

## The Role of the state in the political Empowerment of youth Case Study of Egypt

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### ملخص الدراسة

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى التعرف على دور الدولة في تمكين الشباب في العمل السياسي والى اي مدى اثرت ثورات الربيع العربي في تمكينهم. كما تبنت هذه الدراسة نظرية التمكين والتي تقوم على بناء إطاراً لتنظيم المعرفة، وتعتمد على مساندة الضعفاء والمهمشين، ونجد ان مشاركة الشباب في صنع القرار بات مطلباً ملحا وضرورياً على صانع السياسة العامة، حيث التغيرات المتلاحقة والمستمرة تدفع بضرورة تبني العديد من البرامج لتغيير على فترات متعاقبة، مما يجعل النظام السياسي في حالة استقرار؟

### وخلصت الدراسة الى مجموعة من النتائج أهمها:

- 1- لن تنجح عمليات تمكين الشباب دون بناء إطار من الثقة السياسية يسمح ببناء قواعد لسياسيات العامة والتي ينطلق من خلالها آليات التمكين.
- 2- أهمية اللقاءات التي تجمع بين المسؤولين والشباب لزيادة الثقة بين كل منهما.
- 3- أدى عدم توفر الفرص الكافية للشباب لتطوير وممارسة القيادة الشبابية - والعمليات والادوات التقييمية اللازمة لبناء برامج قيادة فعالة إلى الدراسة الحالية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السياسة العامة، التمكين، الشباب، مصر، المشاركة السياسية- الدولة

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#### **Abstract**

The present study aims to identify the role of the state in youth empowerment in politics and the extent to which Arab Spring Revolutions influenced such empowerment. The present study adopts the Empowerment Theory that is founded on forming a framework for knowledge organization and aims to empower the marginalized and the deprived. We can readily see that youth participation in decision making is increasingly becoming a pressing necessity for public policy makers, as the incessant changes in the general scene makes it a vitality to adopt multiple change schemes over successive periods of time, in order to stabilize the political regime.

The main subject matter was discussed in three aspects. On the first, the study attempted to elaborate on the theoretical merits. The second aspect addressed the reality of empowerment and the state role in the empowerment process, while the third aspect explained the challenges facing youth empowerment and the mechanisms of such empowerment in society.

#### **The present study concluded to the following findings:**

- 1-** Youth empowerment processes would not give their expected fruits without a framework of political trust that allows for founding public policies from which empowerment mechanisms can operate.
- 2-** It is of importance to hold frequent meetings between the officials and the youth in order to build up mutual trust.
- 3-** The present study was fueled mainly by the lack of opportunities for youth to practice and develop leadership, processes and assessment instruments necessary for construction of effective leadership programs.

**Keywords: Public Policy, Empowerment, Youth, Egypt, Participation, state.**

### **Introduction:**

New horizons opened in the effect of the major changes witnessed in Egypt and Tunisia, thanks to the mass uprisings that transferred to many other countries. Such horizons are distinctive by genuine, unprecedented characteristics. And it is of no doubt that in such recent events, being a major turning point, youth had a new, essential role, them being the true advocates for change.

Given the fleeting changes and developments around the globe, and the rise of multiple various problems related to youth in various fields, it has been a major concern for political leaders in different political regimes, state actors, formal and non-formal actors to address such problems and respond to the demands of youth, achieving youth's goals within integrated programs and plans known as public policies (Abdel wahed,2011).

the political Empowerment of youth has been one of the most important subjects related to state policy, being reflected on the type of policies and how they relate to individuals, society and the ruling regime.

The state has given a major significance to public policy planning and implementation, based on the dominant concepts throughout the past two centuries. Such significance varied between different political regimes and constitutions and was made clear by the extent of state intervention, depending on the nature of the current political regime and its value system. Public policy is related to the ideology adopted by the regime, and such policy is usually a reflection of such ideology in various fields (Hussein,2007).

#### **First: Purpose:**

The present study highlights the substantial topic of the role of the state in youth empowerment in politics and the extent to which Arab Spring Revolutions influenced such empowerment. It also aims to identify the nature of relation between youth and the state as for political empowerment, whether such relation allows for an actual democratic transition, and the limitations and challenges facing such empowerment.

#### **Second: Significance:**

The present study derives its significance from a number of academic and practical considerations, which are:

##### **1- Academic significance:**

A) Lack of Egyptian academically significant studies that have addressed the subjects of youth empowerment and democratic transition by stressing on the role of the state, as it is a comparatively novel subject that has not reflected much in practice, and it has not received much attention by researchers and practitioners alike.

B) The crucial part taken by youth in society and its major influence over the society.

##### **2- Practical significance:**

A) Defining the social role of youth

B) Highlighting the role of state institutions in forming policies for youth integration and social participation.

C) Highlighting the role of the role of the state in Egypt in youth empowerment, youth being an integral part of the Egyptian society, and Egypt being an integral part of the Arab world.

#### **Third: Problem statement:**

The present study seeks analyzing the influence of the Arab Spring on the role of the state and youth empowerment

programs in Egypt and analyzing transition policies that are still short of assimilating youth and hinder their involvement in political and social action.

**Fourth: Questions:**

The central question for this study is: What is the influence of the Arab Spring over Arab youth empowerment, and what are the obstacles hindering active involvement of youth in making positive change? And how to overcome such obstacles for youth empowerment?

From the central question arise a range of complementary questions, which are:

A- What are the obstacles hindering youth social participation?

B- After the Jan 25<sup>th</sup> Revolution, have the different ruling regimes tended to build up mutual trust with youth for an actual state of empowerment?

**Fifth: Methodology:**

This research paper uses a case study method applied to the political empowerment of the youth and what is the role of the state in that, in such approach, a researcher focuses on a certain case to examine. Such case can be a regime, an individual, a group, a society, an institution, an organization or a sub-culture or a general culture in a society or a nation.

Such approach was applied in the present study, as it addresses the role of state for youth empowerment in Egypt. A legal approach was utilized by referring to legal texts and articles of the Constitution related to youth social empowerment, and comparison of different constitutions and legislations to define the extent of the consequent changes and how that affected youth participation and empowerment, and how all that reflects on political actions.

## **First section: Youth empowerment in public policies: A theoretical framework**

### 1. Empowerment Theory:

In the present study, the researcher leans on the Empowerment Theory, as it provides a framework and principles for knowledge organization, and it aids in developing what is more than fleeting gains and political manipulations. Such theory hints at the presence of methods to evaluate a political regime in different contexts for the purposes of empowerment process studies, and to measure its advantage over other regimes in points like self-evaluation, self-sufficiency or educability.

