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CEPPS | Strengthening Democracy through Partnership

Raising Their Voices: How effective are pro-youth laws and policies?

Source: NDI

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International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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ABOUT CEPPS

Established in 1995, the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) pools the expertise of three international organizations dedicated to democratic development: the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the National Democratic Institute (NDI). CEPPS has a 20-year track record of collaboration and leadership in democracy, human rights, and governance support, learning from experience, and adopting new approaches and tools based on the ever-evolving technological landscape.

As mission driven, non-profit democracy organizations, IFES, IRI, and NDI differ from many development actors by maintaining long-term relationships with political parties, election management bodies, parliaments, civil society organizations, and democracy activists.

Through this work, IFES, IRI, and NDI:

- Promote meaningful participation of all citizens in their political systems, including women, youth, and other traditionally marginalized groups.

- Harness the comparative advantages of media and technology to promote citizen understanding and engagement and transparent political competition.

- Support meaningful transition processes that establish positive precedents for effective democratic governance.

- Promote the integrity of elections as a sustainable vehicle for peacefully and democratically choosing leaders.

- Facilitate the ability of elected political actors to fulfill their responsibilities to citizens through better governance practices.

- Promote competitive and representative multi-party political systems.

- Ensure respect for the application of impartial legal frameworks and compliance by political actors.

Authors

Aaron Azelton (NDI)
Bret Barrowman (IRI)
Lisa Reppell (IFES)

Source: IFES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

National governments, international donors, and domestic youth stakeholders are increasingly advocating for, and adopting, pro-youth legal and political participatory mechanisms, ostensibly to encourage youth civic and political engagement and respond to a sense of political marginalization among key demographic groups. Advocates of these measures expect that increased youth engagement will result in better policy outcomes across a range of issues that affect young people. To date, however, there has been relatively little empirical research on whether and how these mechanisms actually improve the quality or quantity of youth engagement. Moreover, youth are possibly gravitating to other forms of political participation, for example using social media and other online platforms to engage in decision-making processes.

This report begins to fill that gap by analyzing the effect on youth engagement of four specific pro-youth legal and political mechanisms: national youth policy strategies, reducing minimum ages for voting and candidacy, youth quotas, and political party youth wings. Our research on these participatory mechanisms suggests mixed results for substantive youth engagement.

CORE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Despite constituting a large portion of electorates around the world, on average, youth participate in political and civic life at lower rates than older age cohorts. Pro-youth legal instruments (e.g. lowering age restrictions to vote), intra-party policies (e.g. party youth wings), and other public measures (e.g. adoption of national youth policies) are tactics increasingly employed by governments, political parties, and other electoral stakeholders to encourage youth engagement. However, as these actors, including international funders, evaluate their investment in these approaches, they lack empirical evidence on the efficacy of legal instruments, intra-party policies, and public measures in promoting youth engagement.

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SUMMARY FINDINGS OF RESEARCH

- There was no evidence from any of the cases reviewed that national youth policy strategies improved long-term youth civic and political engagement beyond an initial cooperative development process.

- On the other hand, the available evidence suggests that lowering the minimum age of candidacy results in more youth holding office, and lowering the minimum age of voting tends to increase youth voter turnout, even beyond youth voters' first elections.

- Youth quotas can increase the quantity of youth in elected bodies but must be accompanied by a holistic strategy to support meaningful youth engagement within those institutions.

- Finally, youth political party wings can increase the quantity of youth members of political parties, but the quality of that participation depends on local context, including the underlying nature of the political system. Youth wings can either provide a constructive formative political experience, or can mobilize youth for violence or patronage, depending on the goals of political elites.

National Youth Policy Strategies

Ideally, national youth policy strategies facilitate youth political and civic engagement by prioritizing youth issues across state agencies and policy sectors; by helping state officials and agencies coordinate policies and programs across sectors; by encouraging state agencies to allocate financial, human, and material resources to youth policy programs; by kick-starting youth engagement through an initial policy development process; and by helping governments signal commitment to the values and interests of youth and youth advocates.

Often, however, implementation failures impede these functions. In all the cases we analyzed, including Colombia, Georgia, Kenya, Mongolia, and Morocco, the development of a national youth policy strategy suffered from similar implementation challenges. Common issues surrounding implementation included a failure to allocate resources, redundancy of state agencies, a lack of accountability, limited technical capacity, and a lack of political incentives for implementation.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

The incentives for governments to develop national youth policy strategies may not necessarily encourage implementation of that strategy. Donors, implementers, and local partners should encourage accountability by pushing for action plans and for monitoring and evaluation benchmarks, and strengthen inter-agency coordination with relevant ministries for more effective commitment of budget resources prior to the adoption of the strategy. Sustained engagement from development through implementation can help ensure a national youth policy strategy performs its key functions and fulfills its objectives.

Minimum Ages for Voting and Candidacy

Efforts to lower minimum eligibility ages for voting and running for office fall primarily into two lines of argumentation. First, rights-based arguments contend that formal political participation through voting or holding office are fundamental human rights that should not be unreasonably denied to younger citizens. Utility-based arguments, on the other hand, contend that enfranchising and empowering younger citizens provides observable benefits to youth and to society as a whole. Our research suggests that lowering these minimum eligibility ages can indeed increase youth voter turnout and representation, but that there is insufficient evidence to conclude that this increased representation improves policy outcomes.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

In countries where there is local initiative to lower voting ages below 18, comparative examples should be used to inform legal framework reform efforts, including the option of lowering the voting age for only subnational elections. Efforts to lower minimum voting and candidate ages should be accompanied by civic education programs that build political literacy and should be designed to reduce discrepancies in participation rates among youth from marginalized groups. For national and subnational elected positions, candidate eligibility ages should align more closely with the age of voter enfranchisement.

Youth Quotas

Elected bodies and political parties around the world have adopted youth quotas to achieve several distinct goals: to appeal to young voters, to mitigate political violence, or to increase substantive youth engagement in decision-making. If well-designed, youth quotas can increase the number of youth elected to office, but quotas alone do not guarantee substantive representation of youth. Youth quotas must be accompanied by holistic strategies to empower young office holders to participate meaningfully once elected.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

Youth quotas have the potential to result in a greater number of youth elected when they are numerically significant and enforceable. Proponents of youth quotas should address acknowledged barriers to youth participation that prevent youth candidates from different backgrounds from competing for office and ensure that quotas recognize youth as a cross-cutting identity. Adoption of youth quotas in representative bodies should account for formal and informal barriers to meaningful youth participation within those institutions, including technical expertise, political financing, and existing networks of influence.

Political Party Youth Wings

Political party wings, under different circumstances, can emphasize substantive, constructive youth engagement in the political process, or act as a vehicle for the mobilization of political patronage or violence. Within democratic systems with relatively programmatic political parties, party wings can facilitate the recruitment of young leaders, provide technical training and experience, and help parties appeal to youth through substantive policy contributions to the policy platform. However, where political systems are characterized by political patronage or violence, political elites can dole out positions in party youth wings in exchange for political support, while denying substantive youth contributions to the party. Youth party wings may also allow the immediate mobilization of youth for violent demonstrations or attacks on opponents in political systems that encourage violence between competing groups.

The research identified a number of specific, and often interrelated, challenges facing youth wings in transitioning democracies. Some of these challenges, however, are also found in established democracies where parties can become set in their ways and find it difficult to change, particularly when the overall political incentives support the status quo.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

Political party youth wings are most likely to facilitate constructive youth engagement in parties that reproduce democratic, programmatic politics. Donors, implementers, and partners supporting the development of youth wings should ensure that elements of internal party democracy within the parent party, including clear organizational guidelines and financing, democratic leadership selection, technical capacity development, and clear guidelines for recruitment and promotion, are preconditions for the development of youth wings.

Areas of Priority Research

These findings are based on a limited number of cases from various regions. Further research is needed on key issues such as:

a) New forms of political participation and mobilization by youth especially linked to social media, technology, and advocacy;

b) Distinctions in policies and effective implementation in fragile versus stable environments;

c) The role of civic education to engagement models in strengthening both participation and the enabling environment; and

d) The link between volunteer and national service program models and greater political engagement by youth.

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF PRO-YOUTH PARTICIPATORY MECHANISMS

Introduction

In 1995, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), a framework for the development of public policies across 15 priority sectors to improve the situation of youth around the world.[1]

The theory of change underlying the WPAY was that if governments facilitated youth participation in decision-making processes, those processes would generate better outcomes across the other policy sectors. In the subsequent two decades, with varying levels of success, donors, assistance implementers, and local partners have encouraged governments around the world to implement pro-youth participatory mechanisms in keeping with the WPAY. Despite this advocacy, and despite increasing calls for more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of youth participatory programs and policies, there is still relatively little empirical evidence as to whether public policies improve the quantity or quality of youth civic and political engagement.

To fill this gap, this report assesses the degree to which youth participatory mechanisms have contributed to youth civic and political engagement. It reviews and analyzes the existing evidence on four specific pro-youth legal and political participatory mechanisms: national youth policy strategies and action plans, minimum ages for voting and candidacy, youth quotas in representative bodies, and political party youth wings. CEPPS partners conducted desk research, including collection and analysis of primary and secondary documents across a diverse range of countries, to identify theories of change behind each mechanism, and to evaluate the body of evidence on the impact of these policies on youth engagement.

In addition, CEPPS partners conducted field research, including in-depth interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders in youth policy, in three countries: Georgia, Uganda, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This original research supplements the desk research by illustrating how these participatory mechanisms affect youth engagement within a specific local context. This approach allows CEPPS partners to identify the specific conditions under which participatory policies are likely to facilitate youth engagement across cases, and this report fills a gap in the existing academic and policy literature on youth engagement.

The State of Research on Mechanisms for Youth Participation

Despite nearly 30 years of calls for more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of youth participatory policies and programs, there is still relatively little evidence on the impact of these policies on youth civic and political engagement. Certainly, ongoing limitations on the collection and management of data on youth engagement have impeded the ability of analysts to study this impact.[2] Marking the 20th anniversary of the WPAY, the 2014 Global Forum on Youth Policies identified important shortcomings in existing research on the impact of youth policies, and made a formal commitment to "developing tools, indicators, methodologies, and practical research, including the identification of successful practices, that would allow [sic] to build and maintain a solid knowledge and evidence-base for effective, inclusive, and gender-responsive youth policies."[3]

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[1]   The 15 priority sectors identified by the WPAY were education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, substance abuse, juvenile justice, leisure-time activities, girls and young women, youth social and political participation, globalization, information and communication technologies, HIV/AIDS, armed conflict, and intergenerational issues.

[2]   Of course, this research faced similar challenges. The methodological limitations of this study are discussed in more detail in the respective chapters for each mechanism. See also Appendix A for recommendations on data collection, management, standardization, and dissemination for future research on youth policy.

[3]   Youth Policy Labs. 2014. "1st Global Forum on Youth Policies Report." http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic Governance/ Youth/2014 - REPORT - 1st Global Forum on Youth Policies.pdf.

This evidence gap is also evident in the body of academic research on youth civic and political engagement. Certainly, several studies have identified structural, cultural, or institutional features that are associated with youth civic and political engagement.[4] However, studies that focus on the impact of specific public policies are more limited. In the words of two USAID-funded researchers writing on the efficacy of existing youth programming, "There is limited academic empirical work on the impact of youth programming on individuals, organizations, and institutions. The literature does not establish causal links between the impact of interventions on individuals or the long-term impact on governance."[5] This finding squares with those of a systematic review of program evaluations on interventions on civic engagement more broadly.[6] This report helps fill that gap by providing important original and secondary empirical research on the effect of specific youth policies in a diverse sample of countries.

Research Framework: Impact and Symbolism of Youth Participatory Mechanisms

CEPPS partners approached the study of these four mechanisms without explicit preconceived notions of how, why, and under what circumstances they would affect youth engagement. Through the course of the research, one central dilemma emerged as a pattern underlying the development and implementation of these mechanisms. Youth civic and political engagement in the countries we studied, like civic and political engagement more broadly, is characterized by a paradox of legitimacy, or what Stockemer and Sundström label "a vicious cycle of political apathy among the young."[7] Political elites and institutions are often not responsive to the interests of young citizens. This lack of responsiveness leads to youth disillusionment and disengagement with political and civic institutions, which in turn leads elites to further ignore their demands. If youth are unable or unwilling to participate in formal or informal political processes, they are unable to hold leaders accountable, and incumbents therefore have no incentive to champion public policies that serve the interests of youth. Youth policy therefore is often trapped in a vicious cycle in which disengagement begets unresponsiveness.[8]

This crisis of legitimacy creates a trade-off for proponents of youth participatory mechanisms. Ideally, youth participatory mechanisms would produce a tangible impact — increased substantive youth engagement in civic and political processes, and subsequently, better policy outcomes on issues that affect young people. However, this desired impact can be impeded by a variety of factors, including a lack of political incentives or limited state capacity to implement these mechanisms. Where youth participatory mechanisms fail to have a substantive impact, they may still have important symbolic or signaling features. Indeed, for phenomena like political participation, the symbolic power of a policy, as a normative commitment to a set of values,

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[4]   For an example and review, see Melo, Daniela F, and Daniel Stockemer. 2014. "Age and Political Participation in Germany, France and the UK: A Comparative Analysis." *Comparative European Politics* 12 (1):33–53. https://doi.org/10.1057/cep.2012.31.

[5]   Skalli, Loubna Hanna, and M.A. Thomas. 2015. "What We Know About 'What Works' in Youth Civic Engagement and Voice, Youth Organizations, Youth Leadership, and Civic Education." Counterpart International. https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/summary_of_findings_from_youth_and_drg_research_project.pdf

[6]   Dunn, William. 2015. "Systematic Review of Program Evaluations of Civic Education and Political Participation." Counterpart International on behalf of Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Section, United States Agency for International Development. Referenced in Skalli and Thomas, 2015, pp. 10.

[7]   Stockemer, Daniel, and Aksel Sundström. 2018. "Age Representation in Parliaments: Can Institutions Pave the Way for the Young?" European Political Science Review 10 (3). Cambridge University Press:467–90. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773918000048. pp 471.

[8]   Ibid. pp. 470–471.

Young Political Leaders School in Ukraine (IRI)

may be just as important as tangible impact.[9] In other words, youth participatory policies can help signal elites' commitment to improving youth policy outcomes, even if these policies do not have their intended effect, helping to overcome the cycle of apathy identified above.[10]

However, the trade-off to symbolic politics in the absence of policy impact is that purely rhetorical policy commitments might be perceived as "cheap talk," superficial policy responses to placate demands. In terms of the youth policy mechanisms included in this report, national youth policy strategies might be perceived either as important normative commitments to youth engagement, or as purely rhetorical documents designed to placate domestic or international pressure. Similarly, youth quotas can increase the number of youth in decision-making bodies, but might also contribute to the cycle of disillusionment and disengagement if participation is "tokenistic" — that is, if quota members are prevented from meaningful participation.

This study, therefore, makes a series of recommendations for donors, implementers, and partners so that youth participatory mechanisms are most likely to produce increased substantive and constructive engagement. Failing this substantive impact, however, these recommendations provide a set of best practices so that donors, implementers, and partners can help governments developing these policies in good faith ensure that they are not just perceived as empty promises.

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[9]   Boussaguet, Laurie. 2016. "Participatory Mechanisms as Symbolic Policy Instruments?" *Comparative European Politics* 1412:107–24. https://doi.org/10.1057/cep.2015.12.

[10]   For several examples of European-level participatory mechanisms that are thought to encourage participation despite lacking substantive outputs, see Ibid. pp. 108–112.

Raising Their Voices: How effective are pro-youth laws and policies?

Report Roadmap

In this report, CEPPS partner organizations IRI, IFES, and NDI analyze four youth policy mechanisms. Each partner performed desk and field research to produce the chapters for their respective policy instrument(s), which were then revised through a process of internal and external review. Each chapter is dedicated to a separate policy mechanism, and contains a conceptual overview of the mechanism, an analysis of the effectiveness of that mechanism in facilitating youth political and civic engagement, and a set of recommendations for relevant stakeholders. While these chapters have been compiled for a full report, each chapter is designed to serve as a stand-alone report and may be understood independently of the other chapters.

In chapter two, CEPPS/IRI examines the development and implementation of national youth policy strategies. These national strategies are intended to facilitate youth participation in decision-making processes by coordinating youth policy across sectors and stakeholders. Ideally, national youth policy strategies prioritize youth engagement in the policy agenda, coordinate state policy across sectors, provide a framework for allocation of budget resources to youth issues, provide immediate opportunities for youth engagement through the development process, and signal ongoing government commitment to youth issues. In practice, however, the effectiveness of national youth policy strategies is often limited by implementation issues. Across the countries included in the CEPPS/IRI analysis, national youth policy strategies were limited by a failure to allocate resources, a failure of state agencies to commit to coordinating policy, a lack of accountability, limited technical expertise for implementation, and a lack of political incentives for incumbents to implement such a policy strategy. Given these challenges surrounding implementation, CEPPS/IRI produces a set of recommendations for donors, implementers, and partners centered around developing specific, measurable, and achievable benchmarks for implementation, and developing capacity of relevant stakeholders to implement, monitor, and evaluate national youth policy strategies.

In chapter three, CEPPS/IFES analyzes the effect of lowering the age of enfranchisement and candidacy on youth engagement, which has gathered some momentum due to movements in both Europe and Latin America to permit voting at 16. Proponents of this type of reform tend to offer two arguments. First, a rights-based argument holds that formal participation in decision-making processes through voting is a fundamental right that should not be denied to young people because of age. Second, utility-based arguments point to benefits to youth and society of expanding the franchise to younger citizens. These arguments contend that lowering the minimum voting age will lead to the formal participation of more young citizens, producing better policy outcomes on issues that affect youth, such as education, health, and employment.

Rights-based arguments for lowering the minimum age for candidacy hold that youth, in addition to voting, have a fundamental right to contest and hold office, while utility-based arguments contend that lowering the minimum age of candidacy will ensure more youth in elected office, and better substantive representation on youth issues. Despite some limitations of the data available on youth political participation and representation, the evidence does suggest that lowering the age of candidacy results in more youth holding elected office, and that lowering the minimum voting age produces some gains in voter turnout, even beyond voters' first elections. However, there is less evidence to suggest that lowering the minimum voting age improves policy outcomes. This chapter closes with a series of recommendations for relevant stakeholders, including policymakers and the international community, focused on situating the debate on these reforms in the unique local context.

In chapter four, CEPPS/IFES explores the effect of youth quotas on youth civic and political engagement. Elected bodies and political parties around the world have adopted youth quotas in various forms, with the goal of increasing substantive youth engagement in decision-making processes, to appeal to young voters, or to mitigate political violence. Whether a youth quota achieves these goals depends on the local context, and the quota must be supported by a holistic strategy to promote youth engagement and representation. In short, the adoption of a youth quota can increase the quantity of youth in elected bodies, but those representatives must be further empowered to pursue meaningful engagement within the institution. This chapter closes with a series of recommendations for key stakeholders that focuses on designing youth quotas in a way that integrates with, and cuts across, existing institutions like electoral rules or gender quotas, as well as tackling external and internal barriers to youth participation in representative bodies.

In chapter five, CEPPS/NDI focuses on the role of political party youth wings in facilitating youth engagement and representation. The effect of youth wings on the quality of youth engagement in political decision making is highly context dependent, especially in multi-party systems with shifting political dynamics. Depending on the underlying nature of the political system, youth wings can provide a formative experience for youth in politics, leading to constructive future political participation. However, party wings can also be used destructively, as coercive or violent political tools, or as vehicles for political patronage. The chapter closes with a series of recommendations for ensuring youth wings have a constructive impact on the political system, including developing clear organization guidelines and financing, internally democratic leadership selection, capacity development programming, and ensuring clear pathways for advancement and recruitment to avoid membership stagnation.

Finally, each chapter is accompanied by a case study that situates the analysis of the relevant policy mechanism within the larger political context of the country. These case studies are based on approximately two weeks of field research in three countries — Georgia, Uganda, and Bosnia and Herzegovina — in which CEPPS researchers conducted in-depth interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders across youth policy sectors, including political leaders, civil servants, political party members, and representatives of civil society and international organizations.

CHAPTER 2

NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY STRATEGIES

Author:
Bret Barrowman, International Republican Institute

NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY STRATEGIES

Source: IRI

Definition

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) emphasizes four distinguishing features of a national youth policy strategy:

Long-term   **Consensus-based**   **Integrated**   **Cross-sectoral**

Key Functions

Ideally, national youth policy strategies perform a number of primary and secondary functions:

- Prioritize youth issues across sectors and state agencies
- Help state agencies and officials coordinate
- Help governments signal commitments to youth INGOs
- Encourage allocation of resources to youth policy programs
- Encourage engagement of cross-section of youth and CSOs

Key Findings

National youth policy strategies may have an important symbolic effect, there is little evidence to suggest that these policy initiatives have any measurable medium- to long-term impact on youth civic and political engagement. All the national youth policy strategies in our sample suffered from similar issues surrounding implementation, including:

- A failure to allocate resources;
- Redundancy of state agencies;
- Lack of horizontal accountability;
- Limited technical expertise; and
- A lack of political incentives.

Key Recommendations

The incentives for governments to develop national youth policy strategies may not necessarily encourage implementation of that strategy. Donors, implementers, and local partners should encourage accountability by pushing for action plans, monitoring and evaluation benchmarks, and resource allocation prior to the adoption of the strategy. Sustained engagement from development through implementation can help ensure a national youth policy strategy performs its key functions and fulfills its objectives.

Key Data Points

122 countries
have developed national youth strategies

Africa has the lowest rate of countries with adopted policies

8000 young people
were consulted in the development of Colombia's National Youth Policy

Raising Their Voices: How effective are pro-youth laws and policies?

Introduction

Our research suggests that while national youth policy strategies may have an important symbolic effect, there is little evidence that these policy initiatives have any measurable medium- to long-term impact on youth civic and political engagement. The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1995, established a framework for the development of national policies to improve the situation of young people by facilitating youth engagement in civic and political processes.[11] Since 1995, at least 122 countries have developed national youth policies, many of which have limited impact because of lack of budgeting and implementation.[12] Ideally, national youth policy strategies perform a number of primary and secondary functions: they prioritize youth issues across policy sectors and state agencies; they help state officials and agencies coordinate policy across sectors; they encourage state agencies to allocate material, human, and financial resources to youth policy programs; they immediately engage a cross-section of youth and youth civil society organizations (CSOs) in decision-making processes; and they help governments signal commitment to values or interests of youth to domestic constituencies and international organizations.

However, the ability of a national youth policy strategy to fulfill any of these functions depends on the degree of implementation. All the national youth policy strategies in our sample suffered from similar issues surrounding implementation, including a failure to allocate resources, redundancy of state agencies, a lack of horizontal accountability, limited technical expertise of implementing agencies, and a lack of political incentives for implementation for elected officials.

This chapter takes the following approach to the analysis of national youth policy strategies as participatory mechanisms. First, it provides a short methodological overview that describes the research process and its limitations. Second, it outlines features common to all youth policy strategy documents in our sample, including a definition of youth, goals and objectives, and a set of operative items. Third, it provides a conceptual overview of the potential functions of national youth policy strategies, including agenda setting, coordination, budgeting engagement, and symbolism, and provides examples of how the policies in our sample attempt to perform these functions. Fourth, it identifies several common issues surrounding implementation of national youth policy strategies, including resource allocation, coordination, accountability, technical expertise, and political incentives. The chapter concludes with a series of recommendations for developing and implementing national youth policy strategies for funders, implementers, and partners.

