planning, Monitoring & Administrative Reform Official 2, 2018)

Regarding the amendment and improvement of the policies of 2030, the ministry of planning conducted meetings with youth from the Presidential Leadership Program to issue a set of recommendations to be announced in a document under the name of the improved Egypt 2030. The meetings included another group of youth from political movements as TahyaMisr (Long live Egypt in Arabic) and other political initiative supporting the revolution of June 30th.

In the Ministry of Health according to the interviewed representative, youth are working on national projects and that is useful for expanding their own competencies.

“The staff of these projects are 50% youth and in this young age being subjected to these kinds of experience is beneficial for their own development and having more opportunities of leadership in the future.”

“(Ministry of Health Official, 2018)

The official from the Ministry of health emphasized that 2030 strategic plan and its affiliated policies are the umbrella and guidelines that all the ministries are following to achieve social, economic and political development. For instance, the biggest two national projects in the ministry of health are Virus C and the comprehensive social insurance which was a recommendation from the National Youth Conferences as highlighted previously. Youth working on these files are representing more than 50% of the taskforce. That kind of

engagement on a high level empowers youth with the skills and prepare them to be in leadership positions.

There are growing efforts over the past two years to increase the number of youths in the technical offices of the ministries. Most of the interviewed government officials were PLP alumni and worked in the government as Ministries assistants and consultants after their graduation from these presidential initiatives. Although if the trust is not yet fully restored with all youth but the youth from outside these initiatives in the interviews acknowledge that there is a remarkable progress in youth engagement. According to the engaged youth in this public policy there were meetings to listen to youth suggestions at the beginning and in the amendment phase of these policies.

The Presidential Leadership Program participants were engaged in the discussions in the amendment. Individual initiatives as the taskforces introduced in the findings in the ministry of agriculture depends more on the initiation and motivation of the youth. *Sharek* (Participate in Arabic) mobile application that was launched by the Egyptian Ministry of Planning aims at widening the participation of youth however the application needs more marketing to spread among the target segments as the level of engagement and online participation on the website still low. Increasing youth representation in these engagement activities and in the public discussion is argued to increase the level of trust with wider scale of youth in Egypt besides the youth who participated in the presidential initiatives.

2. Ensuring Sustainability and Institutionalization efforts of Youth Participation

Sustaining youth participation in policy making and its implementation is challenging. The youth participation efforts require the establishment of an institutional committed tool to ensure efficiency and sustainability. In this final part of the findings, the researcher studies the recent efforts in ensuring sustainability and institutionalization of the efforts in promoting youth participation in the policy making in addition to the challenges facing this strategy.

According to the Deputy Governor, the National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment is planned to play a role in fostering all of the youth related governmental activities. Following the steps of the French ENA, the academy aims at incubating the activities that were initiated past two years on presidential and ministerial levels to prepare youth for leadership and participation.

“The academy's objective is to move from capacity building to empowerment.”

(Deputy Governor, PLP alumni, 2018)

The academy will manage the Presidential Leadership Program PLP in addition to targeting the youth and preparing them to public service through various programs and activities. All of the governmental institutions that are working on relevant youth affairs will be working with the academy. Interviewees emphasized the importance of the change management course that is offered by the NTA to prepare them for the methodologies and approaches of managing changes within huge institutions with crosscutting and conflicting interests. The NTA is running as well business administration courses and launched a joint master program in business

administration with ESLSCA School with discounts for youth who are aiming at building their capacity in business and public administration fields.

As shared by the NTA employee, the academy's director signed a partnership agreement with the minister of youth following the World Youth Forum in November 2018 to joint efforts in the youth relevant capacity building fields;

“The academy signed a memorandum of partnership with the ministry of youth & sports in November 2018 to ensure compiling efforts in the field of youth empowerment and capacity building.”

(National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment Employee, 2018)

The graduated students from the Presidential Leadership Program are subjected to opportunities of managerial levels in the governorate and large number of alumni are already working in the technical offices of ministers, technical offices of minister's assistants, direct assistants to ministers and deputy governors. In August this year there were newly appointed 18 deputy governors where 6 of them are from the Presidential Leadership Program and one of them is the first female deputy governor in her governorate in a cultural context that that is not familiar with women in leadership positions. This highlights that there is a political leadership commitment to foster the youth capabilities and prepare them to leadership positions and real engagement in policies and decision-making.

Aiming at sustaining these efforts, it is important to diversity the platforms with youth and support the strengthening of political parties in Egypt. The National Specialized Council young official recommended that the government should be committed to empower youth in order to be able to get engaged and manage the political life in Egypt.

“The government should focus more on the role of youth in political life and parties and prepare them in these fields and enable them to be able on an intellectual and political level to manage the political life in Egypt.”