The Theory depends on social justice and providing people with more social and political security and equality through mutual solidarity and contribution of education in making tiny steps towards goals (Malcolm, 1996).

Zimmerman was concerned with describing **three dimensions** for the Empowerment Theory, which are:

*First: Empowerment values:* they present a belief system that coordinates how practitioners and clients work together (marc,2000).

*Second: Empowerment processes:* they refer to the mechanisms and methods through which individuals, organizations and societies can gain control or master over aspects that concern them and, through them, develop a critical awareness about their environments and participate in decision-making about what affects their lives. Empowerment processes provide individuals with opportunities among which are:

- ❖ Development and practice: of individual skills enough for an individual to achieve a reasonable level of control and mastery over their political and social environment e.g., decision-making and resource-mobilization.
- ❖ Educating individuals about the critical analysis of their socio-economic environments. (Marc,1991).

*Third: Empowerment outcome:*

Empowerment outcomes are represented by new circumstances and effects occurred due to implementation of empowerment programs, as shown by measurement processes. In literature, empowerment outcomes refer to dependent variables, considering that empowerment processes and efforts are the independent variables (Marc,1995).

Spreitzer, was concerned with describing four dimensions for the Psychological Empowerment Theory, which are:

First: Locus of control: The Locus of control, the personality trait most relevant to the impact dimension, will also be related to empowerment. Locus of control explains the degree to which people believe that they, rather than external forces, determine what happens in their lives. Individuals with an internal locus of control regarding life in general are more likely to feel capable of shaping their work and work environments and hence to feel empowered.

Second: Self-esteem. Self-esteem, defined as a general feeling of self-worth, is posited to be related to empowerment. Individuals who hold themselves in high esteem are likely to extend their feelings of self-worth to a work-specific sense of competence.

Third: Information: there are two specific types of formation are critical for empowerment:

- 1- Information about an Organizations mission: until people feel informed about where an Organizations is headed overall, they won't feel capable of taking initiative.
- 2- Information about performance: people need to understand and how well their work units are performing in order to make and influence decisions to maintain and improve performance in the future.

Fourth: Rewards: Another work context variable believed to be critical for empowerment is an incentive system that rewards performance to be empowering a reward system must recognize Individual contribution. Individual incentives enhance empowerment by:

- 1- Recognizing and reinforcing personal competencies.
  - 2- Providing Individuals with incentives for participating in and affecting decision making processes.
- (Gretchen,1995).



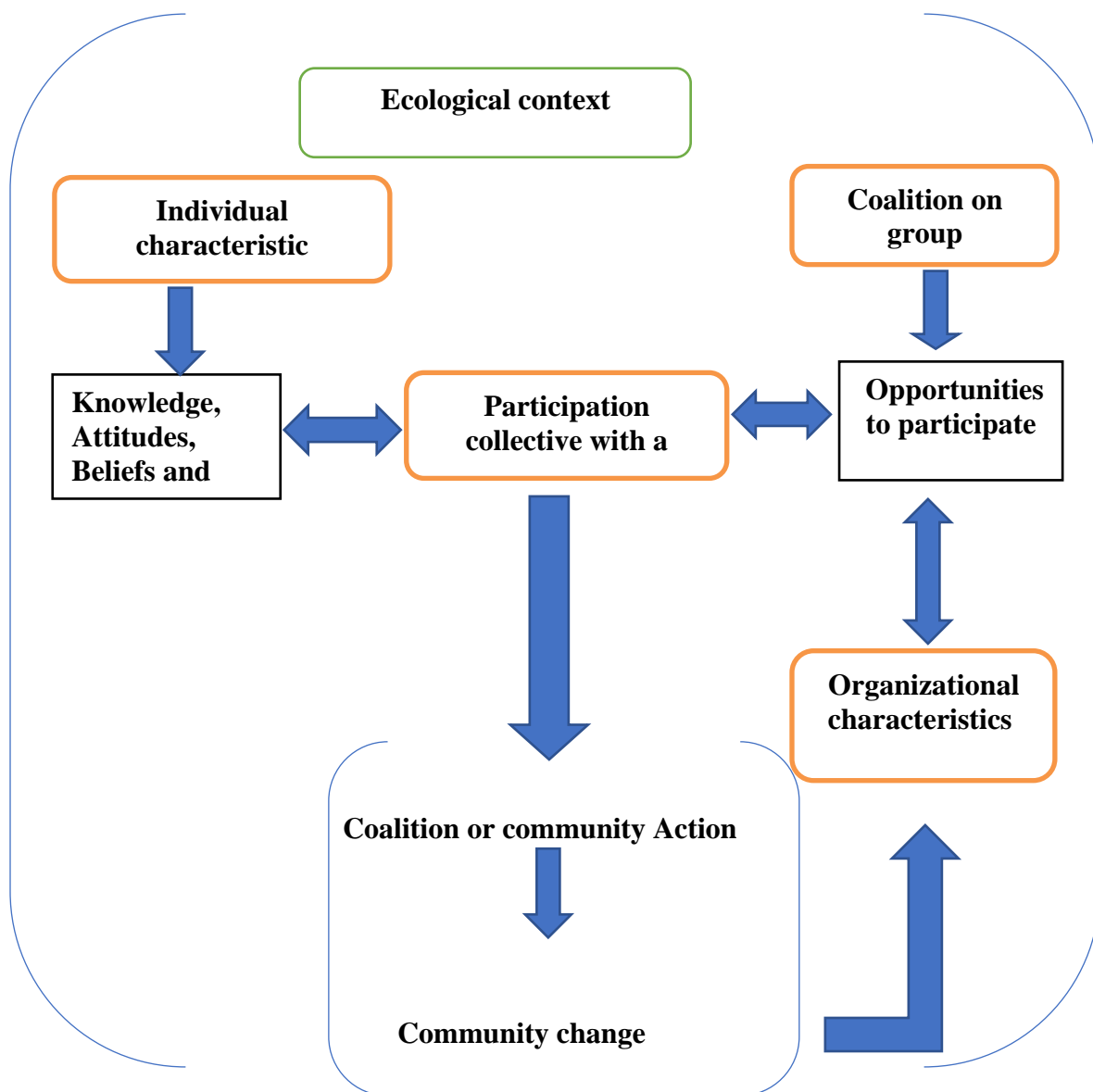


Figure1: conceptual framework for youth empowerment(laurie,2001).

#### *1/1 Origin and development of the concept of youth empowerment:*

The concept of youth empowerment, and empowerment in general, was among the concepts that have rose post-World War II (after 1945).