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[11]   Youth Policy Labs. 2014. "1st Global Forum on Youth Policies Report." http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic Governance/ Youth/2014 - REPORT - 1st Global Forum on Youth Policies.pdf. Accessed September 9, 2018; "World Programme of Action for Youth." UNDESA Division for Inclusive Social Development Youth. https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/world-programme-of-action-for-youth. html. Accessed July 25, 2019.

[12]   Youth Policy Labs 2014, pp. 6.

Methodology

This research draws on a combination of primary and secondary document analysis for all five of the countries in the sample, and a series of semi-structured interviews in Georgia. We identified five cases (Colombia, Georgia, Kenya, Mongolia, and Morocco) that had a national youth policy or strategy.[13] Cases were selected to represent regional diversity, and to have minimally responsive democratic institutions, as identified by having a rating of at least "partly free" on Freedom House's Democracy Index. For the five cases with a national youth strategy, we obtained the primary national youth strategy document and/or the accompanying action plan. In two cases (Georgia and Kenya), the governments made the documents publicly available in English. For three others (Colombia, Mongolia, and Morocco), the documents were translated from the original language into English by CEPPS/IRI staff or contractors. Once the primary national youth strategy documents were translated, we coded them in NVivo qualitative data analysis software to facilitate the identification of similarities and differences in the documents across cases.

After analyzing the content of national youth policy strategy documents, we conducted a desk review and analysis of secondary documents produced by academics, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) on national youth policy strategies for each case. The synthesis and analysis of these documents yielded an evaluation of the degree to which the policies were implemented in each case, implementation issues, and the degree to which the policies affected youth engagement, if any.

This research approach has significant limitations in its ability to say conclusively whether national youth policies affect youth political and civic engagement. First, as the cases were chosen to reflect geographical diversity, the study lacks the necessary level of control for confounding variables. That is, youth engagement is driven by cultural, structural, and political institutional factors that vary both within and between countries. Furthermore, the concept of participation or engagement itself varies across contexts and over time, making the measurement and comparison of rates of engagement across cases more difficult.[14] Second, the causal direction between national youth policies and engagement may be reversed. In other words, countries with high levels of youth engagement may be more likely to develop national youth strategies in response to high demand. A cross-sectional comparison without a process-tracing element makes it difficult to determine whether national youth policies drive youth engagement, or vice versa.

Finally, our research suggests that among the cases with national youth policy strategies, all faced significant, and similar, issues surrounding the implementation of these polices. Without more variation in the degree of success in implementation, this study is limited in its ability to measure the impact of the policy on youth engagement. In short, our research found little evidence to suggest that national youth strategies increase youth political and civic engagement. However, we were able to identify important similarities and differences in national youth policies across cases, and crucially, identify similar issues in policy implementation that lead to important recommendations for funders, implementers, and local partners.

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[13] These cases represent a small and unscientific sample of more than 120 countries that have developed a national youth policy strategy since 1995. For more information on national youth policy strategies in other cases, see http://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/.

[14] For an overview of the methodological difficulties associated with comparing youth engagement across countries, see Barrett, Martyn. 2017. "Young People's Civic and Political Engagement and Global Citizenship." UN Chronicle. https://unchronicle.un.org/article/young-people-s-civic-and-political-engagement-and-global-citizenship.

All five of the national youth policies or strategies that we identified in our sample of countries maintain a similar basic framework. The common elements of national youth policies include a definition of youth; a set of strategic goals and objectives across policy sectors, usually including health, education, economic issues, political and civic engagement, and sports and culture; and a set of action items or implementation directives. In keeping with the goals of the research project, the following analysis will focus primarily on the provisions of national youth policies that deal explicitly with civic and political engagement, though will consider issues of health, economic insecurity, and education where they produce barriers to youth engagement in civic and decision-making processes.

National Youth Policy Strategy Definition

Before proceeding with an analysis of the primary youth policy documents, it is important to define a national youth policy or national youth strategy, to distinguish them from more specific, ad hoc, or idiosyncratic policies concerned with youth, and to ensure we are comparing similar policies across countries. Colombia provides an important example of the need to define national youth strategies as distinct from other youth policies. Colombia has a tapestry of policies concerning youth dating back to the 1991 Constitution, many of which concern specific sectoral issues, including health, employment, and civic and political engagement, and engage or create state bodies to implement policies in these areas.[15] To compare like to like, and to explore the dynamics surrounding development and implementation of national strategies, therefore requires a definition that distinguishes these national youth policies from policies that are unique to particular countries.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) emphasizes four distinguishing features of a national youth policy strategy — they are "*long-term, consensus-based, integrated, and cross-sectoral.*"[16]

- **Long-term**: a national youth policy strategy should guide state youth policy development over successive governments, rather than acting as a political tool for any single government, party, or politician.

- **Consensus-based**: a national youth policy strategy should be developed through consultation with all interested parties, especially young people, and should reflect a national, multi-party consensus.

- **Integrated:** a national youth policy strategy should delegate and coordinate state actions across ministries and state agencies.

- **Cross-sectoral**: a national youth policy strategy should guide state policy across the range of issues that concern youth development.[17]

15 Romero Rodriguez, Gina Paola; Cindy Paola Garcia Buitrago, Carlos Andres Rodriguez Castro, and Daniel Tobon-Garcia. 2015. "Youth and Public Policy in Colombia." http://www.youthpolicy.org/pdfs/Youth_Public_Policy_Colombia_En.pdf.

16 United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 2004. "Empowering Youth Through National Policies." http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001345/134502e.pdf, pp. 5.

17 Ibid.

Based on these distinguishing characteristics, we identified the following national youth policy strategies for the countries in our sample:[18]

TABLE 2.1

Colombia	"Política Nacional de Juventud: Bases para el Plan Decenal de Juventud 2005–2015 (National Youth Policy: Basis for a Ten-Year Plan)"
Georgia	"National Youth Policy Document of Georgia 2014"
Kenya	"Kenya National Youth Policy 2006"; "Strategic Plan 2007–2012"
Morocco	Stratégie Nationale Intégrée de La Jeunesse 2015–2030 (National Integrated Youth Strategy)"
Mongolia	"Залуучуудын Хөгжлийг Дэмжих Үндэсний Хөтөлбөр 2006 (National Program on the Promotion of Youth Development)"

Features

All the national youth policy strategy documents in our sample contain a similar set of basic features: a definition of youth; a set of strategic goals, objectives, and guiding principles across relevant sectors;[19] and a set of operative clauses or an action plan. In addition to these features, Morocco and Kenya provide examples of a more comprehensive strategy document that includes concrete action items, preliminary indicators of implementation outcomes, and an extensive monitoring and evaluation plan.

Definition of Youth

First, all national youth policy strategies in our sample contained at least an implicit definition of youth. As the concept of youth is a social category that varies widely according to political, cultural, and economic context, the operational definition of youth in a national youth policy strategy has important implications for the intended beneficiaries.[20] Table 2.2 displays the operational definitions for youth provided by each country in the sample, along with definitions from major relevant international organizations. Notably, all the definitions, except the low-end of one Colombia definition, conform roughly to accepted definitions used for statistical or programmatic purposes by relevant international organizations.

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[18] www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets

[19] Relevant sections are usually, but are not limited to, education, health, economic issues, political and civic engagement, and arts, culture, and sport. UNESCO, 2004.

[20] Perovic, Bojana. n.d. "Defining Youth in Contemporary National Legal and Policy Frameworks Across Europe." Accessed April 30, 2018. https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1668203/Analytical+paper+Youth+Age+Bojana+Perovic+4.4.16.pdf/eb59c5e2-45d8-4e70-b672-f8de0a5ca08c.

TABLE 2.2

Country	Youth Definition[21]
Colombia[22]	Varied, ranging from approximately a low end of 10 years to a high end of 30 years
Georgia	Age 14–29
Kenya	Age 15–30
Mongolia[23]	Age 15–34[24]
Morocco	Age 15–29
United Nations[25]	Age 15–24
World Bank[26]	Age 15–24
European Union	Age 15–29
EU Youth Strategy[27]	No official definition
African Youth Charter[28]	Age 15–35

Importantly, all the national youth policy strategies in the sample include an identification of youth subgroups that would benefit from increased state services under the strategy. These subgroups include traditionally marginalized groups such as young women, youth with physical or mental disabilities, ethnic and racial minorities, youth without employment or housing, youth with substance abuse issues, and youth with communicable diseases like HIV/AIDS. In many cases, the document identifies target groups that suffer from country-specific issues. In short, while a general definition of youth may be desirable for statistical purposes, national youth policy strategies should go beyond a cookie-cutter approach to inclusion, and should account for the local political, economic, and cultural context surrounding youth issues to ensure that state policies benefit marginalized and vulnerable communities.[29]

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[21] As defined by the NYSP identified above, unless otherwise noted.

[22] Colombia's definition of youth varies widely both within the National Youth Policy identified above, and between other national youth policies, according to sector or context.

[23] Mongolia's National Program on the Promotion of Youth Development does not explicitly define youth but does mention a statistical definition of youth as age 15–34.

[24] http://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/mongolia/

[25] http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/youth-definition/. This is the definition provided for statistical consistency across countries. For programmatic purposes, international organizations may expand their definition of youth to that of the member state to expand the pool of potential beneficiaries.

[26] Definition for statistical purposes.

[27] Program targets young people age 15–30.

[28] http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/african_youth_charter_2006.pdf

[29] UNESCO 2017, pp. 3.

Source: USAID

Goals and Objectives

Second, even the most minimal strategies in the sample contained a set of goals and objectives related to the range of challenges facing young people in the country. According to UNESCO, a national youth policy strategy should establish both specific policy objectives and strategic goals outlining broad policy outcomes to be achieved.[30] The preamble sections of the national youth policy documents in our sample note several common challenges for youth and barriers to constructive youth civic and political engagement. Indeed, a lack of educational opportunities and economic issues like youth unemployment are important barriers to youth engagement across countries in our sample. Beyond the general educational and economic challenges facing youth, unique local challenges also impede youth engagement. The youth policy documents for Colombia and Kenya, for example, cited crime, conflict, and violence as significant challenges for young people.[31] Unique cultural factors also impede youth engagement, as in Morocco and Colombia, where socially conservative attitudes on family stemming from Islam and Catholicism, respectively, discourage broad youth civic and political engagement.[32]

The goals and objectives of the national youth policy strategies for these cases stem from a recognition of these barriers to constructive youth civic and political engagement. In all five of the documents in our sample, the explicit, overarching goal of each was to facilitate constructive youth engagement in the civic, political, and cultural life of the country. From this overarching goal, each document establishes a set of subsidiary objectives, ostensibly designed to guide policy development to lower or eliminate barriers to this engagement. Tracking the challenges to youth engagement described above, access to public goods and services, high quality education, employment and professional development opportunities, and security were explicitly or implicitly identified as policy objectives across all national youth policy strategies in our sample. In some cases, these broad objectives are accompanied by a more specific acknowledgment of the role of the national youth policy strategy in the policy process.

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[30]   UNESCO 2004, pp. 12.

[31]   Programa Presidencial Colombia Joven. 2004. "Política Nacional de Juventud: Bases Para El Plan Decenal de Juventud (National Youth Policy: Basis for a Ten-Year Plan) 2005–2015." http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Colombia_2005_National_Youth_Policy.pdf; Ministry of Youth Affairs of Kenya. 2006. "Kenya National Youth Policy 2006." http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kenya_2006_National_Youth_Policy.pdf.

[32]   Floris, Sylvie. n.d. "Studies on Youth Policies in the Mediterranean Partner Countries: Morocco." Accessed July 19, 2018. http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Morocco_2009_Youth_Policy_Study.pdf. Romero Rodriguez, Garcia Buitrago, et al. 2015.

Action Plan or Action Items

Third, having established a set of goals and objectives, each national youth policy strategy elaborates a series of operative items — steps the state will undertake to achieve the objectives. These operative items range from the very general to more specific and measurable steps. Colombia's National Youth Policy, for example, explicitly states that the document is not an action plan, and instead outlines general strategic directions for state policy on youth.[33] Similarly, the operative clauses for Georgia's National Youth Policy Document are vague, emphasizing that the state should "facilitate," "support," "promote," and "encourage" various general initiatives across sectors, rather than laying out specific, measurable policies.[34]

Mongolia's National Program on the Promotion of Youth Development goes further, delegating responsibility for policies to specific agencies, proposing preliminary statistical indicators based on the Millennium Development Goals, and suggesting budgetary resources.[35] At the high end of the spectrum, Morocco's National Integrated Youth Strategy and Kenya's Strategic Plan 2007–2012 lay out specific policy initiatives, propose indicators, and develop comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plans and budget.[36]

Based on these shared features, national youth policy strategies perform a series of functions, either in theory or in practice. Ideally, these strategy documents function as a guide for policymaking across government agencies. They help disparate state actors prioritize youth policy issues, coordinate youth policies across agencies, and allocate resources to youth initiatives. Beyond these deliberate functions, national youth policy strategies may also perform secondary or unintended functions. First, the process of development of the national strategies often serves as a focal point for immediate youth mobilization and engagement. Second, national youth policy strategies help state actors signal support for issues of interest to youth citizens, domestic interest groups, and international organizations.

> " The potential benefits for a country gained from a comprehensive national youth policy are manifold. The actions associated with the formulation of a youth policy first of all serve as a symbol of society's commitment to its young citizens; It is the communication of a common vision for its young generation and identifies its needs and priorities. As a framework for common goals and collective action, it provides a basis for equitable and concerted distribution of government resources to meet the needs of youth. Furthermore, a national youth policy gives a valuable example of how young people can engage in decision-making processes in their country through their active participation in the development and implementation of youth policies."
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> *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2004.*

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[33] Política Nacional de Juventud: Bases Para El Plan Decenal de Juventud (National Youth Policy: Basis for a Ten-Year Plan), 2005–2015.

[34] The Government of Georgia. 2014. The Georgian National Youth Policy Document. https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/7110688/Georgian+Naitonal+Youth+Policy-2014.pdf/c09e9ff5-6c86-467b-b4c9-fb5b102b3

[35] Засгийн газрын 2006 оны 282 дугаар, and тогтоолын хавсралт. 2006. "Залуучуудын Хөгжлийг Дэмжих Үндэсний Хөтөлбөр (National Program on the Promotion of Youth Development)." http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Mongolia_2006_Youth_Development_Programme.pdf.

[36] Ministere de la Jeunesse et Sports en collaboration avec le Comite Internisteriel de la Jeunesse de. 2014. "Stratégie Nationale Intégrée de La Jeunesse (National Integrated Youth Strategy) 2015–2030." http://www.mjs.gov.ma/sites/default/files/strategie-morocco.pdf; Office of the Vice President and Ministry of State for Youth Affairs of Kenya. 2007. "Strategic Plan 2007–2012." http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kenya_2007_Strategic_Youth_Plan.pdf.

Agenda Setting

One primary function of a national youth policy strategy is to prioritize youth interests and perspectives in the agendas of all state agencies, not just those explicitly responsible for traditional youth issues (usually the ministries of youth and sports, education, health, interior, or the equivalents).[37] That is, the function of an action-oriented national youth policy strategy is to facilitate youth input into the national policy agenda, rather than simply prioritizing youth-specific issues at the agency level. However, for the countries in our sample, there is little evidence that any of the youth policy documents have worked to mainstream youth perspectives in decision-making processes in a sustained way. Aside from an initial development process in which governments solicited feedback from youth and youth organizations through a series of forums and workshops, the end results have generally been strategy documents that delegate responsibility for youth-specific policies to the traditional youth ministries.

The national youth policy strategies in our sample take a variety of approaches to prioritizing youth issues in the national policymaking process. Colombia's tapestry of national youth policies establishes a series of bodies to carry out youth policy under both the legislative and executive branches.[38] Kenya's National Youth Policy recognizes the existing Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MOYAS) as the authority overseeing the development and implementation of youth issues,[39] and provides for the formation of a National Youth Council to advocate youth perspectives across policy sectors. However, writing five years after the development of the National Youth Policy, and three years after the adoption of a strategic action plan, Muthee notes that no youth council had been formed, and that MOYAS retained responsibility for implementing the NYP and other youth-specific policies and programs.[40]

Morocco's National Integrated Youth Strategy goes a step farther, emphasizing that Morocco's 2011 constitution "strengthened the legal framework promoting the participation of young people in the public life of the country," and stressing the need to "extend and generalize participation of youth in the social, economic, cultural, and political development of the country" by creating a national youth council.[41] This emphasis on a national youth strategy as a mechanism to increase youth engagement across policy sectors is perhaps the best example in our sample of the ideal described by UNESCO, but it is unclear whether this statutory emphasis has actually resulted in increased youth political engagement in Morocco. According to Youthpolicy.org, there is no evidence that any such council has been formally convened.[42]

Beyond the general goal of mainstreaming youth perspectives into the national policy agenda, UNESCO recommends that the national youth policy strategy identify a series of more specific policy priorities. UNESCO emphasizes that priority areas should be identified by young people themselves during an initial consultation process, and that those priority areas should depend on cultural, social, economic, and geographic factors that are unique to the country.[43] In addition, UNESCO, based on the 15 youth priority areas defined by the 1995 World

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[37] UNESCO, 2004, pp. 5.

[38] Romero Rodriguez, Garcia Buitrago, et al. 2015.

[39] Muthee, Margaret Wamuyu. 2010. "Hitting the Target, Missing the Point: Youth Policies and Programmes in Kenya." Accessed December 27, 2017. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Kenya_Policies_on_Youth.01072011.pdf.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Stratégie Nationale Intégrée de La Jeunesse (National Integrated Youth Strategy) 2015–2030.

[42] UNESCO 2017, pp. 4; http://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/morocco/

[43] UNESCO, 2004.

Programme of Action for Youth,[44] recommends a general set of policy issues common to many governments, including education, youth employment, poverty, health issues (including drug abuse, mental health, disabilities, physical fitness and leisure, and infectious diseases), girls and young women, and youth engagement.[45]

All the national youth policy strategy documents in our sample mirror these recommendations closely. All policies address the core priorities recommended by UNESCO, including education, economic issues, health issues, girls and women, and youth engagement. Furthermore, many of the policies we analyzed explicitly address issues that are unique to their contexts. For example, Georgia's National Youth Policy Document explicitly identifies youth from the families of internally displaced persons and youth living on the occupied territories of Georgia as potential beneficiaries of strategic youth policy directives.[46] Similarly, Colombia's National Youth Policy emphasizes the need for policy support for indigenous and Afro-Colombian young people, as well as victims and former members of gangs and militias, a product of the country's civil war.[47] Kenya's National Youth Policy emphasizes the country's high rate of youth unemployment, health-related issues like malaria, malnutrition, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.[48]

Coordination

A second primary function of national youth policy strategy is to coordinate the actions of state agencies and non-state actors across policy sectors. UNESCO advises that a national youth policy strategy should delegate responsibility for policy goals both horizontally and vertically. That is, it should clarify responsibilities between state agencies for broad strategic objectives, and between national and local state agencies and NGOs for specific projects.[49] UNESCO thus envisions a national strategy as a "joint youth action partnership" between government and non-government stakeholders but acknowledges that this level of policy coordination across sectors will be difficult without adequate financing and state capacity.[50]

The national youth policy strategy documents in our sample vary in the degree to which they explicitly delegate spheres of responsibilities to specific agencies or organizations. At one end of the spectrum, Georgia's National Youth Policy Document outlines a general youth strategy, assigning operative clauses to the general entity, the "Government of Georgia."[51] The document does identify relevant actors in the sphere of youth policy, including the Parliamentary Committee on Sports and Youth Affairs, municipal governments, youth and youth organizations, and international organizations, but generally stops short of delegating specific steps to these entities. The document also establishes an Interagency Coordinating Council, to be coordinated by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, and mandates that it meet at least once per quarter.[52] However, the document makes no specific mention of the division of labor on youth policy, leaving the task of coordination to the discretion of the Coordinating Council. Similarly, Kenya's National Youth Policy identifies strategic priority areas, and delegates

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44   Youth Policy Labs 2014, pp. 10.

45   Ibid.

46   Georgian National Youth Policy Document, 2014. This identification stems from the 2008 Russian invasion of Georgia and subsequent occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

47   Política Nacional de Juventud: Bases Para El Plan Decenal de Juventud (National Youth Policy: Basis for a Ten-Year Plan) 2005–2015.

48   Kenya National Youth Policy 2006.

49   UNESCO, 2004.

50   Ibid.

51   National Youth Policy Document of Georgia, 2014.

52   Ibid.

responsibility for specific objectives to general entities like "the government," "society," or "the private sector." The implementation section of the document makes reference to the responsibilities of "all agencies dealing with the youth," as well as "government ministries," "non-governmental organizations," "the private sector," and "various youth organizations."[53] However, the more specific strategic action plan document delegates responsibility for specific policy objectives to state agencies, non-state actors, and international organizations and donors in an implementation matrix that ties policy goals to specific time frames and performance metrics.[54] Similarly, Mongolia's, Colombia's, and Morocco's policy documents enumerate spheres of responsibilities to specific state agencies and non-state actors. In this sense, these documents provide a good example of how to identify spheres of responsibility in youth policy implementation, especially where their jurisdictions might be overlapping or unclear.

These documents therefore range from very general strategic statements that avoid assigning responsibility for specific policy areas to more concrete action plans that help agencies and organizations coordinate youth policy efforts. However, in many cases, even the most specific documents help avoid coordination problems in form only. As we illustrate in the next section, a failure of coordination between state agencies, between agencies at different levels of government, and between state agencies and NGOs has been a major impediment to the effective implementation of policies based on these national youth policy strategies.

Budgeting

A third primary function of a national youth policy strategy is to encourage state agencies to allocate resources to accomplishing youth policy objectives. Closely related to agenda setting and coordination, strategy documents should allocate resources, including time, human resources, and budget, both to the initial document development process and to the policy priorities the end document identifies.[55] Adequate resourcing is vital to providing space and opportunity for consultations on the development of the policy document, to promote the document to the public, to finance and staff specific projects, and to monitor and evaluate the impact of these specific projects or the policy document as a whole.[56] Furthermore, explicit resource allocation performs a coordinating function by mitigating a free-rider problem among state agencies. Without a clear division of labor and explicit budgetary authority, any state agency might otherwise avoid expending resources to support programs that other agencies might also be expected to support. In this sense, more specific allocation of responsibility for distributing resources in a national youth policy strategy increases the likelihood of successful implementation. There are no examples of countries that have effectively coordinated budgets across ministries, as the larger issue is that governments do not allocate funding.

Again, the national youth policy strategy documents in our sample vary widely according to the degree to which they assign responsibility for providing resources for youth initiatives. Again, as the most comprehensive policy in our sample, Morocco's National Integrated Youth Strategy acknowledges deficiencies in existing infrastructure, and recognizes the necessity

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53   Kenya National Youth Policy, 2006.

54   Office of the Vice President and Ministry of State for Youth Affairs of Kenya. 2007. "Strategic Plan 2007–2012." http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kenya_2007_Strategic_Youth_Plan.pdf.