(National Specialized Councils Official, 2018)

To ensure the sustainability of the youth participation strategy the government and political leadership, should formalize clear policies to prepare the youth for political life in order to prepare leaders at different levels who are aware of the challenges and the tools available.

Raising the awareness of officials as argued by the interviewed Ministry of Planning young man official is an important factor for the success of the youth participation strategies.

“I see that promoting youth participation should come through raising the awareness of the officials to give more opportunities to the youth.”

(Ministry of Planning, Monitoring & Administrative Reform Official, PLP alumni, 2018)

Along with the governmental efforts there should be awareness efforts with the officials in the governorates, ministries and municipalities on the importance of supporting youth participation and getting them engaged in decision-making and relevant policies. That should contribute to establishing a youth adult partnership that contributes on the long term to the succession of the participation and engagement process which is a challenge nowadays.

The interviewed representative from the Ministry of Agriculture strengthened that youth participation and responsibilities in decision-making positions should be supported by law articles.

*Youth in governmental positions there should be a law that guarantee that they have “
”authorized powers to carry on their responsibilities.*

(Ministry of agriculture official, PLP alumni, 2018)

A number of youths following the youth initiatives over the past two years in Egypt are holding positions in ministries and governorates currently however there is a need for law support to give them authority and delegation in responsibilities and decision-making to ensure that the participation and empowerment is being implemented successfully. Youth should be aware of the legislations and get introduced to the different laws and to the process of changing a legislation as it is complicated and needs awareness as shared below by the PLP alumni and Ministry of Health young official.

“Youth should be introduced more to law as it guides the way of amending a legislation.”

(Ministry of Health Official, PLP alumni, 2018)

If youth from the recent presidential initiatives are appointed at a managerial position in a ministry and want to make some changes to legislations as for example linking the appraisal to the productivity and results not working hours, there should be legislation that authorizes the youth or the official to implement that. Therefore, the knowledge of the current legislations in the relevant field is vital for managing any sort of change. This point was emphasized and recommended by the young employee from the research center; civil society.

“Youth should learn what is the cycle of legislation how it is issued, where it starts and until the implementation.”

(Research Center Private University, 2018)

The research center young man employee shared that youth participation programs should include a component that explains the cycles of legislation in policy making and, in addition to the methodology of writing policy papers, presentation skills which are the skills needed to empower youth to be able to suggest policy recommendations.

According to the Deputy Governor, the new municipalities and amended civil servants' law will help promoting youth participation across the country;

“The new municipalities’ law that is supposed to be issued soon will highly support youth participation.”

(Deputy Governor, PLP alumni, 2018)

The new municipalities' law will support the decentralization in decision-making. The law will give high authority and delegation to each governorate to utilize its resources including the human resources and especially youth. The new proposed law is recommended to support youth participation in the public sphere and hence prepare them on a decision-making level to participate more actively in public policies. The absence of such law puts burden on each governorate as it requires series of approvals to implement any project or ideas to engage youth in various aspects. The existence of a law that gives authority to governorates could potentially support the engagement of these youth in the decision-making and policy formulation. The improvement of legislation process for workers in public service and policy making was highlighted several times through the interviews as a major factor to institutional change.

For instance, the governorate that this young woman PLP alumni is working in is planning to implement a consultant committee from youth on the short term;

“The criteria of this youth committee will be targeting youth from 21-40 years old including youth from the presidential leadership program, potential youth leaders from universities, institutes and cultural groups.”

(Deputy Governor, PLP alumni, 2018)

Based on a youth initiative, this committee will recruit youth through a system inspired by the Presidential Leadership Program that starts with an online application then an exam that measures the awareness of the public issues followed by the interview. This initiative is as individual effort however the application of the new law could potentially support the other governorates to duplicate such an experience with the youth if it succeeded.

D. Challenges Facing Youth Engagement in Policy Making

This section will summarize in points the challenges raised over the findings in order to formulate relevant policies recommendations;

1- The selection criteria for the participants in the Presidential Leadership Program is clear on the website where applicants apply through an online application followed by exams and interviews before the final selection. However, there are still some skepticism from some youth from outside this context who still does not trust fully the selection and doubt the real political will to engage all youth.

“I see that the National Youth Conferences are for the youth supporting the political regime only”

(Youth Oriented Non-Governmental Organization, 2018)

“Criteria for participating in the youth participation programs needs to be more concrete and clearer”

(Research Center Young Male Employee, Private University, 2018)

The lack of trust towards these initiatives was mentioned by one of the alumni of the PLP before enrolment. The participation in the governmental initiatives and the empowerment of this alumni in a leadership position contributed to the increase of individual trust. However, the youth who lack the access to enroll in these activities still have concerns regarding the integrity of the process.

2- According to the interviews of the civil society representatives there is a need to engage higher education institutions and affiliated research centers in serious national policies to empower youth at early stages with the required qualifications; skills & knowledge, to be able to engage effectively in decision and policy making. Data shows that poor qualification of youth in different educational levels affect their participation in policy making.