In 1950, the term made itself apparent in many writings. During that time, social work started to become more organized, as previously the focus was mainly directed to readjusting imbalances of power.

Between 1960 and 1970, the concept gained more depth and gained more ground and influence in social work, and that was due to the rise of various movements for civil rights, women rights and rights of the disabled and other socially based movements (Ahmed,2000).

In the seventies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the concept was firstly associated with alternative trends of development that are concerned with regional developmental movements and initiatives, such as social development, sustainable development and human development (Edward,1995).

In the eighties, the concept of empowerment was defined in psychological literature as a participatory process through which individual may control their lives and environment. Afterwards, such concept started to show up on a regular basis in nursing, health and administration studies: It was defined in educational literature as the process of transferring power from one group to another, resulting in a form of freedom of sharing different types of power.

In 2001, the concept of empowerment appeared in the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations about implementation of the World Youth Programme of Action for the year of 2000 and beyond. Since then, the concept has been

referring to two main sections which are: the objective-social dimension that is concerned with training youth to be educated citizens with professional skills, communication skills, citizenship duties and ability to expand their opportunities; and the "subjective" dimension, which is meant to face youth negativity, replacing it with an incentive for them to seize available opportunities and develop them in order to realize their capabilities and qualities (Rosaline *et al.*,2008).

*1/2. Youth political empowerment:*

*1/2/1. Definition of empowerment:*

Linguistically, the Arabic word for "empowerment", تمكين, is the noun for the verb "مَكَّنَ", and the lexical root (مَ كَّ نَ) refers to a high status (Intermediat lexicon,2004).

Standardly, empowerment is the sense of control and self-potency that emerges when individuals are given power to act in situations they are faced with (Steven and Mary,2000).

Another definitions considers empowerment as the opposite of "disempowerment", which is the process through which the weak can gain access to means of power, i.e., alternating unequal power relations among individuals, groups and social classes, which are based on reciprocal relations of dominance and dependence, allowing for removal of all behaviors, practices, thinking patterns and values that may lead to exclusion or marginalization of certain social categories in the favor of other categories (Sajed,2011).

Some considered empowerment to be an extension of organizational processes, through communication, criticism, opinion exchanging and practicing teamwork, in order to increase knowledge, skills and motivation (Hussein: 2009)

Looking to the aforementioned definitions, it is obvious that empowerment internalizes a relation between an individual and

their society or environment. Thus, it is important to identify such relations among individuals, institutions and societies, and what procedures are required for development of empowerment (Rappaports: 1987). As such, the concept of empowerment has become of major influence and a theoretical framework for political and social practice (Brian,2012).

#### *1/2/2. Definition of youth:*

The youth age stage is when qualitative and quantitative changes start to rise in a person's character, and that is when their desire of self-actualization mixes up is combines with that of seeking a role in society, along with an urge to rebel against past achievements, a sense of responsibility, dreams of an ideal society and an incessant endeavor towards change (Amal,2014). In Arabic, the word for youth, شباب, is derived from the verb شَبَّ which plural is شَبَاب, and other synonyms for the word are الحداثة (novelty) and الشببية (younger generations), and it is the opposite of شَيْب (gray hair). We say (شِب) for a younger boy, and a young woman is شابة (Mohamed,1988)

Some other countries limited it between 11 or 12 to 30, while others limited it to adolescence that extends between 15-21 years, and limited early adulthood between 21-30 (Mahmoud,1994).

#### *1/2/3. Youth empowerment:*

It was defined by Arab Declaration on Youth Empowerment as the process of building, developing and employing youth capabilities and equal opportunities among all their categories, especially between males and females, liberating their will and expanding their choices and initiatives to participate in various fields (Knowledge Report,2014).

*1/2/4. Youth political empowerment:*

It means their practicing of political authority and participation in political decision-making, in addition to official representation in relevant institutions. It is also known as “activating and supporting youth participation, contribution and influence in public processes, decisions and activities (Murad,2014)

Here, reference should be made to two concepts related to youth political empowerment:

First: Youth integration (Mohamed,2013).

Second: Youth participation (Jennifer *et al.*,2003).

Participation is a difficult concept that should be defined, as most authors agree that participation is an on-going process that does not happen only once (Anne and Dan,2017). Participation here can be defined as youth engagement into institutions and decisions that influence their lives (Barry,2012).

Political participation is one of main sections of political empowerment, while the second dimension is represented in political awareness. (Naser and Laila,2017 and John,1997).

*1/3. Conditions and stages of empowerment:*

Empowerment entails the presence of four categories of conditions:

First: political (Democracy),

Second: economical (a minimum of welfare),

Third: social (a minimum of equality and civil society activities),

Fourth: cultural (a minimum of education, various disciplines of knowledge, leisure time and sport and art practicing) (Abdel Aziz,2007).

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There are five stages that should be achieved to realize empowerment, which are (John,1997):

- Welfare: such stage focus on material welfare in all Fields of life.
- Potential: the perspective in such stage is that failure of individuals to fulfill their own needs is attributed to pre-existing social systems.
- Awareness: the main focus here is to raise the capabilities of individuals in critical analysis for discriminatory stereotypes that sustain such social systems. This requires knowing the difference between social management and political management practiced by youth, which is imposed by social, traditional culture.
- Participation: in such stage, the aim is to improve active, positive participation in the process of decision-making. An orthodox society finds difficulty in practicing such form of participation.
- Actionability: it means ability of youth to improve their own standard of living, guarantee participation and take suitable decisions for their social lives.

#### *1/4. Dimensions and strategies of empowerment:*

There are five main dimensions of empowerment (Robert,2003) which are:

##### *1/4/1. Personal empowerment:*

Concerned about granting individuals power and capability to positively influence their own lives. Personal power depends on

efficiency and self-confidence. It includes empowering individuals so they can revolt against well-established bad customs. It is an educational process that transforms an individual into an active participant in formulating a new view to their own life.

*1/4/2. Social empowerment:*

Its main focus is to rearrange or radically change values and beliefs associated with decision-making. It includes giving hopes of making changes and causing transformations in social institutions, advocating for freedom of social groups, dignity and autonomy. Social empowerment raises sense of social responsibility.

*1/4/3. Economic empowerment:*

It is when individuals are capable of gaining sufficient income for leading a good life and securing their basic needs. The role of social work on a societal level is to train social workers for participation in developing and managing economic development plans.