55   UNESCO, 2004.

56   Ibid.

of "mobilization of significant human, material, and financial resources" to achieve the policy goals of the document.[57] To this end, it assigns primary budgeting responsibility to the head of government, and develops a preliminary budget guide in the action plan.[58]

Similarly, Kenya's Strategic Plan for 2007–2012 estimates detailed implementation costs for 46 specific objectives, as well as budgetary provisions over a five-year period and identifies alternative sources of funding to fill budget shortfalls.[59] In contrast, the strategy documents for Georgia are more ambiguous about the allocation of resources to youth policy. Georgia's National Youth Policy Document recognizes the need for resourcing of a youth strategy but emphasizes the role of the state generally to facilitate or create the conditions for the development of financial, human, and material resources. For example, the operative clauses of the document note the strategy should, "create a favorable environment for the development of a funding system for studying abroad," and "contribute to ensuring that young families have access to… social programs," stopping short of delegating responsibility or setting specific goals or timelines.[60]

Immediate Engagement

Beyond these deliberate functions of agenda setting, coordination, and budgeting, national youth policy strategies perform a series of secondary functions for states that develop them. Perhaps most importantly, the development of a national youth policy provides a focal point for immediate political engagement of youth and youth advocacy CSOs. That is, through an initial development and consultation process, government agencies can provide an immediate opportunity for youth and youth CSOs to engage with them directly to shape the development of the policy strategy. UNESCO repeatedly emphasizes that the development of a national youth strategy should not be elite-driven; the document should be the result of an extended process of consultations with stakeholders, including frequent opportunities for young people themselves to provide input into the policy.[61] Besides ensuring the policy document reflects the interests of young people, this development process might be expected to kick-start a cycle of youth engagement, in which young people see their concerns reflected in decision-making processes, and are therefore encouraged to continue to engage decision makers.

In many of our cases, the development of a national youth policy document was indeed the process of an extended consultation process that included series of workshops engaging thousands of youth and relevant youth CSOs. The documents were revised in several rounds following an iterated process of feedback between decision-makers and young people and CSO representatives. Colombia's National Youth Policy emphasizes that the document was the result of a feedback process that engaged "8,000 young people and 1,600 adults, as well as a set of studies, research and documents, and consensus through various debate and discussion scenarios."[62] This process included discussion seminars with youth CSO representatives, state agencies at all levels, and youth council members; specialized forums with youth CSOs and university youth organizations from about 50 institutions, public discussion on the Colombia Joven website, and a virtual forum with experts from several countries and UNESCO.[63]

Source: NDI

[57] Stratégie Nationale Intégrée de La Jeunesse (National Integrated Youth Strategy) 2015–2030.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Office of the Vice President and Ministry of State for Youth Affairs of Kenya. 2007. "Strategic Plan 2007–2012." http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kenya_2007_Strategic_Youth_Plan.pdf.

[60] Georgian National Youth Policy Document, 2014.

[61] UNESCO, 2004.

[62] Política Nacional de Juventud: Bases Para El Plan Decenal de Juventud (National Youth Policy: Basis for a Ten-Year Plan) 2005–2015.

[63] Ibid.

Similarly, Morocco's National Youth Strategy notes that the Ministry of Youth and Sports, in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), initiated a consultation process that engaged about 27,000 young people. This process provided opportunities for scrutiny and feedback; offered opportunities for collaboration with state actors, donors, CSOs, and youth; and helped publicize the document.[64] These processes constitute clear examples of an attempt to engage youth in the development of the policy by allowing opportunities to discuss a draft document and provide substantive feedback.[65] In contrast In Kenya, there appears to be little evidence of an initial mobilization and consultation process. Kenya's National Youth Policy makes no mention of such a process, and Muthee argues that the policy was developed without mechanisms to solicit youth input and mobilize youth to help set the youth development agenda.[66]

Certainly, a successful initial development phase that engages young people and youth CSOs is no guarantee of the eventual success of the policy, but the lack of such a process compounds the dilemma of legitimacy for governments and young people. Any good will that is generated through the initiation of such a policy is likely to be quickly squandered if youth feel they have no input into a policy that purports to serve them directly.

Symbolism and Signaling

Finally, the development of a national youth policy strategy performs a symbolic function — it is a device through which governments can signal commitment to values or interests of young citizens, other domestic actors, or international organizations. Boussaguet characterizes participatory policy instruments as symbolic reforms that are distinct from "material policies" — mechanisms backed by implementation networks and resources that are expected to have a measurable impact.[67] Symbolic policy instruments, in contrast, affect politics through a discursive effect; since citizens understand politics through language, the adoption of a national youth policy strategy through a participatory process can signal governments' willingness to engage young people in the political process.[68] In this sense, independent of any actual impact on youth participation, symbolic participatory mechanisms help shape citizens' expectations about their role in the political process. Similarly, if participatory mechanisms are primarily symbolic, the convening of an extended and costly process to develop a national youth policy strategy signals governments' willingness to identify with regional or international organizations like the European Union and United Nations.[69] In one sense, the adoption of these policies signals a willingness to engage in the same sort of discourse as the community of nations to which a government aspires. This symbolic benefit was summarized by Colombia Joven's (the main executive branch youth policy agency in Colombia) territorial adviser, who argued that while it was impossible to determine whether the national youth policy was implemented, the document contributed to increased engagement and collaboration among stakeholders, and empowered young people working in the Colombia Joven department.[70]

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[64] Stratégie Nationale Intégrée de La Jeunesse (National Integrated Youth Strategy) 2015–2030; "UNICEF Annual Report 2013-Morocco." 2013. https://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Morocco_COAR_2013.pdf.

[65] Romero Rodriguez, Garcia Buitrago, et al. 2015.

[66] Muthee, 2010.

[67] Mazur, Amy G. 1995. *Gender Bias and the State: Symbolic Reform at Work in Fifth Republic France*. University of Pittsburgh Press. Quoted in Boussaguet, Laurie. 2016. "Participatory Mechanisms as Symbolic Policy Instruments?" *Comparative European Politics* 1412:107–24. https://doi.org/10.1057/cep.2015.12. pp. 120.

[68] Boussaguet, pp. 120.

[69] For a complete overview of "soft instruments of international policy" that provide a normative framework for national youth policy development, see Youth Policy Labs 2014, pp. 31. Youth Policy Labs identifies 23 such instruments, a list that is suggestive, but not exhaustive.

[70] Romero Rodriguez, Garcia Buitrago, et al. 2015.

Indeed, the development of national youth policy strategies in the cases in our sample were responses to demands from domestic actors, including youth movements, international organizations, or both. Mongolia's Youth Development Program, for example, explicitly identifies the need to meet UN Millennium Development Goals as the impetus behind the development of the document.[71] Similarly, Morocco's National Youth Strategy notes that it is an effort to fulfill the youth-oriented provisions of the 2011 constitution, which itself was a response to youth participation in the 2011 protests.[72] Kenya's National Youth Policy was part of a reform effort stemming from a recognition of the role of youth in political violence and crime, as well as of the scope of issues confronting young people.[73] Likewise, Colombia's youth policies are an attempt to respond to twin demands to address youth issues from civic groups, and concern from international and regional organizations with youth violence associated with regional economic and political crises.[74] In the aggregate, all of the national youth strategy documents in our sample explicitly referenced a United Nations agency, usually UNICEF or UNESCO, and several referenced relevant regional organizations.

More cynically, however, this sort of symbolic politics might be understood as "cheap talk" — a form of communication that allows governments to receive some benefit associated with public support or international organization approval without undertaking any costs associated with implementation. Indeed, the implementation of national youth policy strategies often requires the redistribution of resources to youth programs. Since resources are finite, political or economic actors that benefit from the status quo might have good reason to obstruct policy that diverts resources to new constituencies. Also, greater incorporation of young people into the political process could entail political costs to incumbents. Where young people are frustrated with the political process, the implementation of policies designed to engage previously disenfranchised youth in the political process could threaten the political positions of individual actors, who therefore have a strong incentive to impede reforms. In this sense, the development of national youth policy strategies might be an attempt by political incumbents to placate domestic activists, or satisfy international donor conditionality, without implementing reforms that might endanger them politically or economically.

Implementation Issues

Whether through a lack of incentives or a lack of capacity, the implementation of the national youth policy strategy documents in our sample has been limited. All cases in our sample have demonstrated similar issues surrounding implementation including failure to allocate resources, issues of coordination and redundancy, a lack of accountability, limited technical expertise, a lack of monitoring and evaluation, and a lack of political incentives for implementation.[75]

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[71] Залуучуудын Хөгжлийг Дэмжих Үндэсний Хөтөлбөр (National Program on the Promotion of Youth Development), 2006.

[72] Stratégie Nationale Intégrée de La Jeunesse(National Integrated Youth Strategy) 2015–2030.

[73] Muthee, 2010.

[74] Romero Rodriguez, Garcia Buitrago, et al. 2015.

[75] In a separate review of youth policies in five countries, including Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, and Kuwait, UNESCO found that these policies were largely theoretical, and not backed by budgeted action plans (UNESCO 2017, pp. 5).

Resource Allocation

While the national youth policy strategies exist ostensibly to prioritize youth initiatives across state agencies, there has been little institutionalized allocation of financial resources to youth policies or programs. Colombia is a prime example of a well-developed national youth strategy that has been difficult to implement because of problems associated with the allocation of appropriate resources. In Colombia's federal system, authority for implementation of youth projects in line with the national policy is delegated to territorial entities that themselves are cash-strapped.[76] This issue presents another dilemma for policymakers, since territorial units are arguably closer to beneficiaries, and are therefore in the best position to design and implement programs to increase youth engagement but may lack the capacity to raise and allocate funds.

On the other hand, our research in Georgia turned up a positive example of the use of a national youth strategy to guide funding allocation. Irakli Zhorzhorliani, the director of the Children and Youth Development Fund at the former Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia, voluntarily uses the National Youth Policy Document to devise criteria to evaluate proposals for grants from the fund. Under this system, young people and youth CSOs apply for grants from the fund, and fund awards grants based on the applications' relevance to the policy priorities outlined in the strategy document.[77] This process is a potentially useful model for improving the allocation of resources to youth policy, both for other agencies within Georgia and for other countries with national youth strategies. However, the example is also instructive of drawbacks associated with resource allocation. Zhorzhorliani's use of the strategy document to guide funding decisions was voluntary, not subject to constraints from the government or to oversight from other state agencies or branches. Since his policy is not institutionalized, there is no guarantee the process will continue if the director is replaced, and the processes could be arbitrarily changed by the government.

Coordination/Redundancy

Although one defining purpose of national youth policy strategy is to integrate and coordinate youth policy across sectors and state agencies, implementation of these policies is often impeded by problems of coordination and redundancy between agencies. Across many cases, implementation is undermined by a lack of coordinated action between sectoral ministries, and by fragmentation between executive and legislative agencies.[78] For example, Colombia has a set of youth policies dating back to 1991, each of which is subject to a different implementing authority unique to the sectors covered by the policy.[79] Especially at the local level, there is a disconnect between agencies responsible for youth policy across different sectors.[80] While the National Youth Policy was intended to integrate these policies and streamline and clarify implementation, there is still considerable overlap between agencies and levels of government on the implementation of youth policy.[81] Similarly, the implementation of Morocco's National Integrated Youth Strategy has been hampered by a lack of formal designation between territories and federal units, weak local application of national policies, and limited ownership of youth policies at the local level.[82]

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[76] Ibid.

[77] Zhorzhorliani, Irakli (Director, Children and Youth Development Fund at the former Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia). Interview with Bret Barrowman. January 2018. Tbilisi, Georgia.

[78] Youth Policy Labs 2014, pp. 11.

[79] Romero Rodriguez, Garcia Buitrago, et al. 2015.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

[82] UNESCO 2017, pp. 6.

Accountability

The implementation of national youth policy strategies is impeded by a lack of horizontal accountability and oversight. In Georgia, for example, the development of the National Youth Policy Document had been the effort of the previous Ministry of Youth and Sports,[83] which itself had no authority to compel other ministries or agencies to use the document as a strategic guide. The document also envisions the development of an Interagency Coordinating Council, though as of writing, it was unclear whether the council had any statutory authority to oversee the adoption of the strategy at the agency level, or whether the council had taken any steps toward developing an implementation action plan. Again, to the extent that state officials in Georgia were implementing the document, compliance is voluntary, and not subject to oversight from other agencies or government branches. For example, while Zhorzhorliani's Development Fund under the former Ministry of Youth and Sport used the national strategy to guide funding decisions, the president's office exercised no oversight over this process, and the head of the president's discretionary fund was not using the strategy, nor was there any pressure to use the strategy for funding decisions from the legislative branch.[84]

Implementation of national youth policy strategies may also be hampered by a lack of vertical accountability. For example, UNESCO notes that despite a long time horizon and a monitoring and evaluation plan, Morocco's National Integrated Youth Strategy has not been implemented because of a lack of baseline measures, a lack of mid-term reviews, a weak culture of evaluation, and an absence of monitoring mechanisms, coupled with general good governance and accountability issues in the region.[85]

Technical Expertise

Secondary analyses of national youth policies in these cases suggest that many state agencies lack the technical expertise to implement youth policy in accordance with the national youth policy strategies, especially at local levels. Colombia, in particular, relies heavily on territorial entities to implement youth policy across sectors, but those entities are often unprepared in terms of resources and expertise to implement complex policy.[86] Officials at Colombia Joven, the main executive youth policy body in Colombia, for example, have noted that responsibility for implementation often falls to mayors with low administrative capacity and technical knowledge, leaving policy issues to be led by external advisers or youth CSOs.[87]

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[83]   In 2017, in a ministerial realignment, the youth portion of the Ministry of Youth and Sport was integrated into the Education Ministry, with the sport portion integrated into the Culture Ministry.

[84]   Zhuruli, Girorgi (Director, Reserve Fund, Staff of the President of Georgia). Interview with Bret Barrowman. January 2018. Tbilisi, Georgia.

[85]   UNESCO 2017; pp. 6.

[86]   Romero Rodriguez, Garcia Buitrago, et al. 2015.

[87]   Ibid.

Political Incentives

Finally, the primary factor underlying the lack of a significant push to implement NYSPs is that politicians lack a political incentive to do so. Youth policy in these cases is characterized by the "vicious cycle of apathy" in which young people are deeply suspicious of political elites, and avoid political engagement as a result.[88] Therefore, when governments produce youth-oriented policies like these policy strategy documents, often at the prodding of international organizations or youth advocacy CSOs, they have little incentive to commit scarce resources to implement them because politically disengaged youth cannot credibly threaten to vote them out of office if they are not participating in decision-making processes. As a result, this lack of follow through deepens youth distrust of, and disengagement from, political processes. Morocco's National Integrated Youth Strategy explicitly recognizes this dilemma:

> "There is a strong feeling of doubt among young people about the willingness and ability of successive Governments to take a strategic approach to reform. The risk is that a strategy developed by a Government is abandoned by the following [Government], reversing the collective and consultative process of previous years. Even if the strategy is not completely abandoned, with a lack of political will in terms of implementation, it risks being neglected and gradually forgotten. This risk is particularly high in the absence of effective involvement of all actors concerned. In addition, under pressure, and to produce immediate results, Governments often want to achieve "quick wins," which could go against some of the recommendations made on long-term strategy projections."[89]

The issue of political will emphasized by Morocco's policy is a result of the political incentives facing individual politicians. In many cases, implementation of the national youth policy strategy is delegated to youth ministries with little political value to officials.[90] As noted in the section on symbolic value, implementing youth policy often requires a redistribution of power and resources that make risk-averse politicians reticent to support a policy with uncertain consequences. In this sense, an extended development process that continually engages young people and youth CSOs is vital to demonstrating to local and national politicians that there is a political constituency that will hold them accountable for implementation of a national youth policy strategy.

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88 Stockemer, Daniel, and Aksel Sundström. 2018. "Age Representation in Parliaments: Can Institutions Pave the Way for the Young?" *European Political Science Review* 10 (3). Cambridge University Press: 467–90. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773918000048.

89 Stratégie Nationale Intégrée de La Jeunesse (National Integrated Youth Strategy) 2015–2030.

90 Youth Policy Labs 2014, pp. 11.

Source: NDI

Conclusions and Recommendations

Our sample of national youth policy strategies includes a range of approaches to developing long-term, integrated, and cross-sectoral strategies on youth policy.

KEY CONCLUSION

Despite this range of approaches, there is little evidence that the national youth policy strategies in our sample have achieved their overarching objective of facilitating youth civic and political engagement.

Colombia's and Georgia's documents provide a general strategic framework, while Kenya's, Mongolia's, and Morocco's strategy documents emphasizes more specific policy directives. Kenya's strategic action plan and Morocco's youth strategy are the most comprehensive, detailing specific action items, delegating them to specific agencies or non-state actors, establishing a preliminary budget, proposing indicators for success, and proposing a monitoring and evaluation plan. Part of the difficulty of answering this question lies in the methodological limitations discussed at the beginning of this section. However, estimating the impact of national youth policy strategies is also impeded by the limited implementation of these policies.

In summary, a distinction should be made in evaluating the effectiveness of national youth policy strategies in engaging young people in decision-making processes. First, the value of such a policy may be primarily symbolic. That is, independent of any actual effects on youth engagement, the mere fact of the development of such a policy provides a signal to youth constituencies and international organizations that governments take youth issues seriously and can therefore shape youth expectations about the possibilities of engaging decision makers. Second, the value of a national youth strategy may be practical. If state agencies use the document to guide the strategic allocation of resources to youth policies and programs, such a document can help increase youth engagement in decision-making processes. However, this practical effect requires costly and difficult coordination by disparate state actors and agencies.

Recommendations for Funders

1. Even independent of any measurable effect on youth civic and political engagement, national youth policy strategies have an important symbolic component. Yet to be meaningful, the document cannot be purely rhetorical. **Funders should continue to demand that strategy documents be the product of an extended consultation process that mobilizes significant numbers of youth and youth CSOs that are representative of a cross-section of the population**. This process should deliberately identify and recruit members and representatives of traditionally marginalized populations within the unique country context, including ethnic and religious minorities, girls and women, LGBTI youth, and youth with disabilities. The development process should also deliberately recruit youth and representatives of youth facing specific substantive challenges, including youth living with infectious illness, people on the move, and youth living with crime and violence. This bottom-up process of development, rather than any content of the document, ensures the symbolic value is not just "cheap talk;" this process best signals state intentions to engage young people and helps set expectations among youth about engaging decision makers in the future. Crucially, this process can have the opposite effect if it is not backed by allocated resources and an implementation plan. High-profile development processes that are not backed by implementation risk further alienating youth who are already disillusioned with governments that undertake superficial reforms to secure good will and/or funding from international donors.

2. Relatedly, donors should welcome the development of national youth policy strategies as a symbolic commitment to international normative frameworks, but can also help ensure that these documents have a tangible impact by linking legitimacy to the achievement of common and transparent benchmarks. **Donors and international organizations should push for the development of common youth engagement indicators, including resource commitments, and publish comparative assessments of policy implementation**.[91] Legitimacy should be linked not only to document development, but to substantive implementation as compared to peer countries. Donors should not assume that the incentives for governments to develop youth policy strategies are the same as those for implementation and should not assume a government's decision to develop a youth policy strategy will necessarily result in greater youth engagement.

3. **Encourage document specificity in definitions of youth, identification of key target subgroups, policy prioritization, delegation of policy responsibility, sources of financial and material resources, and monitoring and evaluation.** Operative clauses should more closely resemble Morocco's and Kenya's youth policy documents — specific, measurable, and achievable — than Georgia's or Colombia's, which are more vague statements of aspiration. Furthermore, country contexts are unique; donors should encourage governments go beyond cookie-cutter approaches and instead develop policy strategies that are responsive to the unique interests and challenges of youth in their respective contexts.

4. **Funders should encourage governments to adopt an action plan as part of the national youth policy strategy document**. Several cases, including Kenya and Georgia, separated the process, resulting in the delayed development of a specific implementation plan. Strategy documents that include an action plan, including a specific monitoring and evaluation framework and plan, encourage governments to think at early stages about implementation, and how they will be held accountable for falling short on progress indicators.

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[91] Youth Policy Labs 2014, pp. 41.
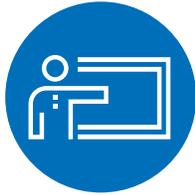
Recommendations for Implementers

1. **Encourage local partners, including youth and youth CSOs, to participate in initial development processes for strategy documents, and maintain that engagement after the document is adopted.** Trainings in policy advocacy and organization can help local partners more effectively hold officials accountable. Even if the government initiates the document as a purely symbolic instrument, extended, targeted engagement can convince individual officials and politicians that implementation will get them elected and keep them in office.

2. One comparative advantage of implementers in this process is familiarity with monitoring and evaluation tools and frameworks. Implementers should work to make this knowledge and capacity available to partners, so that citizens can use monitoring and evaluation efforts to continue to hold officials accountable for implementation. **To encourage accountability for state officials, implementers should develop and push for the adoption of monitoring and evaluation standards for youth sectors generally, as opposed to for specific projects, and cross-nationally**.[92]

3. Implementers have an important role to play in helping to build government implementation capacity at the national and local levels. **Democracy and governance assistance implementers can provide training programs for politicians and civil servants that help develop the knowledge and expertise necessary to implement cross-sectoral youth policy**. And failing the political incentives to implement cross-sectoral policies at the national level, civil servants and elected officials at the local level will be better equipped to implement local or sector-specific policies.

Recommendations for Local Actors

1. **Local partners should ensure that participation in the initial development process is representative of the entire population of young people, including traditionally marginalized populations**. The inclusion of a broad coalition ensures the strategy accounts for the range of issues confronting youth in the unique political, economic, and cultural context of the country.

2. **Participate in the initial document development processes and maintain engagement during the implementation process. As much as possible, citizens and CSOs should lobby individual officials or representatives to support implementation**. Large-scale mobilization or advocacy can raise the profile of youth issues, but individual officials may expect they can "free ride" — that they will not be held responsible for collective success or failure of implementation. Targeted lobbying can help convince decision makers that implementation is in their individual self-interest of gaining and keeping office. Again, the incentives to develop policies are different than those to implement them, and partners should not expect governments to implement national youth strategies voluntarily. Sustained engagement, oversight, and accountability are necessary to realize concrete gains in youth engagement.

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[92]   Ibid. pp. 43.

CHAPTER 3

MINIMUM AGES FOR VOTING AND CANDIDACY

Author:
Lisa Reppell, International Foundation for Electoral Systems

MINIMUM AGES FOR VOTING AND CANDIDACY

Definition

The age at which citizens can vote and run for office are two benchmarks defining formal youth political participation. Arguments for and against lowering these ages can be:

Rights-based: whether voting and running for office are fundamental rights

Utility-based: whether changes to eligibility ages have societal benefits or harms

Key Functions

Arguments contend that lower voting and candidate eligibility ages can:

- Serve a fundamental rights imperative by enfranchising a group that is affected by, but has little say in, policy decisions.
- Combat declining voter turnout rates among youth.
- Strengthen young voters' sense of citizenship and democracy.
- Influence electoral and policy outcomes by adding youth perspectives to policy debates.

Key Findings

- Available evidence suggests that lowering the voting age to 16 does moderately boost youth voter turnout, though this evidence is most persuasive in consolidated democracies.
- The connection between lower voting ages and widespread gains in young voters' understanding of citizenship and democracy is dependent on the ability of schools and civic education initiatives to instill these values in conjunction with the act of voting.
- Moves to lower candidate eligibility ages will be most impactful if young people are involved in advocating for the expansion of this right.

Key Recommendations

- In countries where there is local initiative to lower voting ages below 18, comparative examples should be used to inform legal framework reform efforts, including the option of lowering the voting age for only subnational elections.
- Efforts to lower minimum voting and candidate ages should be accompanied by civic education programs that build political literacy, and should be designed to reduce discrepancies in participation rates among youth from marginalized groups.
- For national and subnational elected positions, align candidate eligibility ages more closely with the age of voter enfranchisement, particularly in subnational elections.