3- The ability to introduce new ideas in the governmental system are highly challenging to youth working in the government due to legislations complication. That affects the will to manage positive change with institutions and the motive to initiate new youth engaging models.

4- There is a need to ensure the coordination of efforts between the relevant institutions managing youth affairs as the Ministry of Youth and the NTA. There is an absence of a published strategy of cooperation between the two institutions that are working on intersecting objectives which could affect the implementation of certain youth projects.

5- Poor engagement of Youth in governorates far from the capital. In addition to the lack of interactive content in the youth programs of Ministry of Sports which affects the reaching out to youth and the effectiveness of the outcomes of the programs.

6- Civil Society Law No.70 of 2017 needs to be amended and become more flexible to support the engagement of youth in local communities. Civil society organizations can reach out to wider scale of youth and engage them in policy making. The absence of the role of the municipalities since 2011 affected the participation of youth in their local communities in specific and the public domain in general.

7- Lack of strong political parties affect the participation of youth in socio-political institution forms and accordingly their preparation in public debates and policy making discussions.

Chapter VI: Conclusion and Recommendations

Egypt had challenges before 2011 and the years following the revolution in adopting and implementing serious national policies to support the engagement of youth socially and politically. The lack of fostering such policies and the absence of a political commitment contributed to an absence of trust between youth and authorities and eventually the social and political unrest. Roger' Hart's (1997) ladder of participation divided youth participation into eight levels from the lowest levels; where youth have low trust in the authorities and no representation or participation, ending by the highest levels of trust where youth and adults maintain strong partnership and share decisions. The Engagement of youth in the processes and decisions that affect their lives is argued to have positive social and political implications as for instance increasing the policies legitimacy and improving interpersonal skills. (Wodschow and Cerutti, 2016, Sabo 2001). Studying youth participation on both social and political levels supports the process of understanding the term and covering its aspects.

The refined Egyptian Constitution of 2014 included a number of articles that support the youth sociopolitical participation. Articles 11, 82 discuss the need to foster policies for youth inclusion and participation besides supporting gender equality in sociopolitical participation. Moreover, the Constitution gave the youth a quota of 25% in the local councils. Following 2014, there is a remarkable progress in increasing gender equality in policy-making processes. This is highlighted in the growing number of female ministers in the cabinet, the increasing percentages of women parliamentarians and the appointment of young females as deputy governors. These efforts are considered positive and promising in translating the 2014 constitutional articles into reality.

This study followed a qualitative methodology through conducting in-depth interviews with field professionals to stand on the recent efforts of the Egyptian government and political leadership in encouraging the youth participation in the processes of policy making. The findings reveal that promoting youth participation in policy-making requires the integration of two factors; the preparation of a cadre of youth leaders and the engagement of youth in relevant policies through sustainable tools. Data focused on the progress starting 2016 (Year of Egyptian Youth) where a series of presidential initiatives were released concerning youth and promoting their sociopolitical participation.

The presidential leadership program (PLP) highlights the existence of political commitment in preparing a cadre of leaders for public institutions. These initiatives target developing the knowledge and skills of youth to prepare them for participation in policy-making. This political commitment is demonstrated in appointing 18 youth as deputy governors in August 2018 and employing youth graduates of the PLP as assistants to ministers. Scholars as (e.g. Alesina and Talbellini, 2007; and Schnose, 2007) emphasize the importance of building the capacity of bureaucrats who are engaged in the policy-making as a modern understanding of policy making involves both politicians and bureaucrats. Thus the growing efforts in preparing youth leaders for public service in Egypt is argued to contribute to enhancing youth participation in public domain and policy-making.

Moving to the engagement in policy making, National Youth Conferences played a role in engaging groups of youth in discussions of national plans and policies as Egypt 2030. The discussion in each conference was summarized in a set of recommendations in which some of them are translated into plans and national policies as the Comprehensive Social Insurance. The

Egyptian State Simulation is a participatory tool to engage youth in a state of discussion with officials over strategies and relevant policies. Youth groups from the PLP and political movements participated in the amendment meetings of Egypt 2030. The establishment of the National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment (NTA) and its partnership with the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA) is an indicator for the sustaining the capacity building activities and institutionalizing the engagement process. The NTA will be responsible for preparing youth for public service and empower youth with tools to engage in the public domain. According to the demonstrated Ladder of Participation of Roger Hart (1997) youth participation in Egypt can be labeled as in a process of improvement from marginalization and low trust to a status of consultation and utilizing youth potentials in implementation of plans and policies. The current phase of youth engagement in Egypt can be argued to be the phase where youth are assigned and consulted.