*1/4/4. Educational empowerment:*

Focuses on development of human resources through a comprehensive understanding of the educational framework. The role of social workers here is building capacity for participation in formulating and implementing educational policy on a macro level, while, on a societal level, social workers are responsible for addressing the problems of dropping off from schools, literacy and educational project designing.

*1/4/5. Political empowerment:*

It focuses on forming a political system through which citizens may participate in a way that influences making policies that

would influence their lives. This occurs on both the national and societal levels.

Empowerment includes a range of policies, including:

First: Education:

This strategy is concerned with raising awareness in students and teachers about their society and how individuals are influenced by current and future policies, in addition to raising their understanding of self-confidence and participation in developing policies that meet their needs. It also focuses on educating them about how to negotiate with stakeholders and decision makers in their society (Paulo,2002).

Second: Organization:

As a social engineer, the first lesson to be taught is that the poor cannot be heard for the lack of an organization that would represent them. Such organization would give people a pathway to express their collective needs in a way that cannot be ignored. (Kim,2001).

### 2. Public policy:

Like any other discipline, the study of public policy has been stirring controversy among researchers about its nature and subjects of interest. Thus, there have been multiple definitions trying to grasp public policy and comprehend its many aspects, being a representation of the administrative aspect of a government and its political actions in general (El-sayed,1988).

#### *2/1. Definition and types of public policies:*

There are many synonyms for the term "public policies" including "governmental policies", "governmental programs" and "public projects". And whichever term we would use, we would be referring to the activities practiced by the government,



state institutions and its official agents in order to solve a society's problems.

Public policy (governmental policy) can be defined as "Every action or decisions taken by a government or its representatives to intervene with a society's affairs and solve problems faced by the state from within or without (Abdel Fattah,2009).

Public policy can be categories into a range of types, including (Abdel moneim,2012):

*2/1/1. Distributive policies:* Policies through which a state distributes benefits and advantages over its citizens, defining who gains what and who owns the benefit rights.

*2/1/2. Redistributive policies:* These are policies by which a state redistributes available resources and benefits by deducting some resources from some citizens and redistribute them to other citizens in more need.

*2/1/3. Regulatory policies:* States and governments need to adopt certain laws and regulations to regulate a certain field of life or a certain behavior.

*2/2. Characteristics and problems of public policies:*

***2/2/1. Public policies are characterized by the following:***

- Decisions taken by the government: This means that it chooses, among many alternatives, a certain method to achieve its goals. Such decisions are characterized by permanence and relative unchangeability as long as the public policy remains unchanged.
- Implementation of a public policy is general, comprehensive and equally enforced over all individuals in the given society that are being affected by such policy (Khairy,1988).
- A public policy operates in a regulatory framework based on constitutions and laws. Associating the process of public policy

making with the constitutional regulatory framework of a state is what makes public policy distinct from any other policies that are carried out in regulatory frameworks other than governmental ones, such as the policies of private foundations.

- Public policy is an authoritative and rational pass that is meant to predict the future, i.e., it is a future-based process that is concerned with all economic, technological and political variables and possibilities, and also with changes occurring on the moral level (Ahmed,1994).

- Public policies are decided by consultation among all governmental and non-governmental officials, or it expresses their points of view at least.

- Public policy making is a dynamic, ever-changing process (Khairy,1988).

- In its first stages, public policies tend to reflect the degree of power and authority enjoyed by different categories and elites in a society. Making a public policy requires a series of complex, exhausting procedures such as consultation, negotiation and bargaining in order to arrive to compromises that may allow providing the required limit of harmony between all controversies in trends, incentives and interests.

- There should be sought goals underlying public policies, as such policies are the final result of social management for public issues and problems, and that is what makes such policies a melting pot for the trends of political actors.

- Lack of a public policy leads to contradiction and duality in decisions and courses of action, which may cause wasting of available capabilities, undermining opportunities of efficient and effective goal achievement (el-Sayed and Abdel Karim: 2000, Hassan,2000).

*2/2/2. Characteristics of public policy problems:*

- Reciprocity: problems in public policy are affected by and affect each other, as they are interlacing and intimately related within an integrated system and not completely separate from each other.
- Subjectivity: this means that categorization of internal and external circumstances from which arise problems in public policies, and interpretation and assessment of such circumstances – are all done according to subjective or personal experiences of public policy makers, i.e., the personality of a public policy maker and analyzer has an evident effect on interpretation, analysis and treatment of public policy problems.
- Positivism: which means that problems of public policies are mostly caused by individuals or communities, and they happen wherever human gatherings exist.
- Dynamism: it means that problems of public policies have solutions as much as they have potential definitions, i.e., it cannot be asserted that there are clear limitations or definitive solutions for any of public policy problems (HEYA Center, 2015 & Abbas and Arzooqi, 2005).

Thus, it can be seen that the political empowerment of youth is a way out from a political regime that arises from contextual circumstances, and that it is made within governmental structures and it is implemented and followed up within such structures.

## **Second section: State role in political youth empowerment**

We see that public policy is the fruit of a complex, dynamic interaction that occurs within a defined political, environment and ideological framework participated in by certain formal and informal elements assigned by a political regime. Among such elements: the constitution in an ideological state or the political philosophy of the ruling authority, legislative authority, executive authority, jurisdictional authority, political parties, lobbies, press and public opinion and available capabilities and resources and the general circumstances of a country (Thamer,2004).

Thus, we will discuss this aspect in two main points:

### *1. Relation between Egyptian youth and the state:*

#### *1/1. Pre-Jan 25<sup>th</sup> Revolution:*

State policies ever since the Nasser regime have not been youth neutral; on the contrary, they developed specific policies and legislation targeting young people. The issue of young people became most prominent in the 1970s after Sadat's ascendance to power. Activism and demonstrations have been constrained in universities. This has been most evident in the development of repressive laws on the right to assembly and the right to protest.

The relationship between the regime and young people is highly complex. On the one hand, the regime perceives young people as a force for development and positive change, while on the other hand it perceives young people – and especially young political activists – as a threat to its own existence (Nadin,2016).

In Egypt, Mubarak has started his reign in the eighties, a reign which last for about 30 years, throughout which he ruled all state institutions with an iron fist. Such institutions have witness a state of weakness and corruption that urged the youth to rise against Mubarak in the Jan 25<sup>th</sup> Revolution 2011, which was concluded by the fall of his regime and him being prosecuted (Fatima,2011).

Following the Revolution, came to light the crisis in the relation between the ruling authority and Egyptian citizens generally and the youth specially. Since its foundation, the state of Egypt has been tightly centralized, bureaucratic and strongly controlling all state institutions, which, in turn, led to lack of true efficiency in such institutions and them being replaced by autocracy. That ignited protests against such state and bringing down the regime has become a popular demand for all, first started by youth and then the masses followed.