Key Data Points

27 countries allow some citizens under the age of 18 to vote.

90 percent of countries have a voting age of 18.

1988: Brazilian 16-year-olds gained the right to vote.

21.9 years: average age of candidate eligibility for lower houses of national legislatures.

Raising Their Voices: How effective are pro-youth laws and policies?

Introduction

Debates on lowering voter eligibility ages to 16 are gaining increasing legitimacy and attention among funders, implementers, and national lawmakers as they grapple with legal mechanisms designed to increase youth political involvement. While advocates for this change see the prospect of lowered voting age as a tool for great gains at best or harmless at worst, the empirical foundation upon which these arguments are based is limited. Many of these policy changes have been embraced as a result without consideration of the long-term policy implications.

Proponents contend that there are few downsides to widening the franchise in this manner. They argue that, if it is handled correctly, lowering the voting age has the potential to boost youth voter turnout, add valuable new perspectives to policy debates, and allow youth to emerge as a constituency worthy of attention by politicians. According to this line of reasoning, the reform may also foster intergenerational justice and support a fundamental rights imperative by enfranchising a group that is greatly affected by, but has little say in, policy decisions. However, in many cases, proponents have yet to engage in empirical study across time to assess whether this measure has been successful in achieving its desired ends.

Broadly speaking, there are two strains of arguments in favor of lowering the voting age: rights-based arguments and utility-based arguments. The first line of argument is grounded in the belief that voting, as a fundamental right, should not be denied to young people. The second argument points to a number of measurable benefits of lowering the voting age for youth and for society more broadly. The question of whether lowering the voting age is justified as a fundamental right is open for debate, and will be touched on briefly in this chapter. However, this chapter primarily seeks to understand the empirical case for utility-based arguments: Is lowering the voting age a means to increase youth voter turnout, strengthen citizenship and democracy, and influence electoral and policy outcomes? If so, under what conditions?

A similar set of questions can be asked in relation to another proposed policy change that proponents contend has the potential to boost youth political participation and representation: lowering the age of candidate eligibility, which can also be argued on rights-based and utility-based grounds. The rights-based argument contends that aligning the eligible age to run for office more closely with the age of voter eligibility ensures that young citizens are not just given the right to elect their representatives, but also ensures their right to be elected themselves. As with the case for lowering voting ages, this report will primarily focus on the empirical case undergirding the utility-based arguments for this change: Does lowering the age of candidate eligibility increase the number of youth in elected office and the substantive representation of youth interests?

Methodology

While the potential benefits of voting at 16 and lowering the age of candidate eligibility are highlighted in a number of significant reports on youth political and electoral participation, details on implementation in specific countries are often lacking.[93] In regard to lowering the voting age, policy reports and opinion pieces that do bring in empirical findings often cite nearly identical lines of thought from the limited academic literature on the topic.[94] Although the case for voting at 16 has garnered increasing attention in recent years, particularly in Europe, it is not a new concept — Latin American experiences with voting at 16 stretch back more than 30 years. Given this potentially rich source of data, it is notable how little researched or cited these case studies are in discussions of lowering voting ages elsewhere in the world.

In order to enable a richer depth of engagement with the material, this study undertook a combination of case studies built on interviews and exchanges with researchers, education specialists, government officials, civil society representatives, and former elected officials from Austria, the Isle of Man, and Scotland, as well as more limited interviews on the topic in Kenya and Uganda. This country-specific investigation was combined with access to unpublished and wholly new material shared by some of the preeminent academics focused on the study of participation and youth globally. Given that some of the longest-running experiences with voting ages of 16 are in Latin America, this study also included a review of Spanish and Portuguese-language academic and policy publications on the topic of voting at 16, with a focus on the case study of Brazil.[95]

Cross-national data on youth participation, as noted in the overview chapter of this report, is significantly limited. This report identifies specific types of data that can and should be collected in countries where lowering the voting age is under consideration, as outlined in Appendix A. New data points on youth representation in national legislatures in relation to lowering the age of candidate eligibility[96] recently became available and are incorporated into this report in addition to original data on representation and participation gathered during this study.

This chapter will first provide a snapshot of voting eligibility ages globally before briefly examining several core contentions and implications of rights-based arguments in favor of lowered voting ages. The chapter will then engage in an in-depth exploration of utility-based arguments related to lowering the voting age, namely the impact on voter turnout, citizenship and democracy, and electoral and policy outcomes. The chapter then looks at the viability of subnational elections as a testing ground for lowered voting ages. Taking into account the

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[93] See, for example, Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2016. "Youth Participation in National Parliaments." https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2016-07/youth-participation-in-national-parliaments. Accessed September 19, 2018. Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2014. "Youth Participation in National Parliaments." https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2016-07/youth-participation-in-national-parliaments-0. Accessed September 19, 2018; United Nations Development Programme. 2017. "Youth Participation in Electoral Processes — Handbook for Electoral Management Bodies." http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/youth-participation-in-electoral-processes-a-handbook-for-embs.html. Accessed September 19, 2018; United Nations Development Programme. 2013. "Enhancing Youth Political Participation Throughout the Electoral Cycle." http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Electoral%20Systems%20and%20Processes/ENG_UN-Youth_Guide-LR.pdf. Accessed September 19, 2018.

[94] See, for example, *The Economist*. 2017. "Why the Voting Age Should Be Lowered to 16," February 4, 2017. https://www.economist.com/leaders/2017/02/04/why-the-voting-age-should-be-lowered-to-16; Steinberg, Laurence. 2018. "Why We Should Lower the Voting Age to 16." *The New York Times*, March 2, 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/02/opinion/sunday/voting-age-school-shootings.html; Levine, Peter. 2015. "Why the Voting Age Should Be 17." *Politico Magazine*. February 24, 2015. https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/02/voting-age-17-115466.

[95] The cases for this chapter were chosen to highlight a geographically diverse range of countries that have experience with lowering voting and candidate ages, while taking advantage of the opportunity thoroughly investigate a range of European cases for which more information is accessible.

[96] Stockemer, Daniel, and Aksel Sundström. 2018. "Age Representation in Parliaments: Can Institutions Pave the Way for the Young?" *European Political Science Review* 10 (3): 467–90. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773918000048.

themes that emerge in the discussion of voter ages, the chapter moves to an exploration of lowered candidate ages including a global overview of current practices as well as implications for youth representation. The chapter closes with conclusions and recommendations for funders, implementers, and local partners.

Lowering the Age of Voter Eligibility

Ninety percent of countries worldwide have a voting eligibility age of 18.[97] Austria's decision in 2007 to enfranchise 16-year-olds in all national and local elections was a watershed moment that launched the concept into larger public consciousness in Europe, in particular, but it was built on precedent elsewhere. The Isle of Man[98] voted to give 16-year-olds the right to vote in 2006. Latin America's experience with voting ages of 16 began in Nicaragua in 1984 and Brazil in 1988. The idea has since gained steam, especially in Europe, with a number of countries lowering the voting age to 16 in subnational elections or conditioned on marital or employment status. Malta became the second European Union (EU) country to lower the voting age for all national elections in early 2018, after having allowed 16-year-olds to vote in local elections since 2014.[99] The Council of Europe and the European Parliament also endorsed lowering the voting age in separate resolutions in 2015.[100] A handful of municipalities in the United States have moved to enfranchise 16-year-olds,[101] and the debate is just starting to gain consideration in some provinces of Canada.[102]

The debate is less robust in other regions of the world — Sudan, Ethiopia, Indonesia[103] and Timor Leste have voting ages of 17, but countries in East Asia, which have some of the highest voting ages in the world, have only recently begun lowering them in line with international averages. Japan lowered its voting age from 20 to 18 in 2015, even though public support for the change was low.[104] In Taiwan in 2017, the voting age for referendums was lowered to 18, but the voting age for general elections remains at 20.[105] In South Korea, as of the writing of this report, a basket of constitutional reforms, including lowering the voting age from 19 to 18, had been introduced by the office of President Moon Jae-in.[106] Kuwait, Bahrain, Cameroon, Lebanon, Malaysia, Oman, Singapore, and a handful of islands in the western Pacific have voting ages of 20 or 21; the United Arab Emirates has a voter eligibility age of 25.[107]

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[97] Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016, p. 15.

[98] The Isle of Man is a self-governing British crown dependency.

[99] "16-Year-Olds Granted the Vote in National Elections." 2018. *Times of Malta*. March 5, 2018. https://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20180305/local/16-year-olds-granted-the-vote-in-national-elections.672453.

[100] Council of Europe Resolution 387: Voting at 16 — Consequences on youth participation at local and regional level. October 20, 2015; European Parliament resolution 2015/2035 (INL) on the reform of the electoral law of the European Union. November 11, 2015.

[101] Takoma Park, Hyattsville, and Greenbelt, Maryland have lowered the voting age to 16 in municipal elections. The Council of the District of Columbia has also introduced legislation to lower the voting age to 16 for presidential and local elections. See Fox, Peggy. 2018. "The Nation's Capital May Allow 16-Year-Olds to Vote for President." *USA Today*. April 17, 2018. https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2018/04/17/washington-d-c-may-allow-16-year-olds-vote-president-2020-election/523301002/.

[102] "BC Green Leader Reintroduces Bill to Lower Voting Age to 16." 2018. *CTV Vancouver Island News*. March 13, 2018. https://vancouverisland.ctvnews.ca/bc-green-leader-reintroduces-bill-to-lower-voting-age-to-16-1.3841235.

[103] Indonesia grants the right to vote at the age of 17 or at the age of marriage, whichever is earliest.

[104] Nakatani, Miho. 2017. "What Happened When Japan Lowered the Minimum Voting Age?" *East Asia Forum* (blog). October 20, 2017. http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2017/10/21/what-happened-when-japan-lowered-the-minimum-voting-age/.

[105] http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2018/04/11/2003691075

[106] Kim, Christine, and Michael Perry. 2018. "South Korea Presidential Office Proposes Two-Term Presidency, Lower Voting Age." Reuters. March 21, 2018. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southkorea-politics-constitution/south-korea-presidential-office-proposes-two-term-presidency-lower-voting-age-idUSKBN1GY094.

[107] IPU PARLINE Database; CIA World Factbook.

The move to lower voting ages has happened with varying degrees of political debate and with differing patterns of implementation. In Austria, there was little political visibility or debate around lowering the voting age to 16 at the national level before it passed; the change was put in place as part of a bundle of other alterations to the electoral framework as a way to balance out partisan concerns around the extension of legislative terms from four to five years and the expansion of postal balloting.[108] In the Isle of Man, the change passed unexpectedly with very little debate, as illustrated in the following section.

In other contexts, however, proposals to lower the voting age have been raised multiple times and been the subject of heated debate. In Luxembourg, the proposition to lower the voting age to 16 was rejected by 81 percent of voters in a constitutional referendum in 2015.[109] Unsuccessful efforts to lower the voting age to 16 in the United Kingdom, including the introduction of narrowly defeated parliamentary bills, have been ongoing for more than a decade.[110] In Norway, after conducting trial elections starting in 2011 in which the voting age was lowered to 16 in select municipalities, lawmakers ultimately decided to discontinue the experiment in 2018. Iran is the only country identified in this study that raised its voting age back to 18 in 2007 after officially dropping it nationwide to 15 in 1981.[111]

> ### A NORWEGIAN EXPERIMENT IN VOTING AGES
>
> In 2011, Norway set up a trial to observe the impact of lowering the voting age to 16. The voting age was lowered in 20 select municipalities, but not anywhere else in the country. This design enabled comparison of a "treatment group" (those municipalities where the voting age was lowered) with a control group, where no change was made. The data led researchers to conclude that the extension of voting rights did not increase political maturity or political interest among 16- and 17-year-old voters, though 16- and 17-year-olds did turn out to vote in higher numbers than their slightly older peers. The trial was discontinued in 2018 and voter eligibility age returned to 18 in all municipalities.

[108] Wirth, Mariz. 2008. "Elections." Demokratiezentrum Wien. October 2008. http://www.demokratiezentrum.org/en/topics/democracy-debates/elections.html.

[109] Boring, Nicolas. 2015. "Luxembourg: Three Referendum Questions Voted Down." Library of Congress Global Legal Monitor. July 7, 2015. http://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/luxembourg-three-referendum-questions-voted-down/.

[110] "Campaign History — Votes at 16." n.d. Votesat16.org. Accessed September 19, 2018. http://www.votesat16.org/about/campaign-history/.

[111] "Iran Parliament Raises Voting Age to 18." 2007. *Iran Focus.* January 2, 2007. https://www.iranfocus.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9698:iran-parliament-raises-voting-age-to-18&catid=4&Itemid=109. "Expert Reports on the Voting Age." n.d. Iran Data Portal. Accessed September 19, 2018. http://irandataportal.syr.edu/expert-reports-on-the-voting-age; The increase in voting age was passed by the parliament and approved by the despite government opposition, which contended that youth voting was a "pillar of the revolution."

Voting Ages Worldwide

- Eligible to vote at 16 in all elections
- Eligible to vote at 16 in some elections
- Eligible to vote at 17 in some or all elections
- Eligible to vote <18, conditional on employment or marital status
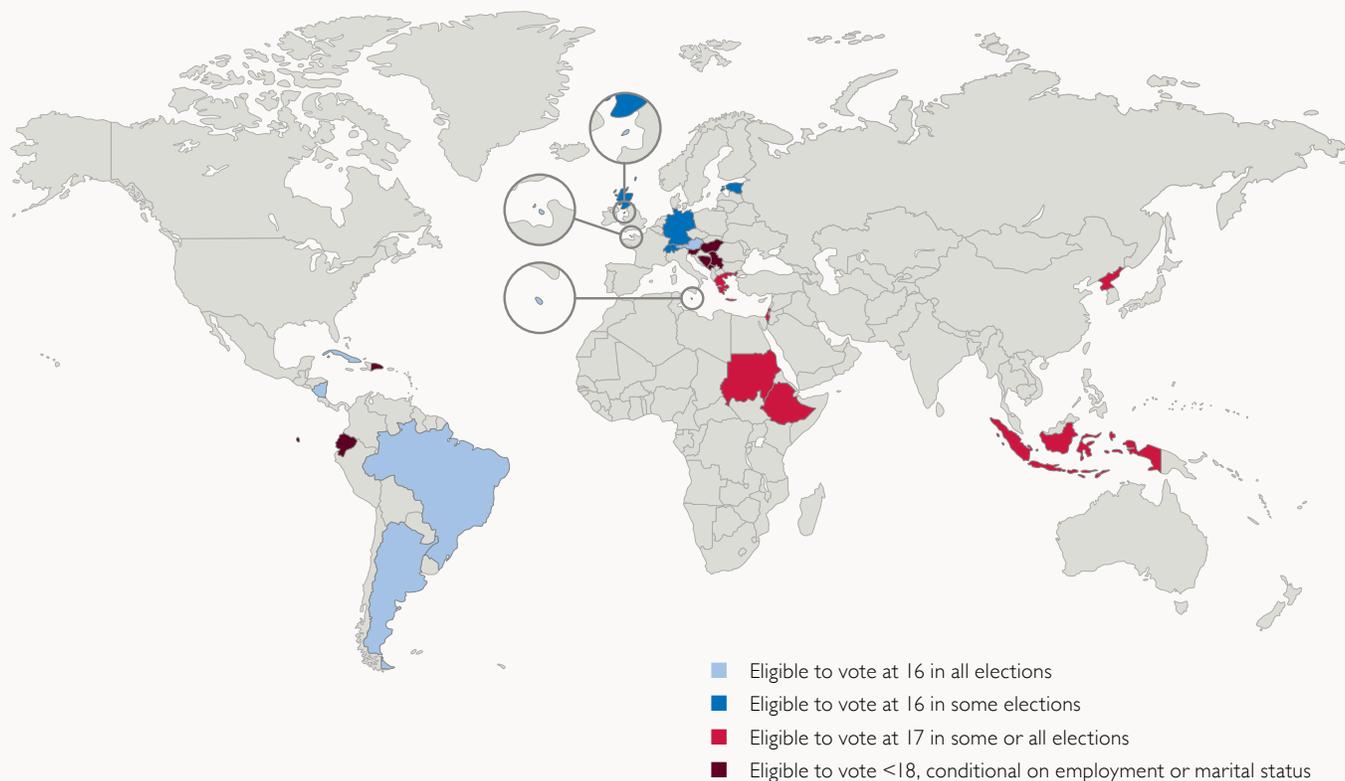
Rights-Based Arguments for Lowering the Voting Age

Although international standards allow for "reasonable restrictions" on voting based on age,[112] the rights-based argument in support of lowering the voting age to 16 contends that 16- and 17-year-olds are as equipped to vote as their slightly older peers and as such should not be denied this fundamental right. It argues that 16- and 17-year-olds have jobs, pay taxes, are punished in adult criminal justice systems (in some countries) and should therefore have a say in the formation of the policies that affect them. Consideration of fundamental rights are important in reform discussions, but there is no international obligation to lower the voting age to 16. Fundamental rights have intrinsic value, and as such empirical data is of little use in "proving" the bounds of that right.

Nonetheless, the ways in which fundamental rights arguments are deployed is illustrative. On the Isle of Man, lowering the voting age was proposed on fundamental rights grounds, and passed unexpectedly, according to the account of the member of the House of Keys, Steve Rodan, who introduced the measure:

> "An expedient amendment was made to Clause 3 (which was reiterating the specific age of 18 for voting) by simply substituting '16 years' for '18 years,' a convenient opportunity to make this far reaching change. As the mover of this amendment, my expectation of success was limited, intending more to test the

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[112] UN Committee on Human Rights. General Comment 25, "The Right to Participate in Public Affairs, Voting Rights, and the Right to Equal Access to Public Service." Article 25(10).

waters of political opinion on a principle I have long held, namely that if you are old enough to leave school, to marry, have a job, pay tax and join the army then you are certainly old enough to vote…and this was, I felt, the ideal opportunity to gauge wide political support for an idea yet to be promoted seriously within schools or among young people themselves.

…[T]o my own surprise and delight I must confess — the crucial amendment carried with 19 votes for and four votes against."[113]

This account from the Isle of Man raises an interesting consideration: whether there will be any differences in impact on youth engagement from expansions of rights driven by policymakers or those that are demanded by youth. Rodan's quote acknowledges that the idea to lower the voting age was one that did not originate with young citizens in the Isle of Man. This move to supply additional political rights to youth at the urging of the political center, as opposed to responding to citizen demand, is not unique to the Isle of Man. The question can then be asked: Will youth take advantage of a right that they have not demanded, simply because the right has been supplied to them? This "supply-side" provision of rights is a pattern of expanding rights inconsistent with many other historic expansions of rights where disenfranchised groups played a significant advocacy role. Whether providing youth the right to vote will yield observable results in the form of youth participation, strengthened citizenship and democracy, and impact on political and electoral outcomes is a question that requires inquiry into the utility of making such a change.

Utility-Based Arguments for Lowering the Voting Age

Although the decision to alter voter eligibility ages in a particular country undoubtedly results from a unique confluence of events, in individual debates on the topic certain themes emerge. Utility-based arguments contending that lowering the voting age will serve a measurable societal good or, conversely, result in an observable harm, are prominent features of debate. In the following sections, the impact of lowering the voting age on rates of youth voter turnout and participation, citizenship and democracy, and electoral and policy outcomes will be explored.

YOUTH VOTER TURNOUT

One common utility-based argument is that lowering the voting age is an effective tool to combat declining voter turnout rates among youth. For countries with declining rates of voting among youth, lowering the voting age is one mechanism that has been proposed as a way to instill the value of voting earlier in life. The empirical case for this argument is mixed, though the evidence is most persuasive in consolidated democracies in which 18 is the age at which young adults often begin leaving the familial home.

In a prominent study of turnout in the 22 countries that have held continuous elections since World War II, Franklin et al. found that the movement to lower voting ages to 18 was the single largest contributing factor to the decline in voter turnout over that period.[114] This 20th century enlargement of the voting pool happened at a time when population demographics due to the baby boom engendered a particularly large influx of young voters. Lower turnout rates among these newly enfranchised voters resulted in a precipitous decline in overall turnout figures.

Source: IFES

113 Rodan, Steve. 2007. "Votes for 16 Year-Olds in the Isle of Man." *Commonwealth Parliamentarian*, September 2007. http://steverodanmhk.blogspot.com/2011/07/votes-at-16-article-0907.html.

114 Franklin, Mark N, Patrick Lyons, and Michael Marsh. 2004. "Generational Basis of Turnout Decline in Established Democracies." *Acta Politica* 39 (2): 115–51. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500060. p. 142.

There is evidence, however, that age 18 is a particularly difficult time to start voting. Leaving home, which in the 22 countries studied correlates significantly with the age of 18, increases the cost of voting for young persons. The "lifecycle" theory undergirding this line of literature suggests that teens who have recently left home are more likely to be in a social context where their peers are also first-time voters and the norms of voting have not yet been created.

There is evidence from multiple countries that first time voters who live at home do turn out in higher numbers than first-time voters who have already left home. A study in Denmark showed that 18-year-old voters who lived at home were more likely to vote in the 2009 local elections than their slightly older peers who had left home.[115] The study also showed that this benefit is compounded — adult parents of enfranchised children who live at home are also more likely to vote.[116] This trend linking residence in the familial home with greater youth turnout is borne out by data from Austria and Norway.[117] In these elections, 16- and 17-year-olds turned out in *higher* numbers than their slightly older peers, who, it can be hypothesized, were more likely to be living away from home as well as no longer enrolled in compulsory education. Even more striking, in Argentina, where the voting age was lowered to 16 in 2012, turnout of 16- and 17-year-olds (for whom voting is optional) actually *surpassed* turnout of the general voting-age population (for whom voting is compulsory) in primary elections in 2013.[118] Though gender-disaggregated data was available in the Denmark and Norway studies, the authors of these studies did not incorporate an analysis of the ways in which participation rates of male and female youth were uniquely affected, nor did the other studies referenced in this paragraph.

THE VALUE OF AGE-DISAGGREGATED DATA IN DENMARK

The research in Denmark shows what can be done with detailed data. Danish voter turnout data is disaggregated by age, and voter registration information includes the voter's residential address, which allows researchers to determine whether a young voter lives in the familial home or not. Data privacy issues are likely to be a consideration in many countries, but Denmark shows the collection of detailed data has value in making causal connections between policy changes and voter turnout.

[115] Bhatti, Yosef, and Kasper M. Hansen. 2012. "Leaving the Nest and the Social Act of Voting: Turnout among First-Time Voters." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Parties* 22 (4). https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2012.721375.

[116] Dahlgaard, Jens Olav. 2018. "Trickle-Up Political Socialization: The Causal Effect on Turnout of Parenting a Newly Enfranchised Voter." *American Political Science Review* 112 (3): 698–705. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055418000059.

[117] Zeglovits, Eva, and Julian Aichholzer. 2014. "Are People More Inclined to Vote at 16 than at 18? Evidence for the First-Time Voting Boost Among 16- to 25-Year-Olds in Austria." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 24 (3): 351–61. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2013.872652; Ødegård, Guro, Johannes Bergh, and Jo Saglie. 2014. "Voter Turnout and the Mobilization of 16-Years-Olds in the Norwegian Local Election of 2011." Prepared for 2014 ECPR General Conference in Glasgow, Scotland. https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/91c546cd-440f-487a-8e38-32d0846fc3b5.pdf.