A set of challenges were raised over the data collection. Firstly, the groups of the engaged youth in the demonstrated initiatives are still limited in comparison to the huge youth population in Egypt. The outreach to young demography of Egypt is challenging due to the large population in addition to the lack of awareness and low youth qualifications. Poor qualification of youth in the educational levels affect their understanding of the importance of participation besides affecting their competencies to engage positively. Following 2016, the National Specialized Councils was directly managing the youth initiatives with a noticeable drawback from the Ministry of Youth & Sports. The NTA will manage youth related activities that are intersected with the responsibilities of the Ministry. Accordingly, there should be a unified strategy within both institutions to ensure the coordination between the different stakeholders and avoid duplication of efforts. Youth working in government institutions highlight that they

face challenges with legislations and bureaucratic constrains to implement positive change or introduce new ideas.

. Civil Society organizations are critical factor in expanding the outreach to youth who are facing challenges in participating and expressing their views. Civil Society practitioner face challenges with the new law to implement their projects. There is a need to implement the new law of Municipalities and conduct the elections in order to give the space for youth to engage on local levels. The gradual empowerment of the political life in Egypt is crucial for the sustainability of these initiatives and in order to avoid affiliating all these efforts to a specific political regime. Finally, further studies should be conducted in the near future to study the role of the National Academy for Youth Training and EmpowermentNTA and its impact on developing youth capacities besides examining the sustainability the presidential initiatives and the level of integration of the youth related institutions in Egypt.

Recommendations

Based on the highlighted challenges, the recommendations are resulted from the data retrieved from the interviews in addition to the experience demonstrated earlier in the literature review chapter. The recommendations include the importance of promoting the role of higher education institutions in policy making to overcome the lack of youth qualifications. Moreover the improving of trust between youth and governments through sustaining the discussions besides ensuring the coordination between the institutions on youth profile and supporting the empowerment of civil society and political life improvement to engage more youth groups on socio-political levels. Recommendations are divided following the discussed two themes over the findings.

1. Preparing a Cadre of Youth Leaders

A. Higher Education Development & Inclusion in Policy Making

1. The foundation skills required for preparing youth for participation in policy making include analytical skills, critical thinking, debating and communication which are important set of skills and knowledge needed to be introduced in different official educational levels. Linking socio-political challenges with research centers and universities develop the problem identification skills, writing and analytical, presentation skills and team work which is critical to participation in policy making. Accordingly, Higher education curriculums should include these skills in its obligatory educational curriculums and ensure the application of these skills in academic and interactive projects with the cooperation of the specialized research centers to overcome the lack of qualifications obstacle.

B. Ensuring an effective Coordination Strategy between Youth Related Institutions

1. The establishment of the National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment as an independent institution affiliated to the presidency institution is a positive move towards minimizing the negative influence of bureaucracy in implementing strategies of youth participation. However coordination is important with the Ministry of Youth because of its huge logistical resources and civic education centers all over the governorates to maximize the reach to wide range of youth.

2. The National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment should sign partnership protocols with the Egyptian Supreme Council of Universities including the top ranked public and private universities and research centers in Egypt. The aim is to facilitate the outreach to youth in

the higher education institutes, in addition to supervising the implementation of youth leadership and participation activities following the international guidelines of the French ENA.

2. Engaging Youth in Policy Making.

A. Youth-Trust Building

1. It is vital to continue the process of building the trust between youth and officials or youth and the government. Expanding the outreach to youth through digital platforms and diversifying the youth participating in governmental activities could potentially lead to increase the level of trust and facilitate the discussion and opinions exchange. Trust is the first step to establish a youth-adult partnership in policy making as demonstrated earlier in the conceptual framework section in the ladder of participation theory.

2. Regularly announce the criteria of the selected youth who participate in the government youth initiatives and ministerial dialogues to motivate youth and improve the trust in the political will to engage youth. The National Youth Academy could be the assigned institution to the implementation of this policy.

3. The Ministry of Youth & Sports should target the marginalized youth in the cities at the border through its programs and civic education centers; as Matrouh, WadiJadeed and Sinai, for more engagement and inclusion in the public domain. The digital platforms can be utilized to reach to these targeted youth groups directly through paid advertisements.

B. Supporting the Enrichment of Political Life in Egypt & Civil Society Empowerment

1. There should be national policies in order to gradually empower the political life in Egypt and support the engagement of youth from various ideologies in policy making. That is

recommended to overcome labeling the governmental initiatives as activities that engage only the youth who are supporting the political regime and widening accordingly the base of youth engagement.

2. Ensuring the engagement of large number of civil society organizations especially youth in the social discussion over the proposed amendment of the current civil society law. The National Academy for Youth Training and Empowerment in cooperation with the Ministry of youth can host through the youth centers and civic education centers the social discussion with youth through a published selection criteria in order to discuss the potential role of civil society in the engagement of youth in policy making.

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