*1/2. Post- Jan 25<sup>th</sup> Revolution:*

The state-youth relation took on two stages since then:

*First: Rule of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF):*

Seeing the SCAF as a political ruling entity, we will find that it was characterized, since its rise to power, by a collective pattern of activity. Such collective entity had a different relation between it and citizens in general and youth in special than its predecessors. The SCAF's political administration had a gradual, non-rushing mode of operation, in a pattern of attempting to make up for the previous regime's faults but does not try to find new alternatives suitable for a new era, the attitude which youth considered against their revolutionary logic. Thus, the SCAF-revolutionary youth relation has become one of a demand-response pattern i.e., action-reaction, in the light of multiple waves of protests by youth on one hand, and

regular counseling with social and ideological leaders and revolutionary youth on the other hand, in order to assimilate the demands and revolutionary ambitions of the youth (Pakinam,2012).

Second: Rule of President Mohamed Morsi:

In this stage, youth realized that the new ruling regime represented by the Muslim Brotherhood is not the regime they demanded in the Revolution, as their policies of excluding people from power were just the same as Mubarak's policies. Youth considered the Constitutional Declaration announced by President Morsi was for him to protect himself against legal accountability, making him a "political dictator" (Azmi,2015).

Afterwards, a group of youth declared the foundation of "Tamarrod" movement that started a campaign for referendum on holding early presidential elections. With the support of millions of people for such call and its rejection by the president then, and with acceleration of events, youth were able to call for a popular uproar in all public squares in the ARE, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2013, calling for ousting President Morsi. That actually happened on 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 2013, and counselor Adly Mansour, head of the Supreme Constitutional Court, stood in for the position of an acting president till election of a new president (Ali *et al*,2015).

Following President Morsi's statement in 2013, Interim President Adly Mansour in an Public speech to stamp the new Constitution likewise depicted youth as mainstays of the country and progress. He guaranteed that "you [the youth] have been the fuel of the two mainstream transformations. The period of building and strengthening is still in front of you. Construct your future and partake in political life, through

improving hardliner activity. You ought to be certain that your endeavors will prove to be fruitful"

Following Abdel Fatah al-Sisi's ascendance to control in 2014, first class talk on "Egyptian youth" has extensively joined two fundamental subjects: from one perspective, al-Sisi has conveyed an appeasing and fairly self-reproachful message: "sorry to have ignored you." He further confirmed his desire for Egypt's childhood to be his ally and guaranteed youngsters that they would have more open doors for political, social and social incorporation through the foundation of another National Youth Council to improve discourse among government and youth. For example, while tending to Cairo University understudies a couple of months after his ascendance to control, he tended to understudies as "children and girls." also, in articulating his adoration for Egypt's childhood, he insisted that he considered them "his kids".

He likewise examines youngsters' significance as beneficial powers for the public restoration of the economy. In encouraging Egyptian youth to help "fabricate another Egypt," Sisi has been unequivocal that in doing as such, they should work with him. For example, he expressed that "I need your [Egyptian youth] trust. I need your loyalty" (Nadin, 2016).

## 2. Governmental role in political youth empowerment:

Considering the governmental role in the process of empowerment, it is clear that it is represented in the following tasks:

a- Amending legislations, making them flexible enough to assimilate youth within the elite in the highest positions in the state.

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- b- Close cooperation between governments and civil society organizations in favor of youth empowerment.
- c- Enabling opportunities for empowerment with no prior conditions or any violations for a citizen's rights.
- d- Cooperation for solving any consequent problems in youth empowerment, consistent with a society's special attributes.
- e- Calling for civil society to take up responsibility for encouraging youth empowerment in different societies (Ali,2006).

Observing the role and procedures taken up by the State of Egypt to encourage empowerment, we can see the following:

#### *2/1. Legislation:*

The state made efforts represented in ratifying conventions and enacting legislations which can be categorized into pre-Jan 25<sup>th</sup> and post-Jan 25<sup>th</sup> legislations.

##### *2/1/1. Pre-Jan 25<sup>th</sup> legislations and conventions:*

- Arab Declaration on Youth Empowerment released by Arab Youth Observatory (Ayman, 2011): Ratified by Egypt in 2006. It is considered an orientation and a main reference in planning regional and national policies aiming to empower youth and underpin their participation in development. It was approved by members of the social committee of the Interim Arab Parliament in 2006, then by Youth Sectors officials in different Arab countries in 2006.
- African Youth Charter: Ratified by Egypt in 2008 (Ministry of Exterior, Egypt,2019). The Charter included a list of youth rights and the responsibilities of governments towards youth sector in four main fields, which are participation, education and skill development, sustainable livelihood and health and welfare (Ayman,2011).



*2/1/2. Post- Jan 25<sup>th</sup> legislations and conventions within the interim period:*

- Head of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces has issued a decree amending Act 40 (1977) on political parties, that removed restrictions on forming new parties and allows a political party to be only founded by prior notice.

- Resolution that binds the Armed Forces to provide all possible administrative facilitations for youth to be able to run for parliament elections and be represented in the political scene.

- Amendments to regulations of parliament by lowering the minimum age of candidacy to 25 rather than 30 years old. That is one of the important steps towards empowerment.

- Constitution: In Article no. 181 of the Egyptian Constitution 2014, it is stipulated that "Each local unit shall elect an administrative board by public, direct election, that lasts for four years. It is required from a candidate not to be less than 21 years old by the Gregorian calendar. Other candidacy conditions and election procedures are regulated by law, with one quarter of seats assigned for youth less than 35 years old." Also, the Constitution lowered age of candidacy for all kinds of political elections and required more representation for youth in boards of youth centers and sports clubs. (Act no. 46/2014)

Then the choice of Prime Minister Ibrahim Mahlab, No. 1592 of 2014, was issued to authorize the ministers to settle on their assistants. and therefore the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and concrete Communities is taken into account the primary to implement Resolution 1592 of 2014, where the then Minister of Housing, Dr. Mostafa Madbouly issued the primary inter-ministerial decision No. 93 of 2015 to appoint 4 assistants for him.

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#### **Governors reshuffle 2019**

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the Governors Reshuffle in 2019 included actual representation of youth, The reshuffle, included 39 new leaders: governors and deputies, among them are 60% of children, including the choice of 16 governors and 23 deputies.

To complete the empowerment of all Egyptian state entities, 5 children are chosen to coordinate parties and politicians, at 20% of the number of deputies.