[118] Cereijo, Nicolás, and Javier Ignacio Tejerizo. 2014. "La Incidencia Del Voto Joven En Su Primer Experiencia Histórica." Prepared for el XI Congreso Nacional y IV Congreso Internacional Sobre Democracia Ciencia Política. Universidad Nacional de Rosario, Rosario, Argentina. http://www.argentinaelections.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Argentina-La-incidencia-del-voto-joven-en-su-primer-experiencia-hist%C3%B3rica.pdf.

The follow-on argument in the lifecycle literature, with its implication that citizens are more likely to vote if they still reside in the familial home than if they have recently left it, is the line of literature suggesting that voting is habit forming, or "sticky" behavior.[119] By getting young citizens to vote earlier, they create the habit of voting and will continue to do so all their lives. However, the literature suggests that non-voting is also a habit that is sticky.[120] If expanding the franchise to 16- and 17-year-olds were shown to create more first-time non-voters who are solidifying the habit of *not* voting, that is problematic for the argument in favor of lowering the voting age for the sake of creating more young voters who will continue to vote later in life.

Of course, these lifecycle theories are specific to countries or communities where 18 is the age at which young adults are likely to leave home, which is not a norm everywhere in the world. Furthermore, in Austria and Norway, it is possible that a *novelty effect* (in which higher turnout can be attributed to the newness of the experience after it is first passed) or a *Hawthorne effect* (in which the increase in attention focused on youth directly after the change in the law causes more young voters to turn out to vote than otherwise would) is affecting the data. Indeed, in Austria, while the participation rates of 16- to 18-year-olds in the 2008 election (one year after the reform was passed) were similar to other age groups, in 2013 elections turnout among the group fell to 63 percent, significantly below the overall 75 percent turnout rate of the population as a whole.[121] The case of Japan, where the voting age was lowered from 20 to 18, complicates the lifecycle hypothesis; in the election following the change, turnout amongst 18- and 19-year-olds was higher than their slightly older peers as well, belying the argument that the voter's residence is of primary significance; in Japan almost half of 20–35 year-olds live at home,[122] suggesting other factors might have been at play in boosting turnout among newly enfranchised voters, such as the novelty of being "franchise pioneers."[123]

Because of the longer timeframe involved, the case of Brazil is particularly interesting as it does not align with the lifecycle theory (most Brazilians leave their parents' homes later in life, on average at the age of 24.5)[124] and shows how an initial "novelty effect" may play out over time. In Brazil, voting becomes compulsory at age 18, but registering to vote and casting a ballot are optional activities for 16- and 17-year-old citizens. Directly following the student movements' and unions' successful fight to lower the voting age in 1988, youth were highly motivated to enjoy their newly granted right, resulting in high voter registration rates among this age group in 1990 and 1992. Though the number of 16- and 17-year-olds registered to vote declined in the late 1990s, rates have fluctuated over time, with the number of youth in this age range registered to vote meeting or surpassing initial highs in 2000, 2004, and 2008.[125] This fluctuation suggests that teenage voters are informing their decision to participate based on similar factors

[119]   Dinas, Elias. 2012. "The Formation of Voting Habits." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 22. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2012.718280.

[120]   Franklin, Mark, and Bernard Wessels. 2002. "Learning (Not) to Vote: The Generational Basis of Turnout Decline in Established Democracies." Paper Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.

[121]   Haupt, Maria, and Elisabeth Turek. n.d. "Citizenship Education in Austria — Analysis within the Framework of the Project 'Engage — Building Together European Learning Material on Education for Citizenship.'" Erasmus + and Zentrum Polis. https://www.politik-lernen.at/dl/qLKsJKJKonMKnJqx4KJK/ENGAGE_Analysis_of_Citizenship_Education_in_Austria.pdf.

[122]   Nohara, Yoshiaki, and Jiyeun Lee. 2016. "More Adults Kept from Leaving Parents' Nests in Asia by Harsh Economic Realities." *The Japan Times Online*, December 2, 2016. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/12/02/national/adults-kept-leaving-parents-nests-asia-harsh-economic-realities/.

[123]   Ødegård et al., 2014.

[124]   Mariani, Daniel, Vitoria Ostetti, and Rodolfo Almeida. 2017. "Com qual idade as pessoas saem de casa no Brasil." Nexo Jornal. February 27, 2017. https://www.nexojornal.com.br/grafico/2017/02/27/Com-qual-idade-as-pessoas-saem-de-casa-no-Brasil.

[125]   Santiago, Daniela. n.d. "Eleitores menores de 18 anos: cada eleição, uma nova estatística." Tribunal Superior Eleitoral. Accessed September 19, 2018. http://www.tse.jus.br/o-tse/escola-judiciaria-eleitoral/publicacoes/revistas-da-eje/artigos/revista-eletronica-eje-n.-2-ano-3/eleitores-menores-de-18-anos-cada-eleicao-uma-nova-estatistica.

affecting the entire electorate; since 1988, Brazil has gone through moments of political optimism and political disillusionment, which seem to have affected voters' interest in politics regardless of their age. This hypothesis is corroborated by the fact that the elections in which 16- and 17-year-olds' participation rates have been low coincides with electoral years in which higher numbers of the general population voted "blank," spoiled their ballots, or abstained from voting as an implied indicator of protest or dissatisfaction.[126]

FIGURE 3.1: NUMBER OF 16- AND 17-YEAR-OLDS REGISTERED TO VOTE IN BRAZIL BY YEAR
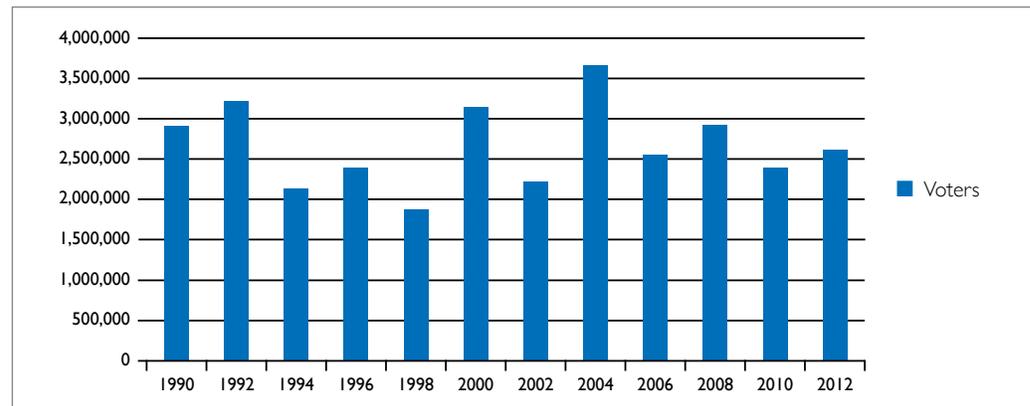
As the case of Brazil also indicates, the legal framework around elections plays a role in determining whether the turnout argument is a persuasive reason to consider lowering the voting age. In Latin American countries that permit 16- and 17-year-olds to vote, voting becomes compulsory at age 18, meaning that creating a habit of *choosing* to vote is a largely unnecessary consideration.

The evidence available suggests that lowering the voting age to 16 as a means to boost voter turnout does have merit, and the likelihood that doing so would have a detrimental effect on voter turnout rates is not borne out by existing examples. For countries where leaving home at or around the age of 18 is common, existing examples do indicate that 16- and 17-year-old voters are more likely to vote than their slightly older peers, and that in lowering the voting age to 16, more voters would have an opportunity to be initiated into the act of voting before they leave the familial home. Whether these young first-time voters continue to vote after leaving home, thus creating a sustained impact on voter turnout over time, is not a question that has been definitively answered in existing studies, due in no small part to a lack of data. However, the idea that a citizen who began voting at age 16 would be *less* likely to vote later in life is not hypothesized or demonstrated anywhere in existing studies. When looking purely through a lens of increasing voter turnout, lowering the voting age to 16 is likely to either have a net-positive impact or a net-neutral impact, with minimal likelihood that the change would negatively affect turnout rates over time. It should be noted that young voters do not have to participate at the same rate as older voters for this net-positive impact on turnout to be observed. In showing that 16- and 17-year-olds vote at higher rates than their slightly older peers, the existing examples suggest that — purely from the perspective of turnout — 16 is potentially a better age than 18 to start voting.

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[126] Ibid.

The multiple, cross-regional examples of a novelty or Hawthorne effect causing a first-time bump in voter turnout directly following the lowering of a voting age are convincing evidence that this effect is common. However, this is not an argument against lowering the voting age, though it is a caution to refrain from overstating the impact of the change on voter turnout based on the results of a single electoral event. An initial bump in rates of voting does not necessarily indicate that a steady decline in voting rates will follow; in Brazil the initial novelty of the change eventually normalized until 16- and 17-year-olds appear to be responding to the same stimuli that drive older voters' satisfaction or disillusionment with the political climate, with their participation rates fluctuating accordingly. Whether this pattern holds true in countries that have more recently lowered their voting age will be interesting to observe as a longer time-series of data becomes available.

STRENGTHENING CITIZENSHIP AND DEMOCRACY

Voter turnout is one very limited measure of the utility of lowering voting ages, and one that is less relevant in countries where low youth voter participation is not a concern, or in countries where voting is compulsory. Voter turnout is one proxy for political participation more broadly, but meaningful political participation is much more than the act of voting alone. Voting for voting's sake does not necessarily provide a societal benefit. Young voters must be initiated into the act of voting in a way that enhances their capacity as citizens and their understanding of democratic norms.

The Role of Schools

The idea that lowering the voting age to 16 will create life-long voters who start voting earlier in life is grounded in a belief about the larger role that schools can play. By enfranchising citizens while they are more likely to be enrolled in compulsory education, schools can play a larger role in preparing 16- and 17-year-olds to vote, initiating the behavior and instilling voting as a value. However, there should be no assumption that schools are naturally equipped to play this role. Educating young voters who are politically literate — that is, informed about their choices, able to identify their own policy preferences, and equipped with tools to sort through disinformation — requires curricula that specifically foster these skills. If there is not an appetite for concurrent review and reform of educational approaches, then the potential benefits of voters coming of age while still enrolled in school are squandered.[127]

Mark Franklin, a prominent scholar on voter behavior, has suggested that lowering the voting age below 18 may counter the higher cost of voting that occurs when a voter's first election happens shortly after they move out of the familial home. He grounds this recommendation in a discussion of the role of educational institutions in supporting such a change, suggesting that voting could then become grounds for an effective class project — in which political knowledge and participation can be graded. Franklin's research is commonly cited by proponents of lowering the voting age, but Franklin is concerned that his research has been divorced from its context. Specifically, he fears that the second element of his research is getting lost: the call for strong support to first-time voters through civic education.

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[127]   In exposing young voters to civic and electoral participation through schools, it may be possible to limit the replication of unequal levels of participation across generations and among social networks. That is, by providing equal access to information on how and why to vote in the setting of compulsory education, first-time voters are introduced to the culture of voting in a setting that exposes them to messages they may not otherwise receive in their familial or social networks. In seeking to strengthen citizenship and democratic practices, policymakers need to consider if public schools have the capacity and resources to achieve these outcomes. Arguments predicated on an enhanced role for public schools in informing young voters make more sense in the context of wealthy democracies. The assumption that schools will be able to provide equal education and civic information to adolescents in less-wealthy countries is harder to justify.

Schools can play a role in ensuring not just that young voters participate, but that they participate within a framework that gives meaning to their experience and helps them to identify candidates and parties that represent their values. The quality of participation matters just as much as the quantity of it; if we are encouraging young voters to vote for the sake of it, unless they are given a framework to identify the candidates and parties that represent their views, then we are doing them, and our democracies, a disservice. The danger of "tokenistic" youth representation in elected bodies is a theme explored in Chapter Four of this report, but it is also important to avoid "tokenistic" participation. The concerns that greater youth participation is supposed to solve — a representation of youth interests in policy discussions, for example — cannot happen if youth are not able to identify their policy preferences and then match them to candidates and parties that espouse views compatible with those preferences.

It is not just youth under 18 who lack capacity to participate in informed ways, as older voters do not necessarily have this civic knowledge either. The existing research does suggest, however, that 16- and 17-year-olds are less politically knowledgeable than their slightly older peers.[128] In the case of Austria, the evidence suggests that the act of lowering the voting age helped to close this knowledge gap, as enfranchisement gave young voters additional incentives to be informed, though young women remained less interested in politics than young men.[129] Slightly less robust evidence from Scotland similarly supports this theory, with 2015 data showing that newly enfranchised 16- and 17-year-old Scots had higher levels of political interest and political participation than their peers in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland for whom the voting age had not been lowered.[130] In the case of Scotland, it was young women who expressed a greater desire for political information than their male peers.[131] However, evidence from Norway did not demonstrate a similar effect, and 16- and 17-year-olds remained behind their slightly older peers in levels of political knowledge and political maturity,[132] suggesting civic education in schools could fill a crucial gap in bringing 16- and 17-year-olds' political knowledge into parity with the general voting population — in addition to equipping generations of better-informed voters for the future.

A rethinking of citizenship education to support moves to lower the voting age did take place in Austria, with initial education reforms in 2008, and continued reflection on needed revisions to curricula resulting in subsequent reforms in 2016.[133] Reforms, led by the Federal Ministry of Education and the Federal Ministry of Science and Research, were launched as a multi-pronged "Democracy Initiative" designed to empower first-time voters, providing dedicated funds for innovative projects that focused on democracy in practice. It also established a new department at the University of Vienna for the study and enhancement of citizenship education. Most

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[128]   Wagner, Markus with David Johann and Sylvia Kritzinger (2012) *Voting at 16: Turnout and the quality of vote choice*, Electoral Studies, 31, p. 372–383. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2012.01.007

[129]   Zeglovits, Eva, and Martina Zandonella. 2013. "Political Interest of Adolescents before and after Lowering the Voting Age: The Case of Austria." *Journal of Youth Studies* 16 (8): 1084–1104. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2013.793785.

[130]   Eichorn, Jan. 2018. "Beyond Anecdotes on Lowering the Voting Age: New Evidence from Scotland." *London School of Economics and Political Science European Institute* (blog). January 2, 2018. http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2018/01/02/beyond-anecdotes-on-lowering-the-voting-age-new-evidence-from-scotland/.

[131]   Hill, Malcolm, Andrew Lockyer, George Head, and Craig A. MacDonald. 2017. "Voting at 16 — Lessons for the Future from the Scottish Referendum." *Scottish Affairs* 26 (1): 48–68. https://doi.org/10.3366/scot.2017.0163.

[132]   "The most frequently used measures of political maturity are political interest, knowledge of politics, political efficacy, consistency in political attitudes, and consistency between attitudes and voting." This study did not analyze gender differences in levels of political maturity. Bergh, Johannes. 2013. "Does Voting Rights Affect the Political Maturity of 16- and 17-Year-Olds? Findings from the 2011 Norwegian Voting-Age Trial." *Electoral Studies* 32 (1): 90–100. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2012.11.001. p. 93.

[133]   De Coster, Isabelle, and Emmanuel Sigalas. 2018. "Citizenship Education at School in Europe 2017." Website. Eurydice Brief. European Commission. https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e0f2801c-184c-11e8-ac73-01aa75ed71a1/language-en. pp. 69–74.

broadly, the reforms changed the teaching of citizenship education in school, creating a new combined school subject, "History, Social Studies, and Citizenship Education" starting in Grade 8 for 14- and 15-year-olds. In addition to the new subject, a new module was introduced with the goal of "enabling young people's integration into political life without third-party guidance."[134]

Overall, research makes it clear that lowering the voting age requires a concomitant investment in civic education. This investment will pay dividends even if the voting age is not expanded, or if the turnout among 16- and 17-year-olds is not as high as hoped, because ensuring that civic education is comprehensive benefits the entire electorate. However, without considerations of changes to civic education designed specifically to support newly enfranchised voters, the gains associated with lowering the voting age are not maximized and civic education as a means to mitigate hypothesized harms is not utilized.

An Inclusive Change

Any reforms made to enhance civic education curricula to improve the political literacy of young voters must take into account diversity within this group. There is a wealth of literature that points to a gender gap in political and civic engagement, but less consideration of if, how, and why this gap manifests in young people.[135] A study of 18-year-olds in the United Kingdom found that social class, educational history, ethnicity, and gender all affect a young person's political engagement efforts.[136] Young women exhibit less confidence in terms of knowledge and understanding of political affairs than their male counterparts. While most research acknowledges the presence of some kind of gender gap in political participation for adult women, some studies that focus on youth find no gender differences in political interest.[137] Studies also show that girls tend to participate in different ways compared with boys.[138] Given the lack of congruence in the literature and the need to understand how young people from different identities engage politically, it is essential that more intersectional research is done so that civic education curriculum can be appropriately tailored to benefit all young voters, and future voters, equally.

There also needs to be a consideration of whether civic education can decrease the gender gap among young voters or if it further entrenches existing gender disparities in political participation. Research from Mali shows that after participating in a civic education course, men substantially increased their civic participation, while participation decreased among women.[139] Because women's participation in the course was seen as deviating from the cultural norm, "women either self-impose[d] limits as a form of compensation or respond[ed] to explicit barriers erected by men in response to attempts to engage in civic activity" after the course

[134] Haupt and Turek, n.d.

[135] Hooghe, Marc, and Dietlind Stolle. 2004. "Good Girls Go to the Polling Booth, Bad Boys Go Everywhere." *Women & Politics* 26 (3–4): 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1300/J014v26n03_01; Yohalem, Nicole, and Shanetta Martin. 2007. "Building the Evidence Base for Youth Engagement: Reflections on Youth and Democracy." *Journal of Community Psychology* 35 (6): 807–10. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20180.

[136] Henn, Matt, and Nick Foard. 2014. "Social Differentiation in Young People's Political Participation: The Impact of Social and Educational Factors on Youth Political Engagement in Britain." *Journal of Youth Studies* 17 (3): 360–80. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2013.830704.

[137] Eckstein, Katharina, Peter Noack, and Burkhard Gniewosz. 2012. "Attitudes toward Political Engagement and Willingness to Participate in Politics: Trajectories throughout Adolescence." *Journal of Adolescence*, Political and Civic Engagement Development in Adolescence, 35 (3): 485–95. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.07.002; Ahmad, Saeed. 2015. "Role of Socioeconomic Status and Political Participation in Construction of Apathy Among Youth." *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 25 (8): 801–9. https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2015.1021065; Quintelier, Ellen. 2009. "The Political Participation of Immigrant Youth in Belgium." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35 (6): 919–37. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830902957700.

[138] Furlong, Andy, and Fred Cartmel. 2012. "Social Change and Political Engagement Among Young People: Generation and the 2009/2010 British Election Survey." *Parliamentary Affairs* 65 (1): 13–28. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsr045.

[139] Gottlieb, Jessica. 2016. "Why Might Information Exacerbate the Gender Gap in Civic Participation? Evidence from Mali." *World Development* 86 (October): 95–110. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2016.05.010.

was completed.[140] A USAID evaluation of civic education programs in 2002 also found that "civic education tended to reinforce gender disparities in the political realm."[141] Although this research focuses on adult women, in countries with strong social norms that further the idea that women should not participate in political life, civic education initiatives for young people should be crafted in a way that disrupts and challenges these norms.

IMPACT ON ELECTORAL AND POLICY OUTCOMES

The focus of utility-based arguments in favor of lowering the voting age has thus far been on the potential benefits of such a change. Lowering the voting age as a means to counteract declining rates of formal political participation and boost the role of schools in supporting young voters are two optimal outcomes put forward by proponents of lowered voting ages. Those who oppose lowering the voting age, however, could concede those points and still have significant concerns about what a lower voting age would mean for electoral and policy outcomes. A primary argument made by opponents of lowering the voting age is that enabling younger citizens to vote may result in electoral and policy outcomes that are detrimental to societal good. These concerns do encroach on fundamental-rights considerations; if a society determines that at a given age-threshold it becomes a fundamental right for a citizen to vote, then it is also that citizens' right to exercise their vote according to their preferences, free from coercion. However, from a utility perspective, there are some considerations that affect the degree to which greater youth enfranchisement has the potential to influence a country's electoral and policy outcomes.

The impact of expanding voting rights to younger citizens may vary, based on the underlying demographics of the society in which changes are proposed. For example, in Europe, where populations are aging, utility-based arguments in favor of lowering the voting age include correcting for the overly influential role of older voters whose interests might differ significantly from young persons', and the prospective harm of enfranchising a relatively small number of new voters is seen to be lower. In countries with large and growing youth populations, enfranchising 16- and 17-year-olds represents a more significant change to the size of the electorate, thus magnifying any uncertainties about the ultimate impact of doing so. To put this in perspective, when Malta dropped the voting age to 16, 8,500 voters became newly eligible, increasing the size of the electorate by 1.9 percent. By contrast, adding 16- and 17-years-olds to the voter rolls in Uganda, one of the youngest countries in the world, would add more than two million voters, a 4.9 percent increase.[142] The differing magnitudes of these two examples illustrate how a country's underlying demographics can shape perceptions of the risks associated with lowering the voting age. In a country in which a large number of young voters stand to be newly enfranchised, policymakers and the public may perceive the potential impact on electoral and policy outcomes to be higher.

From the perspective of political choice, some proponents do focus on the ways in which expanding the number of young voters might enhance the political viability of issues with longer time-horizons that may be of less concern to older voters, such as environmental concerns or the long-term solvency of national pension or social security plans.[143] However, a contentious

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140 Ibid, p. 104.

141 Morris, Sharon. 2002. "Approaches to Civic Education: Lessons Learned." PN-ACP-331. Technical Publication Series. United States Agency for International Development, Office of Democracy and Governance. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACP331.pdf.

142 World Bank Data. https://data.worldbank.org/country/uganda. Accessed September 19, 2018.

143 See Tremmel, Jörg, Antony Mason, Petter Haakenstad Godli, and Igor Dimitrijoski, eds. 2015. *Youth Quotas and Other Efficient Forms of Youth Participation in Ageing Societies.* Springer International Publishing. http://www.springer.com/us/book/9783319134307.

element of debate around 16- and 17-year-olds' capacity to participate as voters is the question of whether youth are more likely to support extreme political parties. The available evidence shows strong variation across countries, with some countries' youth being indeed more likely to support politically extreme and protest parties.[144] In Austria, researchers found evidence that young voters are the "most likely to turn to protest parties such as those on the radical right."[145] While it is beyond the scope of this report to place a value judgement on the vote choices of young voters, the question of the link between youth voters and vote choice is one that deserves additional study, particularly in contexts of declining party membership, electoral volatility, and the relatively new viability of extreme parties at either end of the political spectrum.

For proponents of lowering the voting age, it would be unwise to dismiss concerns about youth vote choice without good-faith consideration. In the Council of Europe's endorsement of lowering the voting age to 16, the authors' only mention of youth support for extreme political views is as follows: "As surveys in Austria and the U.S. have shown, young people are not likely to hold extreme views or beliefs fundamentally different from other voter groups. Therefore, a disturbance of the balance of political views does not seem likely."[146] However, the footnote that they offer to support this claim, says the opposite (it is the Wagner, Johann and Kritzinger article cited above, which finds evidence that youth in Austria *are* more likely to support extreme parties). The contextual factors that might make youth more likely to support extreme parties, and whether or not this is grounds for excluding them from voter rolls, are open questions that are valid space for debate. However, the fact that evidence suggests youth in some countries are more likely to support parties and candidates that espouse extreme or undemocratic views does drive home the need for civic education that supports young voters' ability to make informed choices about their political preferences and increases their awareness and understanding of democratic norms and practices.

Subnational Elections: A Testing Ground?