Assistants system of the Prime Minister and Ministers

The Cabinet approved, during its meeting on Lincoln's Birthday, 2020, headed by Dr. Mustafa Madbouly, a draft resolution on the system of assistants of the Prime Minister and Ministers, as an alternate to the system established by Prime Minister Decision No. 612 of 2017, amended by Resolution No. 1273 of 2019..(State Information Service, 2020).

- Act of Parliament elections (2015) (Act no. 46/2014): that act required assignment of a particular number of seats on electoral lists for youth.

- Youth Associations Law No. 128 of 2017

The House of Representatives approved (Youth Associations Law No. 128 of 2017), which provides for a minimum of 50% of the seats within the Council for Youth Centers under the age of 35, which can cause the activation of youth centers for his or her role within the cultural field of society. ( Nabilah,2019).

The new amendments to the law stipulated in Article 4 for youth Associations whose conditions haven't been reconciled in accordance with Minister of Youth and Sports Resolution No. 36 of 2018 to reconcile their conditions without fees consistent

with the provisions of this law, within six months of the date of its implementation, otherwise they're deemed dissolved by the force of the law.

#### 2/2 Education:

Being an instrument for social empowerment, the state started a course of re-planning for a few educational sectors like technical education that stayed neglects for periods of your time, and ratifying agreements of cooperation with other countries to support education and supply elements of attraction for youth. Therefore, the state made efforts for recapitulation of some civics curricula and introduction of latest concepts like citizenship and human rights.

Also, the govt has adopted transformational training for all ministries and institutions associated with youth, so as to assist youth, change their previously assigned jobs to new ones according to their skills and ambitions. Such programs are relevant to actual market demands and aim to limit unemployment.

#### 2/3. Media:

There exists an outsized sort of media sources and triggers to which individuals are exposed, increasing sources of data, affecting public awareness and culture during a society. Media have multiple roles, like providing youth with tailored information about their society and surrounding world and emphasizing pros and cons of obtainable alternatives in order that they can make their free choices.

#### 2/4. Presidential decrees:

Refer to decisions taken by the state president that are associated with such context.

- In his speech on 23rd of June 2013, President Mohamed Morsi has issued instructions to governors and ministers to

assign youth advisors who are but 40 years old, within but fortnight.

- Acting President Adly Mansour has assigned a couple of youth ministry advisors.

- Then, President Abdel-Fattah Elsisī called ministers to assign for themselves a particular number of youth assistants, and, in 2015, declared a presidential program for youth empowerment, allowing two months to coach few select groups, for eight months.

Elsayed Yassin has commented on such decisions, saying that the novel post-June 30th has resorted to a futile approach to empowerment, which is that the issuing of ministerial decisions requiring each minister and governor to settle on a gaggle of youth as assistants. Such decisions, being illogical, have faced many difficulties in practice. Worse than that, they didn't solve the issues in youth empowerment, for, if only a limited number of youth assistants would be chosen to be assistants, then what about the wide masses of youth that seek a lively role in politics and decision-making? (El-Sayed,2015).

### ***Third section: Problems facing youth empowerment in Egypt, and mechanisms for an active role for youth in society***

#### ***1.Problems faced by Egyptian youth (Radia,2018):***

1/1. Unemployment is taken into account one among the foremost significant sufferings Egyptian youth sleep in. this will be attributed to the very fact that the state not assigns fresh graduates to governmental jobs, which some trials to unravel such problems have failed, like small enterprises financed by the state-affiliated Social Fund.

1/2. Appearance of some negative phenomena among Egyptian youth, like addiction, unregistered marriage among university

students thanks to socio-economic pressures and financial difficulties.

1/3 Increased levels of celibacy among Egyptian youth.

1/4. Most voluntary work institutions are dominated by elders and doesn't support rotation of power.

## 2.Problems facing youth empowerment in Egypt:

Such problems and challenges could also be basically social. Seeing from its definitions, it's a desirable and highly accepted term by many that are attributed to organizations or groups that aspire to succeed in it. But mere desire isn't enough to determine empowered organization unless the relevant groups are in dire needs for such empowerment that they might provide all possible circumstances and capabilities and style studies and plans for it to happen and be a basis for plans and decisions (Abu omra,2015).

2/1. *Political problems:* they ask problems associated with a political regime. the primary and foremost of these are good governance, considering that good governance is that the most prominent challenge facing the method of empowerment. one among the most features of excellent governance is that the notion of non-discriminatory political participation for all (Ali, 2005)

### *2/1/1. Political problems of Egyptian youth pre-Jan 25<sup>th</sup>:*

There is little question, that the Egyptian youth faced a difficult phase of marginalization and neglect during the amount of Mubarak's rule which lasted for thirty years, as there was no obvious vision or practical desire to enhance youth, but on the contrary, the youth were expelled out of the general public life whether via enabling a selected sector of elites from the general public jobs albeit they exceeded the majority or via the absence

of justice and equal opportunities concepts of the state structure that was concerned only about extending the amount for the faces which served it quite worrying about enabling and developing the talents of latest generation of youth as various factors helped therein like corruption, favoritism and therefore the absence of independent control bodies.

Hence, it had been not a surprise within the light of this expellant climate for youth, notably those that have an interest in political participation that an enormous sector of youth stays far away from the political process sponsored by the state. (Ziad,2015)

The Human Development Report 2010 has acknowledged a variety of reasons, including:

- Indifference, negativity and lack of loyalty of youth towards everything political.
- Dissociation between youth and their society, thus they are doing not engage in any social or political activities.
- About 90% of youth lack self-confidence and confidence in anyone in their vicinity, which successively reflects on their lack of confidence within the regime and society in whole (Human Development Report,2010).

*2/1/2. Post-Jan 25<sup>th</sup>:*

The Revolution provided an excellent opportunity and space represented in data communication technologies like internet and social media (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) for people, especially youth, to participate in politics even under the radar of an oppressive political regime. data communication media played a pivotal role in igniting the primary spark for Jan 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Revolution by the hands of intellectual youth who kept making good use of the virtual world as a big tool of political participation (Farid,2013).

The same happened with the events of June 30th, 2013, because the digital media played a task in documenting the disadvantages of the ex-president Mohamed Morsi's regime, raising political awareness and recruiting popular opinion for military. For the second time, digital media succeeded in recruiting people to travel right down to streets in revolution (El-Shaimaa,2015).

We may attribute poor political participation by youth pre-Revolution, in spite of raised political awareness, to the rigidity of the political regime then and its deliberate exclusion of youth from the political scene. Post-Revolution, it had been no different, because the youth then were exposed to internal and external difficulties that disassembled its unity with no unified decision, ideology or leadership, in spite of their shared goals represented within the Revolution's mottos, additionally to being ignored by the SCAF and most political parties that were there pre-Revolution or post-Revolution. We didn't see one young individual taking over a high position within the state or maybe participated in planning its public policies or constitution during a way that did youth justice by increased representation in parliament or increased job opportunities etc., (Abu omra,2015).

## *2/2. Economic problems:*

Unemployment is that the greatest economic challenge thanks to its disastrous effects extending to all or any elements of a society. The Human Development Report 2013 acknowledged that youth percentage was the very best among Arab countries in 2012 (Arab Human Development Report,2013).

A key aspect of the stunted transition in Egypt is that the problem of unemployment. Its rate continues to climb and youth between the ages of 15 and 29 are increasingly the

foremost affected. The official percentage currently stands at 12.8 percent, and within the youth bracket it reaches 30 percent. Many Egyptian youth who are unable to migrate legally still die as they plan to illegally cross the Mediterranean to Europe.

As the events of 2011 have shown, youth unemployment not only has ramifications for the economy, except for the general stability of the region also. Research shows that there's an immediate correlation between youth unemployment and therefore the socio-economic and political stability of a state.

A 2013 report by the African Development Bank explored data from 24 developing countries and located an immediate correlation between unemployment and political instability. (Adel,2016).

Even though the state has administered some projects, youth didn't directly interact with such projects, for the subsequent reasons (A Proposed Project for Youth Empowerment: 2016):

2/2/1. *Lack of knowledge:* as youth don't have enough knowledge about available projects, and there's not enough communication with them nor sufficient marketing, additionally to deliberate and constant defamation by others.

2/2/2. *Lack of confidence:* youth feel lack of potential, and that they don't find suitable programs for raising self-confidence and sense of security.

2/2/3. *Lack of motivation:* lack of media support and motivation and therefore the major shortage therein. Information about youth empowerment projects are scattered and hard to trace, and, alongside trials of discouragement, nobody bothers to look. So, it's important to form efforts to directly communicate information during a focused way.

2/2/4. *Conflict of information:* caused by the Muslim Brotherhood and their supported. it's a crucial explanation for



concealing much information about empowerment projects. Whenever a project involves light, appears alongside it a serious dose of discouragement and false information that drives youth far away from it.

2/2/5. Uncertain future: youth lack sufficient courage and that they doubt their own potential and therefore the potential of Egyptian markets to assimilate their projects, which is why they are doing not venture into the planet of entrepreneurship, settling for a hard and fast job.

2/2/6. Procedures: shocking levels of bureaucracy parturient market and lack of enforcement of suitable legislations against such bureaucracy make starting any project a posh process.

2/2/7. Inexperience: it's a clear, unsolved problem thus far, be it in primary, secondary or university education which should be introducing a richness of data about commercial processes and their instruments, the thing that never happens, causing unawareness in youth, making them unqualified and unable to require on project management responsibilities.

2/3. Social problems: the difficulty of citizenship may be a main challenge against youth empowerment and engagement. Citizenship is merely reflected in just legislations that are never extending to practice and implementation, neither in job opportunities, nor in law governance and nor in social rights. That reflects on youth loyalty and their sense of alienation.

The present study proposes that this results in major social problems, including illegal immigration.

2/4. Cultural problems: most of our cultural heritage, additionally to the unhealthy current state of being in our society, has led, for the foremost part, to hindrance of the method of gaining objective awareness about the overall happenings within the national and international surroundings

alike, as there's a state of political instability, economic stagnation, intellectual and ideological shortage, poor national production rates and slow sustainable development plans (Sven,2012).

Based on that, it's difficult to treat such problems without a framework of political trust that governs the state-youth relation. albeit the state is completing youth-empowering procedures, such procedures don't reach the particular administration of the political regime.

### 3. Mechanisms of youth empowerment in the society:

#### *3/1. Mechanisms of enforcing the role of youth in Egypt:*

##### *3/1/1. Mechanisms of economic empowerment (A Proposed Project for Youth Empowerment,2016):*

- In early 2016, President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi launched an initiative that included mandating the Central Bank to provide 200 billion pounds to support small and medium enterprises at an interest of no more than 5%.
- in 2017, the Rowad 2030 project was launched, as a part of the state's interest in supporting youth by supporting entrepreneurship and start-ups, to assist youth create jobs for themselves et al.. The project aims to enable children to determine private enterprises and work to devote and support the role of entrepreneurship in developing the economy and diversifying sources of income through the implementation of the project axes. The project also contributes to providing a group of services like scholarships and masters to review the sector of entrepreneurship during

a deeper and wider scale, and to support and establish business incubators for emerging companies that provide new ideas within the market.

- encouraging children by granting lands freed from charge to Upper Egypt governorates: The Egyptian state granted free lands with utilities to the governorates of Upper Egypt from Beni Suef to Aswan so as to encourage youth and investors.
- The launch of the “Emkan” project for youth employment: The “Imkan” project for youth employment and support for entrepreneurship was launched in Upper Egypt, a project of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. (Studies in Human Right, 2020)

First: coordination of state capacities:

Here we discuss the rationale why the state should coordinate its financial and economic capacities towards a unified national project that approaches youth and harnesses their potential, and around it gathers all economic capabilities and political will of the state, keeping in mind accounting those responsible on their successes and failures .

And to hold out such project, the state must set its priorities, first of all, and this includes identifying actual and available financing capabilities, so as to formulate a shared plan on two parallel axes equal quantitatively and qualitatively:

First axis: making maximum use of monetary resources and coordinating them well, yielding highest possible production rates which will reflect on the Egyptian GDP. this is often the "quantitative aspect."

Second axis: good planning and employment of finances and productive capabilities underpinning basic projects in favor of

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the economic and strategic trends of the state, for instance, to support exports or to fill a niche within the local market. this is often the "qualitative aspect."

Second: wise finance management:

Management of monetary resources and gaining maximum benefits from state capabilities and from other external loaners.

In this context, the most goal is to make a full investment cycle that starts by adequate training and ends with high-quality production operations and good marketing, guaranteeing a sustainable project with positive results.

Third: sustainability and increased chances of success:

For a project to be a national project, the state must raise trust in it and its projects and services, which successively will reflect on entrepreneurs and new applicants for financing. Also, the state should provide officials who would answer the questions of that category, addressing their concerns, among which are their ability to continue with the project and reap adequate gains, and also whether or not they would be ready to pay its interests.