Subnational elections are a promising testing ground for the idea of lowering the voting age to 16, and an opportunity to implement concurrent educational reforms designed to support the move.[147] For countries where 18 is a common age for leaving the home, voting at 16 in the subnational context gives the same benefits of establishing the habit of voting while in the familial home and enrolled in compulsory education while also allowing for the possibility of studying the impact of such a change. It also minimizes any real or perceived risks associated with vote choice and support for politically extreme parties at the national level.

The move to lower the voting age only for subnational elections is an approach that some countries have adopted. For example, in Estonia the national parliament voted to lower the voting age to 16 for local elections nationwide. In countries with federal structures such as Germany, the decision to lower the voting age to 16 has been made by select states. In the United States, individual municipalities have chosen to lower their voting ages. Lowering the voting age in subnational elections provides an opportunity to observe the impact of such a change as well as an opportunity to test changes in educational curricula designed to support young voters — at least in subnational contexts where associated educational authorities have some autonomy over

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[144] For example, Pilkington, Hilary. 2014. "Are Young People Receptive to Populist and Radical Right Political Agendas?" Presented at the Turning Evidence into Policy: MYPLACE Policy Forum, Brussels, Belgium, November 20; Idriss, Cynthia Miller. 2018. "Youth and the Radical Right." *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*, April. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190274559.013.18.

[145] Wagner, et. al. p. 381.

[146] Council of Europe Resolution 387, Section B, Paragraph 1:a(13).

[147] The recommendation to consider subnational elections is consistent with the Council of Europe Resolution mentioned in the previous footnote.

curricula. As Daniel Hart and James Youniss argue in their book *Renewing Democracy in Young America*, "...Because municipal governance is less ideologically polarized than national politics, local communities are excellent contexts for developing civic knowledge and dispositions."[148]

Various types of municipal elections might be considered for expanded enfranchisement. Voters in the city of Berkeley, California, for example, approved a measure to lower the voting age to 16 specifically for school board elections.[149] Giving youth a vote in the election of bodies that directly affect them, such as school governance bodies, in combination with civic education reforms, could yield many of the benefits proponents point to in lowering the voting age, while further minimizing risks.

However, if the goal of increasing youth turnout and political participation is driving reform efforts to lower the voting age, limiting the change to local elections may yield a less pronounced boost than a change that includes national elections. The political importance of an election is often the largest factor driving turnout,[150] and turnout rates of 16- and 17-year-olds in subnational elections might not be indicative of how they would turnout in national elections. Zeglovitz and Zandonella hypothesize that the discrepancy between their findings (which indicate lowering the voting age does increase 16- and 17-year-olds' political knowledge) and Bergh's findings from Norway (which found no increase in political knowledge) might be because Austrian elections enfranchised youth for all national elections, which are likely to generate greater interest, but Norway only extended voting rights in the less politically salient municipal elections.[151] However, the case of Brazil provides a counter example: the fluctuation in 16- and 17-year-olds' electoral participation has peaked in years when municipal elections took place. According to political scientist Marcia Ribeiro Dias, there might be a higher number of youth willing to vote for local and municipal elections because the focus of the political discussion in this case is the adolescents' immediate, everyday context, whereas general elections bring up broader, usually more complex, political issues.[152]

In endorsing the move to lower voting ages in subnational elections, proponents should be aware that doing so may increase the likelihood that movement toward endorsing the change at a national level may accelerate. Mark Franklin observes that, "if the example of Austria is anything to go by, the result [of lowering the voting age in subnational elections] will be increased political pressure for lowering the age more widely rather than increased study of the political consequences."[153] This is observably true in some cases, though the manner in which lawmakers frame the issue can limit the perception that expanding the measure to the national level is inevitable, as illustrated by the example of Norway. In lowering the voting age to 16 in select set of municipalities, the exploration of lowering the voting age was publicly framed as an experiment in which the impact of the change was being observed. This enabled the government to frame the end of the trial period as a discontinuation of an experiment, as opposed to a removal of a right.[154]

[148]   *Renewing Democracy in Young America*. 2017. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

[149]   "Measure Y1 Passes to Lower Voting Age for School Board Elections." n.d. *Vote16usa.Org* (blog). Accessed September 19, 2018. http://vote16usa.org/project/berkeley-ca/.

[150]   Franklin, Mark N. 2005. "You Want to Vote Where Everybody Knows Your Name: Anonymity, Expressive Engagement, and Turnout Among Young Adults." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. Washington, DC. http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download;jsessionid=D1F2392D90C4FDC524A5EF495F9FBBE7?doi=10.1.1.76.8640&rep=rep1&type=pdf.

[151]   Zeglovitz and Zandonella, 2013, p. 1090.

[152]   Lupion, Bruno. 2014. "Qual é o percentual de adolescentes de 16 e 17 anos com título de eleitor." Nexo Jornal. October 5, 2014. https://www.nexojornal.com.br/expresso/2016/07/07/Qual-%C3%A9-o-percentual-de-adolescentes-de-16-e-17-anos-com-t%C3%ADtulo-de-eleitor.

[153]   Franklin, Mark. Email correspondence with Lisa Reppell. February 13, 2018.

[154]   Pourramedani, Ali. 2017. "16-Year-Olds and 17-Year-Olds Can No Longer Vote." *Norway Today*. May 12, 2017. http://norwaytoday.info/news/16-years-old-and-17-years-old-no-vote/.

Source: IFES

Lowering the Age of Candidate Eligibility

Supporters of lowering the age of candidate eligibility maintain that denying citizens the ability to run for office for several years after they have reached the age of enfranchisement sends the message that young voters are not yet full participatory citizens. Although no serious arguments contend that 16- and 17-year-olds should be able to run for elected office, international guidance points to 18 as the best standard, or at a minimum no later than age 25.[155] Candidate eligibility ages have been coming down in recent decades, with the global average age now at 21.9 for lower houses of national legislatures.[156] The vast majority of countries have candidate ages of 18, 21, or 25 for their lower houses of parliament — with a fairly equal split among these three age thresholds.[157]

Representation is an instrumental means by which interests of younger generations can be brought into policy debates. As academics Daniel Stockemer and Aksel Sunderström argue in their analysis of age representation in parliaments, the "magnitude of [youth] presence in the legislature shapes the degree to which [youth] are able to be spokespersons for other young individuals. Equally important, young parliamentarians might differ from older parliamentarians in terms of agenda setting and the introduction of topics relevant to youths…The presence of young deputies in legislatures may strengthen the representation links of these groups; it might foster positive attitudes among youths toward government and it could increase government responsiveness toward demands from disadvantaged groups."[158] Greater representation in elected bodies is one mechanism by which proponents suggest youth cynicism and apathy toward elected bodies can begin to be overcome.

There are promising indications that countries with relatively lower ages of candidate eligibility do have a greater number of youth in elected positions. Stockemer and Sunderström's analysis of the makeup of national legislatures indicates that "for every year candidate age requirements are lowered, the share of young deputies aged 35 and lower or aged 40 and lower increases by one percentage point or more."[159] This analysis controls for regime type, degree of development, corruption, population age, and the share of Muslims in the population.[160]

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[155] "Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters: Guidelines and Explanatory Report." 2003. Opinion no. 190/2002. European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission). https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2002)023rev-e.

[156] Inter-Parliamentary Union, PARLINE Database.

[157] Calculated average of candidate eligibility ages in lower houses according to Inter-Parliamentary Union PARLINE Database.

[158] Stockemer and Sunderström, 2018, pp. 3

[159] Stockemer and Sunderström, 2018, pp. 20

[160] The determination of these control variables is an extension of established methodologies used to assess women's representation.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union found that "in countries permitting citizens under 21 to stand for election, an average of 33.4 percent of parliamentarians are under 45, compared with 27.3 percent in countries requiring candidates to be 21 or older."[161] Both of these studies demonstrate a clear correlation between lower ages of candidates' eligibility and the election of younger parliamentarians. Though correlation is clear, it is not possible to conclude from these two studies that the expansion of candidate eligibility rights *causes* an increase in the number of youth in elected bodies. That is, policymakers wishing to boost youth political engagement may or may not be able to make that outcome more likely by lowering the age of candidate eligibility.

The question of cause or correlation connects back to the discussion on supply-side versus demand-side expansion of rights. When there is demand for lower candidate eligibility ages, examples indicate that it can be an effective vehicle for getting more young people elected. A case study from Turkey illustrates that when youth do demand additional candidacy rights, they are also likely to take advantage of those rights. A multifaceted advocacy campaign, spearheaded by multiple youth organizations in Turkey, pushed lawmakers to lower the age of candidate eligibility from 30 to 25 in 2006. Lawmakers were quickly responsive to the campaign. In the subsequent 2011 elections, those same advocacy organizations successfully lobbied political parties for the inclusion of younger candidates on party lists and the reduction of party registration fees that might otherwise hinder young candidates from running. During the campaign, the coalition of partners kept youth issues on the agenda and raised the profiles of young candidates, resulting in the successful election of multiple individuals between the ages of 25 and 30 to the national legislature.[162] The success of this effort is laudable, though it is worth noting that an interlocutor at the Turkish parliament indicated that youth who were nominated and elected via the ruling party's list were selected on the basis of their loyalty to ascendant factions in the party. This allegation illustrates how the election of young representatives can serve political interests beyond the representation of youth viewpoints in elected bodies and the dangers of "tokenistic" representation in elected bodies.

In some contexts, lowering the age of candidate eligibility has been done with little political fanfare. In Austria, lowering the age of candidate eligibility from 19 to 18 was part of the same bundle of electoral reforms that lowered the voting age in 2007.[163] Based on the degree of coverage and commentary at that time, lowering candidate eligibility age was a less politically sensational move than lowering the voting age. This is perhaps because the eligibility was only lowered by one year and the harms of such a change are perceived to be lower; even if young people can run for office, they must still be elected by voters or selected by political party leadership to take up their desired seats.

Changes to candidate eligibility ages, however, can be highly contentious. Discussions of removing lower age limits can quickly become tied to conversations to remove all age limits on candidate eligibility, including upper age limits. While the legitimacy of upper age limits is a valid grounds for debate, in both Uganda and Kenya, the move to change candidate eligibility age was tied to the eligibility of specific candidates, (that is, the proponents of the change sought to manipulate the law to engineer desired political outcomes). In late 2017, the Ugandan Parliament voted to amend the constitution to remove an upper age limit on presidential candidates, a move that cleared the way for long-serving incumbent President Yoweri Museveni

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[161] Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016, p. 16.

[162] This case study was researched and highlighted in Lührmann, Anna. 2013. "Enhancing Youth Political Participation Throughout the Electoral Cycle: A Good Practice Guide." United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Electoral%20Systems%20and%20Processes/ENG_UN-Youth_Guide-LR.pdf. pp. 40.

[163] Wirth, 2008.

(who would have been otherwise ineligible to contest the next election) to stay in power indefinitely.[164] Although interlocutors in Uganda advised that there were strong arguments in favor of reconsidering candidate eligibility requirements, particularly a restriction on individuals under the age of 35 contesting certain seats at the district level, ultimately conversations about lowering eligibility ages were overshadowed by the conversation on removing the upper presidential age limit. In Kenya, interlocutors noted that the conversation around candidate age restrictions in the mid-2000s was largely driven by youth who felt that they had been denied political rights. At that time, an upper age limit on candidate eligibility was being debated but was ultimately not included in the subsequent constitution; the addition of an upper limit at that time would have hindered the incumbent president from running in the next election. However, the idea of introducing an upper age limit was once again raised in 2013 as a tactic to render the main opposition leader ineligible to contest the next presidential election.[165]

The impact of lowering the age of candidate eligibility will be informed by other factors that influence the electoral viability of young candidates, such as campaign finance and internal party structures, but as the evidence from Stockemer and Sunderström and the IPU show, lower candidate ages are associated with a greater number of young representatives being elected. Furthermore, lowering the age of candidate eligibility has few associated harms. Proponents of lowering the age of candidate eligibility should be aware of the political context in which this conversation happens, and be prepared to advocate in an environment where opening the door to one electoral reform may open the door to other, potentially less democratic, revisions of electoral laws.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The conversation around lower voter eligibility ages is one that has applicability in consolidated and developing democracies, and the necessity for evaluating the utility of such a change is equally important in both.

KEY CONCLUSION

Demonstrating that a voting age of 16 may boost youth voter turnout, for example, is highly relevant in countries where low youth voter turnout is a concern, where voting is not compulsory and where 18 is a common age to end compulsory education and/or leave the familial home. The connection between lower voting ages and widespread gains in young voters' understanding of citizenship and democracy is dependent on the ability of schools and civic education initiatives to instill these values in conjunction with the act of voting.

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[164] Goitom, Hanibal. 2017. "Uganda: Bill Eliminating Presidential Age Limit and Extending Parliamentary Term Passed." Library of Congress Global Legal Monitor. December 27, 2017. http://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/uganda-bill-eliminating-presidential-age-limit-and-extending-parliamentary-term-passed/.

[165] Mathenge, Oliver. 2013. "Jubilee Plan to Block Raila in 2017." *The Star*, Kenya. August 16, 2013. http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2013/08/16/jubilee-plan-to-block-raila-in-2017_c817741.

Rights-based arguments in favor of such a change may share many key elements, namely the contention that young citizens have the capacity and right to shape the elected institutions that govern their lives. The applicability of different utility-based argument in favor of lower voting ages, however, may have wider variation and must be evaluated in each national context. Adequately supporting the enfranchisement of young voters through education initiatives may be more or less realistic in different national contexts, and may require differing degrees of international support to achieve. Lastly, concerns related to the impact of greater youth enfranchisement on electoral and policy outcomes should be engaged with in good faith. This can be done by investing in additional research to understand the link between youth voters and vote choice, particularly how youth may be uniquely affected by aspects of the political landscape including declining party membership, electoral volatility, and the relatively new viability of extreme parties of the left and right.

In regards to candidate eligibility ages, the correlation with a greater number of youth in elected office is empirically demonstrable and the perceived risks of such a change are less pronounced.

KEY CONCLUSION

Moves to lower candidate eligibility ages will have the greatest impact if young people are involved in advocating for the expansion of this right. An expansion of age-based voter or candidate eligibility rights that is driven by the political center is less likely to realize the gains in youth engagement that it hopes to achieve.

Recommendations for Funders

1. While supporting legal framework development or reform, **funders should encourage review of voter and candidate eligibility ages**. In countries with voter eligibility ages higher than 18, funders should endorse lowering the voter eligibility age to 18 in line with international norms. In countries where there is local initiative to lower voting ages below 18, funders should highlight comparative examples to inform legal framework reform efforts, including the option of lowering the voting age for only subnational elections. They should also stress the value of concurrent educational reforms to support moves to lower voting ages. Funders should support initiatives and dialogue that focuses on aligning candidate eligibility ages more closely with the age of voter enfranchisement, particularly in subnational elections.

2. **Funders should invest in rigorous, data-driven studies that measure multiple aspects of youth political participation across time in order to assess the impact and consequences of initiatives designed to boost youth participation.** The utility of making changes to voter or candidate eligibility ages may not be observable in the short or even medium term, which is why data that allows for comparative study across time is important. Gathering data from before a change is enacted is essential to being able to observe the effect of that change. Funders should encourage the collection of data disaggregated across multiple dimensions so that the experience of youth from different identities and backgrounds can be analyzed.

Source: IRI

Recommendations for Implementers

1. **Support civic education efforts designed to create informed voters that are specifically tailored to contexts where young voters are newly franchised.** Develop context-specific curricula intended to support young voters' ability to make informed choices about their political preferences and increase their awareness and understanding of democratic norms and practices (see inset on page 55 for specific examples). Curricula should be designed to reduce discrepancies in participation rates between young men and young women, as well as other cross-cutting marginalized identities.

2. **Support or initiate dialogue on voter and candidate eligibility ages in subnational elected bodies if decentralization or subnational democracy and governance programming efforts include a review of local or municipal electoral legal frameworks.** Examples of where lower voter or candidate eligibility ages have been successfully implemented in subnational electoral contexts can be shared.

Recommendations for Local Partners

1. **Consult a diverse array of youth and youth groups on the desirability of lowering the voting age; engage youth spokespersons and social networks in outreach efforts to communicate the nature and implications of lowering voter and candidate eligibility ages.** If the move to lower voting or candidate eligibility ages is primarily emanating from political elites out of a desire to increase youth participation, the effort should be broadened to ensure youth are leaders in efforts to enact the change and positioned to take advantage of any expanded rights that are won.

2. **Ensure that an appetite for concurrent investment in civic education exists before pushing to lower voting ages below 18, or tie a requirement to invest in civic education to any proposal to lower voting ages to 16.** In addition to this, policymakers and educators should coordinate to understand the capacity and resources available to public schools to support newly enfranchised young voters.

3. **For national and subnational elected positions, align the age of candidate eligibility with regional and international standards, particularly if there is grassroots demand to do so.** Consider aligning candidate eligibility ages with the age of voter eligibility/legal adulthood.

CIVIC EDUCATION TO SUPPORT VOTING AT 16

Though a comprehensive review of civic education is outside the scope of this report, certain aspects of civic education specific to efforts to support enfranchised 16- and 17-year-olds are important to consider.

Prior to the passage of reforms, conduct an evaluation of teachers' understanding and engagement with political literacy curricula.

Survey results of teachers in Scotland conducted around the time of the voting age being lowered to 16 for the Scottish Independence Referendum of 2014, revealed that although political literacy was already part of the national education guidelines, teachers did not have a clear understanding of what political literacy education entailed and viewed it as less essential than other aspects of civic education such as social responsibility and community involvement.

Issue educational guidance to schools to explicitly address the role of civics education in preparing 16- and 17-year-olds to vote, and clarify expectations for teachers in ways that remove ambiguities around teachers' ability to engage with politically sensitive topics.

Teachers express a fear of being penalized for bringing bias into the classroom, but building political literacy necessitates an engagement with polarizing topics.

Provide specifically tailored teaching materials and lesson plans to all teachers.

For example, Zentrum Polis, a federally funded educational institution associated with the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research in Austria, develops and makes supporting material available online.[166]

Add resources to school budgets to support projects that bring students into contact with community institutions outside of the school.

One aspect of Austria's "Democracy Initiative" was to dedicate funds to support innovative school projects that fostered "learning and living democracy" such as "the setting up of a student's parliament; meetings with politicians, holocaust survivors, asylum seekers, or representatives of various religions; projects focusing on intercultural dialog or equal opportunities."[167]

Consider introducing early, cross-curricular citizenship education courses to prepare young citizens to vote.

In Austria, reforms as part of the "Democracy Initiative" that closely followed the lowering of the voting age to 16 were designed to go into effect for 14- and 15-year-olds, allowing education efforts to reach more students before they divide into different educational tracks, including vocational school. This design is intended to minimize unequal access to citizenship education that might take place if it began after students had already divided into educational tracks.[168]

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[166] Zentrum Polis website. https://www.politik-lernen.at/site/home

[167] Haupt and Turek, n.d. pp. 6.

[168] Ibid, pp. 2.

Austria employs a cross-curricular approach, and Scotland has a dedicated class. In Austria, it was determined that making a separate class would necessitate shifting time away from other subjects, so the decision was made to make citizenship modules more explicit and mandatory as part of history and citizenship education courses.[169]

Consult young people in the design of activities and curricula and be cognizant that young people are not a homogenous group.

Survey results from students and educators in Scotland indicated that adults' perceptions of students' interest in political topics was not accurate.[170] Designing materials that encourage participation necessitates soliciting feedback from youth to understand how to meet them where they are. When designing activities and curricula, educators should also consider the fact that young people are not a homogenous group. Young people's other identities — including gender, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, sexuality, and other factors — mean they have unique experiences, and their needs in relation to civic education and political literacy may not be the same. Programs should be designed to account for these differences and ensure that all types of young people have equitable access to civic education.

Consider making the act of registering to vote and/or going to vote a class activity, or provide optional transportation from school to polling places. For locations where voting takes place during school hours, provide time off from school to go and vote.

Foster political literacy as a central tenet of citizenship education.

Political literacy education should be grounded in international standards and human rights norms; give room for learners to form their own views about what is right and good, and provide space for reasonable disagreement; include moderated, fact-based discussion of controversial topics; help student voters identify their political preferences, and place their own ideology on a political spectrum;[171] use voting as a "vehicle for teaching … young people to make up their minds, be aware of political bias and manipulations and be able to spot when political and any other argument is a distortion of the truth;"[172] and actively consider how aspects of the curricula can better take into account and address inequalities in access due to gender, socio-economic class, disability, or other marginalized identity group.

Austrian citizenship education efforts make "overcoming prejudice, stereotypes, racism, xenophobia, and antisemitism as well as sexism and homophobia" a specific aim.[173] Consideration is also given to the different classroom experiences of students in academic and vocational high schools, resulting in a decision to have a dedicated citizenship education class for students in vocational high schools who spend less time in classrooms, which makes a cross-curricular approach more difficult to implement.

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[169]   De Coster and Sigalis, 2018, pp.69.

[170]   Hill, et al. 2017, pp. 60.

[171]   Studies out of Austria and Croatia, for example, indicated young voters are particularly bad at this. See Wagner et al., 2012, pp. 376; and Ilišin, Vlasta, Dejana Bouillet, Anja Gvozdanović, and Dunja Potočnik. 2013. *Mladi u Vremenu Krize: Prvo Istraživanje IDIZ-a i Zaklade Friedrich Ebert o Mladima (Youth in a Time of Crisis: First IDIZ-Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Youth Survey)*. Zagreb: Institut za društvena istraživanja. http://www.idi.hr/izdavastvo/knjige-i-studije/posebna-izdanja/. pp.117.

[172]   Hill et al., 2016, pp. 61.

[173]   Haupt and Turek, n.d. pp. 4.

CHAPTER 4

YOUTH QUOTAS

YOUTH QUOTAS

Definition

Youth quotas can be used to increase the number of youth elected to national legislatures and/or subnational bodies. The three types of youth quotas used in different countries are:

Reserved seat quotas   **Legislated candidate quotas**   **Political party quotas**

Source: IFES

Key Functions

Rationales for adopting youth quotas differ among countries, and include:

- Increasing youth representation in elected bodies.
- Appealing to young voters as a political strategy.
- Creating electoral systems that help mitigate conflict.

Key Findings

- Thoughtful, enforceable quotas do increase the number of youth elected. However, less successful youth quotas show that effectiveness is highly dependent on design.
- Quotas that acknowledge overlapping marginalized identities, such as gender quotas and youth quotas, can work to reinforce each other in ways that are positive.
- While a well-designed quota can increase descriptive representation of youth, broader gains are dependent on concurrent, concerted efforts to empower youth to be representative voices in elected bodies.

Key Recommendations

- If adopting a youth quota, design a measure compatible with the broader electoral system that is likely to increase the number of youth candidates competing in and winning elections.
- Address acknowledged barriers to youth participation that prevent youth candidates from different backgrounds from competing via youth quotas and ensure quotas recognize youth as a cross-cutting identity.
- Consider promoting subnational youth quotas, ideally combined with targeted capacity investment in youth candidates and legislators at the local level.

Key Data Points

21+ countries
have youth quotas

5: Uganda reserves 5 seats in parliament for youth elected via the national youth council

20: Peru has a 20 percent youth quota for subnational elections.

Raising Their Voices: How effective are pro-youth laws and policies?

Introduction

Youth quotas have emerged as one of the array of legal and policy changes being adopted around the world in an attempt to increase youth representation in elected bodies and encourage increased youth political participation. This chapter seeks to fill a gap in the current understanding of youth quotas by adding to existing knowledge about their design, implementation, and interaction with other aspects of electoral frameworks. It also evaluates the efficacy of youth quotas in increasing youth representation in elected bodies.

There is no identifiable geographic pattern in the trend of countries who have adopted youth quotas, which appear to have emerged organically in a number of different countries in both developed and emerging democracies. Although increasing youth voices in elected bodies is the most visible motivation for adopting youth quotas, the rationale for adopting quotas in some locations has included a political desire to appeal to young voters or, in some countries, as a means to mitigate violence.

Regardless of the rationale for creating a youth quota, the measure is one that is intended to increase the number of youth holding seats in elected bodies. Of the world's approximately 45,000 members of parliament (MPs), 1.9 percent are under the age of 30, 14.2 percent are under age 40, and 26 percent are under the age of 45 — a slight increase across the same age brackets since 2014.[174] Lack of youth representation, when combined with low rates of conventional political participation, reinforce one another to engender youth populations that are increasingly alienated from political parties and institutions. Concurrently, political actors fail to address the interests of youth because youth are not participating as voters, nor are they represented in elected office.[175] One avenue to interrupt this cycle, then, is the introduction of more youth into political office.

Furthermore, marginalized groups need *representative* members in elected office in order to improve their political status; if a quota merely produces young office holders who are beholden to party bosses and unrepresentative of the broader concerns of youth, then the quota quickly loses meaning. Descriptive representation of youth (more youth elected) is a very different measure than whether youth are empowered as leaders. Nonetheless, increasing the descriptive representation of youth is a necessary condition for elevating youth voices in elected bodies, and quotas are one possible avenue for achieving that end.[176]

Existing research on youth quotas is extremely limited. Accessible information on the structure, implementation and impact of youth quotas is difficult to obtain for many countries that have them, and there is no comprehensive database of countries that employ them. The IPU's 2014 and 2016 reports on *Youth Participation in National Parliaments* broke new ground on the topic of youth quotas, with baseline information about 15 countries' youth quotas. This information was gathered through surveys that were distributed to national parliaments, but did not ask detailed questions about youth quota arrangements. Some of the survey respondents that reported the presence of a youth quota in their country provided nothing more than an affirmation that this mechanism is present in some form. Information on the topic of youth quotas is limited to the degree that some of these affirmative answers cannot be readily verified through available primary or secondary sources. Youth quotas are likely more prevalent than

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[174] "Youth Participation in National Parliaments." 2016. Inter-Parliamentary Union. https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2016-07/youth-participation-in-national-parliaments. pp. 6.

[175] See Chapter One of this report. p. 6.

[176] For further discussion of why youth representation matters, see Chapter Three of this report, page 33.

generally believed, with this study finding 21 countries with some form of youth quota, and it is likely that there are additional countries with voluntary party youth quotas and/or local level quotas that are not here identified.

The limited academic literature on the topic of youth quotas is primarily focused on a philosophical exploration of the idea of intergenerational justice in *aging societies* — i.e., a hypothetical exploration of the potential impact of youth quotas in developed democracies.[177] However, the most numerically significant and innovative youth quotas exist in countries outside of the Global North, and this organic emergence of youth quotas in ways that are not emulative of consolidated democracies may be a factor as to why they have remained understudied.

Methodology

After conducting a comprehensive review of existing literature on youth quotas, this report identified an initial slate of countries for deeper analysis. Initial deskwork included a review of electoral legal frameworks and a consultation of secondary sources where available, though these sources are limited. Interlocutors in Kyrgyzstan, Kenya, and the Philippines provided perspective on those countries' experience with youth quotas, and a review of Spanish-language literature was used to gain greater understanding of Peru's youth quota. Monitoring global news sources over the course of nine months enabled the addition of several previously unidentified (internationally) age quotas.[178] Given that Uganda has one of the longest continuous running experiences with a reserved seat youth quota at both national and subnational levels, this report conducted fieldwork in Kampala to better understand the evolution and utility of the measure in promoting descriptive and substantive youth representation. Input was gathered from more than 40 government, national youth council, political party, and civil society interlocutors through semi-structured individual and group interviews. In-person interviews with interlocutors at the Sri Lankan electoral commission and with Sri Lankan youth advocates were also conducted to gain a perspective on the country's experience with its youth quota.

Given that little basic information exists on the nature of current youth quotas, this chapter begins with a global snapshot of where and in what form such measures exist. The degree of descriptive detail included is deliberate; this information is not available in other sources, and brief synopses can be misleading. Descriptive information of this nature has not been aggregated in other sources and can provide a baseline for funders, implementers, and local partners to understand what existing examples look like. The chapter then transitions to an analysis of the efficacy and implications of different quota models, by looking at youth quotas' success in increasing the number of youth in elected office, considerations for designing an inclusive quota, and the differing rationale for choosing to adopt a youth quota. Thereafter, the chapter will explore whether greater youth representation in elected bodies produces better policy outcomes for youth. A case study of the Ugandan experience provides an exploration, in greater depth, of these various considerations in practice, including an acknowledgement of the impact of the enabling environment on youth candidacy and election. The chapter concludes with recommendations and considerations for local and international actors.

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[177] See Tremmel, Jörg, Antony Mason, Petter Haakenstad Godli, and Igor Dimitrijoski, eds. 2015. *Youth Quotas and Other Efficient Forms of Youth Participation in Ageing Societies*. Springer International Publishing. http://www.springer.com/us/book/9783319134307; and Jahan, Fatema Rouson. n.d. '"Youth Quotas and Youth-i-Zation' or 'Youth Leadership and Youth Movement'? A Response to Age Demographics." Unpublished. https://generationengerechtigkeit.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/jahan_02.pdf.

[178] This monitoring was limited to English language news sources.

Source: NDI

Global Snapshot: Youth Quotas

Youth quotas can be used in both national legislatures and subnational bodies. The age threshold to which youth quotas are tied varies across countries, with 30 and 35 being the most common ceilings, though Morocco sets the age limit for their reserved seats at 40 and the Cypriot Democratic Rally Party sets the age threshold for their party quota at 45. While definitions of youth differ from country to country, quotas that set an age threshold at 40 or 45 may do little to elevate voices that are not already being heard. The German Green Party takes a different approach; rather than set an age threshold, in several state-level party statutes a "newcomer quota" has been adopted with the goal of encouraging the election of younger candidates by limiting incumbency advantages that can keep young people out of elected bodies. This rule dictates that one out of every three consecutive places on the party's list must be filled by a candidate who has not served in a state, federal, or European parliament, with a primary goal of increasing young people's representation.[179]

Although youth quotas have been in place in a limited number of countries for several decades, new youth quotas have emerged in some form in more than a half-dozen countries in the past decade. It is plausible that as gender quotas for legislative bodies have been adopted in greater numbers around the world, the use of quotas to include other historically excluded groups has become an increasingly viable policy approach. Recommendations encouraging the consideration and adoption of youth quotas have emerged in a number of high profile youth publications in recent years.[180]

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[179]   Reiser, Marion. 2014. "The Universe of Group Representation in Germany: Analysing Formal and Informal Party Rules and Quotas in the Process of Candidate Selection." *International Political Science Review* 35 (1): 55–66. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512113507732. pp. 59.

[180]   "Youth Participation in National Parliaments." 2014. Inter-Parliamentary Union; "Youth Participation in National Parliaments, 2016; United Nations Development Programme. 2017. Youth Participation in Electoral Processes — Handbook for Electoral Management Bodies. http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/youth-participation-in-electoral-processes-a-handbook-for-embs.html; Lührmann, Anna. 2013. "Enhancing Youth Political Participation Throughout the Electoral Cycle: A Good Practice Guide." United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Electoral%20Systems%20and%20Processes/ENG_UN-Youth_Guide-LR.pdf.

Reserved seat quotas
Legislative candidate quotas
Political party quotas

Definitions

As with gender quotas, youth quotas primarily take three forms:

Reserved seat quotas – In which a specific number of seats are designated for representatives under a certain age threshold, generally elected via special electoral rules adopted for the purpose of filling these seats.

Examples: Kenya, Morocco, Rwanda, Uganda

Legislated candidate quotas – Legally required quotas for how many individuals under a certain age must be put forward as candidates by a party. The total can be a minimum number or a blanket percentage, without reference to list order or list order for youth candidates can be specified.

Examples: Egypt, Gabon,* Kyrgyzstan, Peru, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Vietnam*

Political party quotas – Voluntary quotas adopted by individual political parties, either informally applied or officially adopted in party governing statutes, which commit the party to putting a certain number of youth candidates on their party lists or competing in constituencies. These party rules can specify requirements for list order or not.

Examples: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Mozambique,* Nicaragua, Pakistan, Senegal, Sweden, Zimbabwe

*Self-reported - unverified

Reserved Seat Quotas

Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, and Morocco all have reserved seat quotas for youth, but they each use different legal mechanisms. In Uganda, five seats are elected via the National Youth Council structure; four seats represent regional districts and one is a country-wide seat to be held by a female youth.[181] In Rwanda, the National Youth Council is also used as the vehicle to identify and elect youth representatives to fill two reserved youth seats in the Chamber of Deputies.[182] The 2010 Kenyan Constitution created 12 seats in the lower house for representatives from an array of marginalized groups, including youth, persons with disabilities, and workers, with the list of nominees alternating between male and female candidates. Candidates to fill these seats are nominated by political parties, and the multi-group nature of the quota means that no minimum number of seats are guaranteed to youth.[183] Additionally, two reserved seats for youth exist in the Kenyan Senate, one man and one woman, and four seats are held for youth in every county assembly.[184] Morocco increased the number of seats in its Chamber of Representatives in 2011 to create reserved seats for both women and youth; 30 seats are reserved for men under the age of 40.[185]

Factors for consideration in the design of a reserved seat quota include the number of seats reserved, which may take into account the overall size of the legislative body, the comparative number of seats held in reserved-seat quotas for other underrepresented or interest groups, and the size and nature of the constituency that youth seats are intended to represent. Another factor for consideration is the age threshold for designating youth seats and whether a candidate must be under that age for the duration of their term in office or only at the time of election. Furthermore, whether reserved seats consider youths' cross-sectional identities, in particular how gender considerations are integrated into the reserved seats, is an important consideration. If a reserved seat quota is in place, measures to ensure seats are available to both young men and young women are strongly encouraged.

Legislated Candidate Quotas

Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia, and Egypt are examples of countries that have legislated candidate quotas for youth at the national level. In 2010, Kyrgyz electoral law was changed to require political parties to have 15 percent of their candidate lists comprised of individuals under the age of 35, with the requirement that five youth candidates must be included in the first 65 names of each party's list.[186] The Kyrgyz Central Election Commission has the power to reject lists that do not comply.[187] Tunisia also specifies list order in their legislated candidate quota, with the requirement that one of the top four candidates on each party's list for the national legislature must be under the age of 35. Parties must comply with this requirement in order to receive the full amount of public campaign financing.[188] In addition to the national-level quota, Tunisia also requires one of the top three and two of the top six candidates on party lists for local

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[181] Uganda's youth quota experience is explored in more depth in a case study on p. 100–102.

[182] The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, 2003, Article 75.

[183] Constitution of Kenya Article 97 sec. 1(c).

[184] Constitution of Kenya Article 98 sec. 1(c).

[185] Morocco Organic Law 1-11-165, 14 October 2011, Article 23.

[186] The Constitutional Law: On Presidential and Jogorku Kenesh Elections in the Kyrgyz Republic Article 60(3). Available English translations of this law include only the specification that 15 percent of candidates must be youth, but interlocutors in Kyrgyzstan confirmed that the list order provision is present in the law.

[187] Ibid., Articles (61)3 and (61)7.

[188] Tunisian Elections and Referendum Act, 2014, Article 25.

and regional elections to be under the age of 35, one male and one female.[189] In Egypt, which employs a parallel electoral system, a minimum of 16 out of 120 seats elected via closed-list are reserved for individuals between the age of 25 and 35 on the day of candidature.[190] The electoral law states that this provision is only in effect for the first election following the promulgation of the law, which took place in 2015. Whether the mandate for this quota will be renewed for future parliamentary elections is uncertain at the time of writing this report. A subnational quota requiring 25 percent of seats on local councils to be held by individuals under the age of 35 is stipulated in the Egyptian Constitution.[191] The Philippines, like Kenya, includes youth as one sector among a list of marginalized and underrepresented groups recognized in their electoral law.

Legislated candidate quotas that are limited to subnational seats are also an option that has been employed in countries looking to engineer increased youth representation in elected bodies. There is a strong argument that the pipeline for national leaders starts at the local level, so getting younger people into office locally is a viable way to support capable young leaders at the national level. As mentioned above, Tunisia, Uganda, Kenya, and Egypt have both national and subnational youth quotas. It is also possible, however, for a country to have only a subnational quota with no national counterpart. Peru, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka are all examples of a variation on this arrangement. Peru's youth quota, referred to as a "youth tithe" (*Diezmo Juvenil*), requires 20 percent of candidates in all local and regional elections to be under the age of 29.[192] In Pakistan, at least one province has adopted a five percent youth quota.[193] In 1990, Sri Lanka introduced a quota requiring 40 percent of candidates in local elections to be under the age of 35.[194] In 2012, the mandate to include youth was significantly lessened, as the quota was changed from one that specified that 40 percent of candidates "must" be youth to one that stated 25 percent of seats "may" be held for youth and women combined. In 2017, the 25 percent quota was made mandatory for women only, while a 30 percent youth quota remained voluntary and thus unenforceable.[195] Comparatively, several of the subnational quotas in existence — 20 percent in Peru, 40 percent (now 30 percent) in Sri Lanka, 25 percent in Egypt — are more numerically significant than quotas seen at the national level. These comparatively large percentages suggest that the adoption of youth quotas at the subnational level might be a more politically viable option, or seen as a less risky option, than instituting a quota at the national level.

Similar to a reserved seat quota, a legislated candidate quota must take into account the numerical size of the quota (generally a percentage or set number of positions on a party list), age threshold, the age threshold for consideration as a youth candidate, and how to effectively integrate gender considerations in a way that promotes the candidacy of both male and female youth. Some considerations, however, are different. The design of a legislated candidate quota should also consider provisions that specify list order to ensure youth candidate are placed in winnable list positions, as well as an enforcement mechanism by which party compliance with

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[189] Tunisian Law on Local and Regional Elections, Article 49(10).

[190] Decree-Law No. 46 of 2014 "On the Enactment of the Law on House of Representatives," Article 5.

[191] 2014 Egyptian Constitution, Article 180.

[192] Peru Law no. 28869 on promoting youth participation in municipal lists, 2006, Article 10; Law no. 29470 2009 modifying various articles of Law no. 27683 on Regional Elections, 2009, Article 12(2).

[193] Sindh Province Local Government (Second Amendment) Bill 2016 See, "Local Government System: Bill Passed to Increase Female Reserved Seats to 33." 2016. *The Express Tribune*. April 27, 2016. https://tribune.com.pk/story/1092185/local-government-system-bill-passed-to-increase-female-reserved-seats-to-33/.

[194] Local Authorities Elections (Amendment) Act No. 25 of 1990 art. 3.

[195] Local Authorities Elections (Amendment) Act No. 23 of 2012 art. 22 sec. 3 and Local Authorities Elections (Amendment) Act No. 16 of 2017 art. 8 secs. 8–9.

the quota is ensured. The most common enforcement mechanisms are access to public funding or a rejection of party lists that do not comply with the quota. Furthermore, a subnational quota may be considered in addition to a national-level quota, or on its own. It may be more politically viable for a subnational quota to have a higher percentage of candidate spots required for youth candidates than a national quota.

Political Party Quotas

Youth quotas voluntarily adopted by political parties can be enshrined in party rules or informally adopted. Voluntary party quotas are the only type of youth quota currently in use in Europe, and have been adopted by parties in Cyprus, Sweden, and Croatia.[196] The German Green Party, mentioned above, puts its newcomer quota at one out of every three candidates.[197] Zimbabwe's Movement for Democratic Change Party (MDC) chose to adopt a quota of 20 percent for candidates under the age of 35 in its party constitution.[198] The Senegal Socialist Party also has a 20 percent quota for youth.[199] In the Azad Kashmir region of Pakistan, the ruling party has committed to reserving 25 percent of seats for youth,[200] providing an example of a subnational, voluntary party youth quota. In all of these cases, the impact of party quotas on the number of youth elected is contingent upon the party's electoral success and on the party's definition of youth. This can explain, for example, why Cyprus — despite having two parties with youth quotas — ranks next to last globally in the number of parliamentarians under the age of 40.[201] It is likely that other countries not here identified have parties that have adopted voluntary youth quotas, either formally in their party governance documents or informally; given the lack of reporting and study on this topic, it is not possible to verify the positions of all political parties globally on this issue.

Given that quotas of this variety are voluntary, the considerations for design are different than quotas mandated by law. Party quotas should consider the same core elements as reserved seat and legislated quotas — the desired size of the quota, the applicable age threshold, and integration of youth as a cross-cutting identity that takes gender or other marginalized identities into account. Like legislated list quotas, in order to be meaningful, a quota should include list-order specifications and should be enshrined in party governance documents. The inclusion of a quota in party statutes, as opposed to less formal pledges, enables members of the party to challenge party leadership if quotas are not observed in practice. Additionally, subnational voluntary party quotas can also be considered where relevant.

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[196] In Cyprus, Democratic Rally Party reserves 20 percent of its seats for candidates under 45, outlined in Sec. 3.20 of their party constitution and the Movement for Social Democracy self-reported to the IPU in 2014 that it has a 20 percent quota for youth under 35. In their 2016 report, IPU reports that in Sweden "multiple parties across the ideological spectrum have adopted formal or informal policies to include young people on their candidate lists" (p. 17). In their 2014 and 2016 report, the IPU reports that Croatia's Social Democratic Party has had a youth quota since 2004, though this is not verifiable through available secondary sources.

[197] Reiser, 2014, pp. 59.

[198] Tafirenyika, Mugove. 2018. "Thousands Submit CVs to MDC." *DailyNews Live*. April 9, 2018. https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2018/04/09/thousands-submit-cvs-to-mdc.

[199] The 2014 and 2016 Inter-Parliamentary Union reports include references to Senegal's quota, though they indicate that this information was not gathered through the parliamentary survey and no other source is provided (2014, p. 16). The existence of this quota could not be independently verified through available secondary sources.

[200] Shafqat, Kamran. 2016. "PM AJK Seeks Structural Reforms, Reaffirms 25% Quota to Young People in LB Polls." *StateViews English* (blog). December 28, 2016. https://stateviews.com.pk/pm-ajk-seeks-structural-reforms-reaffirms-25-quota-young-people-lb-polls/.

[201] Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016, p. 25.

Do Youth Quotas Increase the Number of Young People Elected to Public Office?

At their most fundamental level, youth quotas are intended to result in greater representation of young people in elected office. The existing literature on quotas[202] certainly suggests that quotas *should* result in this outcome, though factors such as the type of electoral system,[203] enforcement mechanisms, and mandates in regard to list order play a significant role in affecting how many youth candidates are ultimately elected.

While the IPU does point to a correlation between countries with youth quotas and a higher-than-average level of youth representation, particularly for countries with reserved seat quotas,[204] the data is not as convincing as it may seem at first glance. Although Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda have reserved seat quotas and also have higher than average rates of youth representation in national legislatures, there is limited foundation to attribute the cause of these high rates of youth representation to the small number of reserved seats each country allots to youth. The inclusion of these examples in such a small sample make the impact of a youth quota look much larger than it may be, and the IPU analysis did not control for any confounding factors. A 2018 quantitative, global analysis of the impact of youth quotas on youth representation in elected bodies published in the *European Political Science Review* concluded that the existence of a youth quota does *not* correlate with a greater number of youth in elected bodies.[205] However, the authors of this study also fell afoul of the limited and incomplete data available on youth quotas, as their analysis worked with an incomplete and outdated list of only 11 countries with youth quotas, calling into question the validity of their null finding.[206]

Given the vast diversity among youth quota designs, the attempt to draw global conclusions about their efficacy based on existing examples is limited in its usefulness. As with other types of quotas, youth quotas have the potential to result in a greater number of youth elected when they are numerically significant, have enforcement mechanisms in cases of noncompliance, have list order requirements, and/or do not dilute youth interests by combining youth with other marginalized groups in ways that limit the likelihood that youth are elected. Few youth quotas have a meaningful combination of these elements, yet some quotas have been successful at bringing more youth into elected office, providing illustrative examples of good practices as well as common pitfalls.

In Kyrgyzstan, researchers found that the 15 percent quota in place did succeed in boosting youth representation, even though the list order requirement did little to ensure advantageous placement of youth candidates on party lists. The authors note that "Although youth activists have pointed out that many parties viewed [the quota] as a formality and put young candidates at the bottom of their party lists, the requirement did raise the number of young politicians in

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[202] Given the lack of study on youth quotas, the larger body of literature on gender quotas serves as a comparison point. Research shows that gender quotas have been a highly successful tool to increase the presence of women in political institutions, particularly in countries where women face significant barriers to entry. Research also suggests that quotas are more effective in proportional representation systems than majority systems although legislated reserved seats have also proven effective. See, Dahlerup, Drude, Zeina Hilal, Nana Kalandadze, and Rumbidzai Kandawasvika-Nhundu. 2013. "Atlas of Electoral Gender Quotas." Institute for Democratic and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Inter-Parliamentary Union, and Stockholm University. https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/atlas-of-electoral-gender-quotas.pdf.

[203] Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016 notes that "Countries with PR systems elect around twice as many young MPs as those with mixed systems and 15–20 times as many as those with majoritarian systems," p.7.

[204] Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016, p.23.

[205] Stockemer, Daniel, and Aksel Sundström. 2018. "Age Representation in Parliaments: Can Institutions Pave the Way for the Young?" *European Political Science Review* 10 (3): 467–90. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773918000048.

[206] The authors cite their data on youth quotas as a combination of information from Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2014; Lührmann, 2013; and International IDEA's QuotaProject website https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas.

the national legislature to 10 percent."[207] Interlocutors at the Election Commission of Sri Lanka advised that when the mandatory 40 percent youth quota for municipal elections was in place in the country from 1990 to 2012, it was a mechanism that brought more youth into elected office, some of whom eventually made it into national office (though they may no longer have met the definition of youth by the time they did).[208] No nationwide data is yet available to determine how changing from a mandatory 40 percent quota to an optional 30 percent has affected the number of youth elected.

Peru's 20 percent subnational youth quota has proven to be highly successful in encouraging a greater number of youth candidates to compete as well as in the actual election of youth candidates. The percentage of youth candidates more than doubled after the passage of the law, with almost one in three candidates competing for municipal office being under the age of 29 by 2014. For regional elections, youth candidacy more than tripled in the same time span, with candidates under age 29 making up approximately 30 percent of all candidates by 2014 — meaning both municipal and regional electoral lists significantly surpassed the 20 percent requirement set in the quota. After the youth quota was first implemented in 2006, the number of youth elected increased 60.5 percent (from 1,004 nationwide to 1,643) and has remained steady at this higher rate.[209] The success at increasing the number of youth elected, not merely the number of youth running, is notable because Peru's youth quota does not specify list order and youth are disproportionately placed in the last places on party lists.[210] Even with this disadvantage, more youth are still being elected.