3/1/2. *Mechanisms of political empowerment:*

Mechanisms of political empowerment:

Even though the state has announced its empowerment-oriented trends, other different efforts never ceased, especially those by politics-engaged youth who announced an initiative to collect all partisan and independent youth under a political umbrella of coordination, so as to supply a model for a dialogue supported a standard ground of shared goals, developing political life and

forming a national political project that gathers all parties. (Amira,2018).

President El-Sisi launched on 9/13/2015, "The Presidential Program for Qualifying Youth for Leadership" with the aim of making a robust and rich base of youth competencies so as to be eligible for political, administrative, and community add the country. The program launched a politician website and page on the social media under the slogan: Long Live Egypt with the facility of youth. (State Information service, 2020).

In 2016, President Al-Sisi has also named 2016 because the official "year of the youth", and therefore the president's office has put in situ a youth leadership program, the primary cohort of which incorporates around 500 children.

At the international level, Egypt has signed up to the United Nations' sustainable development goals, which include 17 goals and 169 outcomes. (Magued and Hanan,2016).

there was a replacement youth initiative for political life development and political youth empowerment by engaging into deciding, which was called "Coordinating Committee for Partisan Youth and Politicians" that included 25 political parties, additionally to 9 political youth from different political ideologies and currents. (Amira,2018).

The President issued presidential decree No. 434 of 2017 establishing the National Academy for Training and Qualifying Youth, which aims to satisfy the human development requirements of youth cadres altogether sectors of the country and upgrading their capabilities and skills. (State Information service, 2020).

Early in 2018, the second initiative started, which was also a coordinating committee with a replacement experience in practicing public action and opening direction channels of

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communication with the state, and coordinating partisan youth, political leaders and independent ryouth. The Committee participated within the 5th and 6th National Youth Conferences and within the 2nd World Youth Forum in 2018, and it included an outsized number of political parties.

Shehab Wageeh, the media spokesman for the Committee, has mentioned some notes, including:

- Youth empowerment is near impossible if youth aren't listened to, don't have their needs fulfilled and don't have an opportunity to talk out about what challenges they're up against,.

- He acknowledged the problem every government has in taking note of Egypt, which is that Egypt doesn't have a majority party, and thus there's no single youth group which will claim they represent Egyptian youth (Amira,2018).

In 2019, several conferences were held for youth, including:

- Announcing 2019 because the year of education.

- Rehabilitation of youth within the National Academy for Rehabilitation and Training.

Activating the artistic, cultural and sporting activities within the universities ... Launching the national project for developing education.

Allocating 20% of scholarships to education personnel for a period of 10 years.

Establishing an educator education and training center in accordance with international standards.

- The seventh national youth conference was persisted 30 and 31 July 2019, within the presence of 1,500 guests representing all groups of Egyptian youth .
- In September 2019, The Eighth National Youth Conference "Al-Manara Center, New Cairo'

- Aswan March 2019'African Arab Youth Forum "
- "Aswan, December 2019"The 10th Arab-African Youth Forum
- "December 2019"The Third World Youth Forum, (State Information service, 2020).

*3/2. Assessment of youth role empowerment mechanisms:*

It is possible to assess the mechanisms of youth role empowerment in society (Abu omra,2015) by the following methods:

3/2/1. Political mechanisms: by assessing the levels of free expression and opinions – youth political participation – increased political awareness in youth – establishment of democracy, equality and social justice – political empowerment,

3/2/2. Economic mechanisms: by assessing the amount of youth employment for improvement of production – increased production altogether sectors – creating job opportunities for youth in small enterprises – providing training courses for improvement of economic performance – loaning and supporting integration between the rich and therefore the poor.

From the previous data, this study concludes the subsequent about Egyptian youth empowerment, given the size mentioned within the theoretical framework:

-On the extent of individual empowerment:

In a glance, we will conclude that the Egyptian government wasn't concerned about qualifying youth to adapt to economic and living circumstances, proven by unemployment rates among youth which reached 25.7% (20.5% males, 38.7% females). Such rates among university graduates were 38.3% (30.2% males, 49.4% females) against 30.7% among graduates

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with technical education (24.7% males, 48.9% females) (Heba,2018). this means failure of professional qualification programs and their inability to satisfy market demands. In such case, it's difficult to expect any level of readiness in youth to interact in any developmental activities in their societies, with deterioration of their economic status, affecting the longer term of organized political participation for youth. Thus, deducing radical solutions for unemployment and poverty are of utmost priority within the subsequent periods.

-On the extent of organizational empowerment: this level reveals youth intentions. The Egyptian government made efforts to reintegrate youth into semi-governmental organizations like Parliament for the Forefronts and Youth, apart from the organization involved by President El-Sisi in support of the state. It also tried to supply different training programs like presidential program and native unit awareness programs etc ,.

Therefore, it seems the Egyptian government doesn't specialise in organizational youth empowerment, but rather to make a replacement political youth basis conditioned to be loyal.

### **Conclusion:**

The process of change is required to be on the medium to long term so its fruits can show. This is followed by saying that the process of youth empowerment will not have deeper effects in the short term, but rather it needs a longer period of time so it can yield its fruits and become a genuine part of the role of state and national & regional plans and programs.

Thus, the need for "a new agenda" for youth empowerment should be first accompanied by some considerations. As such, it seems that the Egyptian government has fallen in many



mistakes in addressing the issues of youth, and instead of it working to enforce true empowerment, it used the name of empowerment to form political youth bases supporting itself, which deepened the gap between the government and the majority of youth.

The present study proposes that all youth empowerment-supporting procedures are nothing but initiatives or instructions by the President. There is no public policy that expresses a framework of reference for any plans or strategies for youth empowerment. Thus, such initiatives should be followed by a range of necessary procedures and projects for youth empowerment on all levels, including forming mechanisms for encouraging youth to participate and take lead in decision-making in what concerns their future, including plans of sustainable development.

### **Findings:**

Through the aspects displayed in the present study, we conclude a few findings, including:

- 1- With the new ruling regime post- Jan 25<sup>th</sup> , there are no clear public policies considering political youth empowerment,
- 2- The process of youth empowerment will not succeed unless there is a framework of political trust that allows for establishment of public policies through which mechanisms of empowerment can operate,
- 3- It is of importance to hold frequent meetings between the officials and the youth in order to build up mutual trust.
- 4- The present study was fueled mainly by the lack of opportunities for youth to practice and develop leadership, processes and assessment instruments necessary for construction of effective leadership programs.

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