The two-phase introduction of Peru's quota also provides interesting insight into the electoral impact of youth quotas beyond the minimum levels mandated by a quota. In 2006, the 20 percent requirement for candidates under age 29 was limited to municipal councilors and expanded to include regional councilors in 2009.[211] In 2006, Peru's quota was in place for municipal elections, but not for regional elections — however, the number of youth regional councilors elected in 2006 increased even without their own quota (from four percent of regional councilors in 2000 to more than eight percent in 2006). When the regional quota was applied for the first time in 2010, the number jumped again to 14 percent.[212] This suggests that the existence of a quota at the lower municipal level in 2006 may have affected candidate and voter behavior at the regional level, though these gains were expanded further by the introduction of a quota at the regional level in the next electoral cycle. However, the impact does not appear to be filtering up to the national level, where Peru has only 12.3 percent of parliamentarians under the age of 40, placing it in the bottom third of countries globally.[213]

[207] Esengul, Chinara, Baglan Mamaev, and Natalia Yefimova-Trilling. 2014. "Youth and Public Policy in Kyrgyzstan." *Youth Policy Review Series*. Youth Policy Press. http://www.youthpolicy.org/pdfs/Youth_Public_Policy_Kyrgyzstan_En.pdf. pp. 137.

[208] No data on the number of youth elected to subnational regions in Sri Lanka exists to confirm this claim, though interlocutors did provide anecdotal examples of national parliamentarians who had started their careers due to the youth quota. Interestingly, some interlocutors in Sri Lanka said that it was national parliamentarians who had been originally elected via youth quota who were most supportive of removing the quota as, now that they were in power, they did not want to risk losing it to young up-and-coming candidates.

[209] "Estudio de Bienestar y Políticas de Juventud En El Perú." 2017. OCDE Centro de Desarrollo. pp. 133. http://www.oecd.org/social/inclusivesocietiesanddevelopment/Youth%20Well-being_Peru_FINAL_Spanish_version-web.pdf

[210] Rodríguez, Ernesto, and Julio Corcuera. 2015. *Subjetividades diversas: análisis de la situación política, social y económica de las juventudes peruanas*. Santiago de Surco (Lima, Peru), Secretaria Nacional del Juventud (Montevideo, Uruguay), y Oficina Regional de Ciencias para América Latina de la UNESCO. pp. 303.

[211] Reyes, Christian Pardo. 2015. "A Democratic Revolution for Youth: The 'Youth Tithe' as a Doctrine." *Intergenerational Justice Review* 7 (2).

[212] Edson Baldeón, "Cuota Joven y Cuota de Género," in Rodríguez and Corcuera. 2015, pp. 301.

[213] Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016.

The fact that youth quotas have not resulted in the election of a greater number of youth in all cases does not mean that they *cannot* do so. As successful youth quotas show, as well as many instances of gender quotas, thoughtful, enforceable quotas do increase the number of youth elected. However, less successful and unsuccessful youth quota examples show that impact is highly dependent on design.

Designing an Inclusive Quota

When countries have multiple quotas for different marginalized groups in place, it is necessary to consider the interplay among these different requirements to ensure that seats reserved for youth do not, by default, become seats for young men. For example, in countries that have more sizable quotas to ensure women's representation than those that promote youth, young women can choose, or be pushed, to compete via women's quotas instead of via youth quotas. Interlocutors in Kyrgyzstan acknowledge this happens to some degree, with women choosing to advance via the women's quota instead of via the youth quota. In general, the existence of women's seats can create a mentality that women, including young women, should *only* compete for seats that are reserved for women, creating widespread resistance to women who are taking "men's seats."[214] Electing young women via a gender quota rather than via a youth quota is not necessarily problematic, as long as they are provided opportunities to contend and not excluded from candidature by older women. However, data does indicate that age discrimination crosses gender lines; globally, a plurality of female MPs are 51–60 and while men outnumber women at every age, this is particularly an issue for younger women who face dual discrimination for age and gender.[215]

However, if designed well, quotas that acknowledge overlapping marginalized identities can work to reinforce each other in ways that are positive. Tunisia is an example of this, where 50 percent of candidates for 2018 municipal elections were women and half of those candidates were under the age of 35.[216] Tunisia's youth quota is able to achieve this parity because it is integrated with a gender requirement. As noted earlier in the report, one of the top three and two of the top six candidates on party lists for local and regional elections must be youth, one male and one female. Though the Kenyan Constitution's grouping of youth with other underrepresented sectors is not effective for guaranteeing that youth are elected, there is acknowledgement of ways in which underrepresented groups reflect multiple identities, by requiring lists for the reserved seats "to be composed of alternating male and female candidates."[217]

There is however a risk at the other end of the spectrum, and an important caveat to the success of Peru's youth quota that is highlighted above. In Peru, 68 percent of youth candidates and 58 percent of elected youth politicians were women in 2014,[218] suggesting that political parties are using young women to fill both gender and age quotas on the party list. This has the effect of preserving a greater number of advantageous positions on party lists for older men by combining women and youth so that these candidates fill fewer positions on the list, often the

[214] Refki, Dina, Diana Abbas, Bilge Avci, Eunhyoung Kim, Iris Berger, Sue Faerman, George Mugisha Barenzi, Robina Mirembe, Solomon Asiimwe, and Eunice Akullo. n.d. "Mapping the Substantive Representation of Women in the Ugandan Parliament." Center for Women in Government and Civil Society, Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, University of Albany, and Nkumba University. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Uganda%20Report.pdf.

[215] Interparliamentary Union, 2016, p. 12–13.

[216] Vogelstein, Rachel. 2018. "Women This Week: Making History in Tunisia." *Council on Foreign Relations* (blog). May 11, 2018. https://www.cfr.org/blog/women-week-making-history-tunisia.

[217] 2010 Kenyan Constitution, Article 97.

[218] OCDE Centro de Desarrollo, 2017, pp. 133.

bottom of the list. Furthermore, if quotas for different groups are seen to be in competition with one another, rather than reinforcing one another, a youth quota might be jettisoned in favor of another type of quota. This dynamic was at play in Sri Lanka in 2017 when the decision was made to make a subnational 25 percent quota for women mandatory while leaving the youth quota voluntary. The Minister of Provincial Councils and Local Government, who was involved with the decision, said "It's not possible to do everything by law. We have already given 25 percent quota to female representatives and we cannot give another 25 percent for youth again."[219] Designing quotas that acknowledge youth and gender as cross-cutting identities can help to alleviate the perception that they are competing identities.

A design element that is not successful at ensuring the election of youth are quotas that pool together positions for youth with a wide array of other underrepresented or marginalized groups. This is illustrated in the case of Kenya, which constitutionally mandates that 12 seats in the lower house are reserved for youth, persons with disabilities, and workers; interlocutors in Kenya advised that in 2013, five youth were put forward to fill these seats, but in 2017 only one youth was represented in the legislature via this mechanism. The Philippines, like Kenya, includes youth as one sector among a list of marginalized and underrepresented groups recognized in their electoral law. Although the Philippines is cited as an example of a country with a legislated candidate quota for youth,[220] this chapter does not consider the provisions in the country's electoral law to qualify as a youth quota. It is, however, an illustrative example of how measures that on their surface may seem to increase the number of youth elected might not achieve this end in practice. The Philippine lower house is elected via a parallel system, with 20 percent of seats elected via party list proportional representation in a single nation-wide constituency.[221] Previously, half of those seats were designated for "marginalized and underrepresented sectors, organizations, and parties"[222] which included youth as one of 12 recognized groups. A 2013 Supreme Court ruling opened these seats for competition by any group or party,[223] effectively removing the reservation of these seats for marginalized groups, though the seats are competed under special electoral rules that limit the competitive advantage of larger parties.[224] Even prior to this Supreme Court ruling, this method of competition was not effective at increasing the number of youth elected as, in order to compete, youth candidates had to seek accreditation as a sectoral interest group and compete as a party. The youth parties that did compete in this manner were not successful in garnering sufficient votes to elect any candidates.[225] In the case of the Philippines, the failure to recognize youth as a cross-cutting identify ultimately undercut its ability to promote the election of youth. In listing youth as an interest group distinct from the urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, overseas workers, and the eight other recognized sectors, the provision fails to acknowledge that youth are also a subset of these other marginalized sectors. Requiring young candidates to organize and run based solely on their identity as youth (and a very narrow band at that, as "youth" was defined from age 25

[219] Nafeel, Nushka. 2017. "Exclusion of Youth from Politics." *Daily News*. September 25, 2017. http://www.dailynews.lk/2017/09/25/features/129195/exclusion-youth-politics.

[220] Inter-Parliamentary Union 2014, 2016; United Nations Development Programme, 2017.

[221] The first iteration of which was envisioned in the 1987 Constitution with a sunset clause after three elections following the passage of the constitution (Article VI Section 5(2) the provision was then incorporated into the Party List System Act of 1998. http://www.chanrobles.com/republicactno7941.htm#REPUBLIC%20ACT%20NO.%207941

[222] Philippines Republic Act no. 7941, Party List System Act, 1998.

[223] Romero, Purple. 2013. "SC Shakes up Party List in New Verdict." Rappler.com. April 5, 2013. https://www.rappler.com/nation/25502-sc-partylist-system-is-not-solely-for-marginalized.

[224] Party-list System Act, 1998.

[225] Velasco, Djorina. 2005. "Rejecting 'Old-Style' Politics? Youth Participation in the Philippines" in *Go! Young Progressives in Southeast Asia*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. pp. 91–92.

— the age of candidate eligibility — to age 30), this model missed a larger opportunity to find ways to integrate youth candidates into existing party structures. Doing so could have provided young candidates with the resources, organizing experience, and mentorship that would have been essential for their election, as well as for their success as leaders once in office.

The failure to recognize youth as a cross-cutting identity in the design of a quota is one that can undermine its usefulness in getting more youth elected. The design of a quota that takes both gender and youth into consideration, for example, requires meticulous consideration to ensure that the quota functions as intended. Grouping youth together as a distinct marginalized group in a long list of marginalized groups can be entirely ineffective in bringing more youth into elected office. Cases where list order or reserved seats include requirements related to both age and gender, such as Tunisia, can be much more successful, as they guarantee seats to youth, while also ensuring that those seats go to both young men and young women.

Differing Rationales for Quotas

Actors do have reasons for adopting quotas beyond a desire for inclusive representation. The result might be the same — more youth in elected office — but the motivators are potentially more sustainable when they align with actors' self-interest. Political interest or mitigation of conflict can be powerful drivers for the adoption of a youth quota.

Political parties' decisions to adopt youth quotas or decisions about where to place youth candidates on party lists can be grounded in political strategy, rather than by an externally mandated principle of enhancing the inclusivity of elected bodies. Parties' adoption of a youth quota can be linked to a desire to appeal to young voters and boost youth voter turnout. Zimbabwe's MDC Alliance is an example of this tactic. The party adopted a strategy of actively courting youth participation, and their voluntary commitment to filling 20 percent of their seats with youth candidates was part of a strategy to demonstrate their commitment to youth and court young voters.[226] List placement of youth candidates can also be a strategy that parties use in an attempt to boost voter turnout. A Norwegian[227] interlocutor who was elected to municipal office at the age of 18 noted that parties place young candidates in competitive, but not guaranteed spots on the list as an incentive for those young candidates to campaign and mobilize their peers to turnout to vote. An additional benefit of positioning youth candidates as a vehicle to drive voter turnout from younger voters is that, if effective, increasing turnout of young voters could motivate all candidates and lawmakers in future electoral cycles to address policy positions that appeal to youth as a matter of political advantage.

Party youth wings can be effective mobilizers to encourage the adoption of youth quotas within their own parties, as noted in the chapter of this report on youth wings, page 77. Investing in capacity building for youth leaders within parties, including their ability to advocate effectively, can be a means to persuade party leaders of the political benefits of promoting youth leadership in the party. The adoption of youth quotas to be used during a general election, or even to ensure youth representation in parties' internal governance structures, can contribute to the strengthening of inter-party democracy as well.

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[226] See, for example, "Chamisa Addresses Aspiring Parliamentary Candidates, Insists on Quotas." 2018. The Zimbabwe Mail. April 27, 2018. https://www.thezimbabwemail.com/parliament-parliament/chamisa-addresses-aspiring-parliamentary-candidates-insists-on-quotas/; Tafirenyika, 2018; "Chamisa to Fight Zimbabwe Polls for Opposition Party." News24. March 1, 2018. https://www.news24.com/Africa/Zimbabwe/chamisa-to-fight-zimbabwe-polls-for-opposition-party-20180301.

[227] Norway does not have a youth quota.

Another motivation — one that is not unique to youth quotas but is distinct from common arguments in favor of gender quotas — is the use of electoral provisions pertaining to youth as part of a conscious effort to create electoral systems that aid in the mitigation of conflict. In Sri Lanka, the adoption of a local-level 40 percent youth quota in 1990 was one measure explicitly adopted out of a desire to address the youth alienation and marginalization that was seen to be a driver of ongoing conflict.[228] In the Philippines, although youth were only one of 12 recognized marginalized and underrepresented sectors, the rationale for the representation of these groups was a desire to mitigate regional insurgencies through expanded representation and deter social unrest seen to stem in part from elite dominance of the legislature.[229]

The inclusion of sunset clauses to accompany youth quotas is another interesting phenomenon that might be an indication that a quota is intended to address an immediate need, such as conflict-mitigation, rather than to foster long term-investment in inclusive electoral practices. Such a clause was included in the 1987 Philippine Constitution's introduction of their sectoral voting system,[230] indicating that the provision would lapse after three elections (it was renewed through legislation after the initial expiration). As noted previously, quotas outlined in Egypt's 2014 Parliamentary Electoral Law were given force for only one election after passage of the law, and whether they will be implemented in future elections is unknown,[231] suggesting the intent of the quota is not to foster long-term investment (in youth or other groups covered by quotas), but as a tool to assuage societal tensions that might undermine government legitimacy.

A perception that youth quotas serve only an abstract idea of inclusion would be inaccurate. Parties and lawmakers in some countries have adopted youth quotas to serve immediate societal or political needs. The adoption of a quota for a purpose grounded in societal benefit or political calculation may in fact be more numerically significant (and designed to actually result in the election of youth) than a quota adopted due to a decision of the political center to expand youth rights on principle alone.[232] However, a desire to increase inclusion is certainly a sufficiently strong motivator for adopting a youth quota in and of itself.

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[228] Nafeel, 2017.

[229] Kimura, Masataka. 2013. "Toward a More Workable Philippine Party-List System: Addressing Problems of Sectoral and Proportional Representation." *Philippine Political Science Journal* 34 (1): 62–82. https://doi.org/10.1080/01154451.2013.789164.

[230] Article 6(5).

[231] Decree-Law No. 46 of 2014 "On the Enactment of the Law on House of Representatives," Article 5.

[232] See conversation on supply-side vs. demand-side rights in Chapter Three of this report. p. 37.

Source: NDI

Does Greater Youth Representation in Elected Bodies Produce Better Policy Outcomes for Youth?

One of the implicit promises behind youth quotas is the idea that an increased number of young people in office will result in policy that better responds to youth needs. However, as discussed in the overview chapter of this report, having youth in elected office does not necessarily mean that they are empowered to do anything. Youth who serve merely "tokenistic" roles in elected bodies or youth that are promoted within parties based on their willingness to vote in line with party leadership may be poorly positioned to advance policies that would benefit youth or even to provide a diverse viewpoint to policy discussions. Youth, of course, are not a monolithic block, and there is no single set of youth issues that all young elected officials can be expected to support. Furthermore, young parliamentarians serve as national representatives, not representatives of youth alone. Evaluating youth parliamentarians solely on their delivery of issues to youth constituents holds them to a different standard than other elected officials. However, differences in generational interests do exist and justification for youth quotas is often derived from a desire to have youth not merely present in parliaments, but *represented* in a way that gives visibility to youth issues.

While the research on youth quotas is limited, the much larger body of literature on gender quotas gives some insight into the success of quotas as a mechanism for producing substantive representation. The available empirical evidence reveals that gender quotas do have a marginal impact on the political process. For example, studies find that once elected, women generally draft more legislation on family and children's issues and sponsor or cosponsor more bills on such issues than their male counterparts do.[233] In Sweden, the voluntary introduction of candidate gender quotas within parties also led to an increase in the presence of women in leadership positions and overall better-qualified politicians in the long term.[234] Critics of gender quotas argue that there is not enough evidence to draw a positive correlation between descriptive representation, as understood by the number and demographic descriptors of women elected, and long-term substantive representation. Critics argue that gender quotas often lead to tokenistic policies that can be manipulated by political parties.[235]

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[233] Norris, Pippa. 2006. "The Impact of Electoral Reform on Women's Representation." *Acta Politica* 41 (2): 197–213. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500151.

[234] Besley, Timothy, Olle Folke, Torsten Persson, and Johanna Rickne. 2013. "Gender Quotas and the Crisis of the Mediocre Man: Theory and Evidence from Sweden." Working Paper, Stockholm University.

[235] Franceschet, Susan, and Jennifer M. Piscopo. 2008. "Gender Quotas and Women's Substantive Representation: Lessons from Argentina." *Politics & Gender* 4 (3): 393–425. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X08000342.

Another example of whether the representation of marginalized groups in elected bodies affects policy can be found in forthcoming research by political scientist Andrew S. Reynolds. His research shows that the presence of openly LGBT legislators in an elected body is significantly associated with the passage of legislation supportive of gay rights, and that the views and voting behavior of straight legislators on these issues is positively affected by the presence of their openly gay colleagues.[236]

Similar data to demonstrate the impact of youth legislators and youth quotas on political outcomes is still nascent. Measuring the substantive impact of elected youth officials on policy that represents youth interests is an important question, but one that is difficult to measure. The Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs' (UPFYA) 2017 *State of the Youth* report provides one example of a methodology to measure progress on policy issues pertinent to youth. In partnership with two other Ugandan CSOs,[237] UPFYA set out to measure the government's delivery on promises related to youth policy by analyzing progress on a set of priority issues explicitly linked to youth advancement against a benchmark outline in a consultatively derived youth manifesto that was released directly after the election of the current parliament. The report found that progress had been made on a range of youth issues, though not all, and that policy priorities for youth did gain significant time and attention in the parliamentary agenda. Uganda is an interesting test case in terms of the impact of youth in elected office on youth policy; not only does the country have five reserved youth seats in parliament, but a full 20 percent of the parliament is under the age of 40.

Reports that measure progress on youth policy agenda items often fail to specifically explore the role of youth representatives in advancing delivery on these promises. Measures that might allow insight into whether youth in elected office are playing a substantive role could be found by tracking, for example, how many youth legislators introduce bills, hold the floor in debate, or hold leadership roles on legislative committees or in political parties. In the absence of such data, it can be hard to discern whether youth legislators are serving more than tokenistic roles. Interlocutors in Kenya and Kyrgyzstan, for example, indicated that youth elected via quotas have not been successful in advancing policies that prioritize youth issues. This may very well be the case, though in the absence of a way to measure youth legislators' engagement, incremental gains or contributions that youth representatives might be making — such as contributing perspective to policy debates — could be overlooked.

An important qualifier to this discussion: the first step toward ensuring that youth have a substantive voice in policy decisions is ensuring that they have a seat at the table. Better understanding the conditions under which youth, once elected, are empowered as legislators is an essential question for continued study and debate. However, requiring representatives of marginalized groups to demonstrate their ability to provide results that benefit that marginalized group holds these legislators to a standard by which legislators from dominant groups are not explicitly evaluated. Proponents of maintaining the status quo often assume that older men in legislatures are capable of representing all of societies' interests; they are not elected to office as representatives of older men alone. Similarly, youth who are elected to office serve all of their constituents, not just youth. The election of representatives of marginalized groups is intended to serve a societal benefit beyond the creation of policies that serve the best interest of that marginalized group, though examples of female and LGBT legislators suggests this is a plausible outcome.

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[236] Reynolds, Andrew. 2018. *The Children of Harvey Milk*. Oxford University Press. pp. 17–18.

[237] "The State of the Youth Report 2016/17." 2017. Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs. http://upfya.or.ug/wp-content/files/Final_State_of_the_Youth_Report_2017.pdf.

In summary, given the relatively small number of youth in office globally, it is not yet clear whether the election of youth results in better policy outcomes for youth, or under which conditions better outcomes become more likely. However, once more young legislators are in office, it will become increasingly possible to assess their contributions, and to tailor support mechanisms that enable them to become increasingly effective representatives.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The utility of adopting a youth quota will vary from country to country. Whether or not a youth quota will achieve its desired outcomes — increasing youth representation in elected bodies, gains in youth political engagement more broadly, a deterrence to violence — is dependent on the adoption of a quota as part of a holistic strategy to support youth. Changes to the legal framework are only one lever to address inclusion, and while a well-designed quota can increase descriptive representation of youth on its own, broader gains are dependent on concurrent, concerted efforts to empower youth to be representative voices in elected bodies. Increases in descriptive representation of youth in and of themselves are a quantifiable gain, though to be satisfied with this gain alone is to miss an opportunity for broader societal benefit that can be served by youth leaders who are empowered to govern effectively.

In choosing whether or not to adopt a youth quota, consideration must be given to how effective the quota will be in achieving its aims and whether appetite exists for concurrent efforts to promote youth leaders. Effectiveness can first be evaluated on the limited question of whether a quota will be successful in increasing the number of youth elected.

KEY CONCLUSION

If designed effectively, reserved seat quotas, legislated candidate quotas, and voluntarily adopted party quotas can all succeed in getting more youth elected. Quota design decisions will be informed by the electoral system in place, existing norms about the necessity and value of quotas, and differing rationale for adopting a quota. Designing a quota that achieves the goal of getting more youth into office is certainly possible, but unsuccessful quota designs serve as warnings.

A quota that actually results in an increase in the number of youth elected must be numerically significant and enforceable, and must be designed in a way that does not dilute the opportunity for youth to be elected by forcing them to compete with other marginalized groups for a limited number of seats.

At the same time, the quota must recognize youth as a cross-cutting issue that works in concert with other measures to ensure inclusive representation, such as gender quotas. There are many viable design options, including the adoption of a national quota, a subnational quota, or both, and the ultimate design should be tailored to the fit local needs and priorities.

A broader measure of the effectiveness of youth quotas is the ability of young elected leaders to provide societal benefit by improving the quality and responsiveness of elected bodies — not only as representatives of their youth constituents, but as representatives equally capable of representing all of their constituents. This is a much broader measure, and relates to a host of other considerations related to the enabling environment around youth candidacy and election. Is the environment such that all youth, not just youth from a particular background,

are able to take advantage of the opportunity to run as candidates? Once they are in office, do youth have the knowledge, resources, mentorship and other support needed to be effective representatives of their constituents? Party structure and leadership, voter biases, incumbency advantages, exclusive networks of influence and the cost of running for election all play a significant role in this picture.[238]

However, requiring evidence that young legislators are likely to be effective representatives prior to supporting their inclusion in elected bodies is a burden of proof that does not exist for legislators representing dominant groups. The suggestion that youth might be more easily manipulated, less experienced in governance, and that their election poses the potential for harm are all arguments that have been and continue to be used to deny representation to women and other marginalized groups, and they are not convincing arguments to deny youth descriptive representation in the present. The question that then remains is not whether to support the election of a greater number of young legislators, but rather if youth quotas are the right means to do so.

Recommendations for Funders

1. **Link the topic of subnational youth quotas with national and donor-supported decentralization efforts.** Given significant donor efforts in the realm of decentralization, consider exploring subnational youth quotas as a possibility with local partners.

2. **Address, through legislation and regulation, acknowledged barriers to youth participation that prevent youth candidates from competing via youth quotas.** The challenges facing youth candidates are myriad and often stem from disadvantages related to political financing, networks of influence, and inexperience. Where challenges are systemic, look holistically at barriers that might prevent youth candidates from competing concurrent with any moves to create a youth quota.

3. **Expand research on youth quotas, and on the factors that make youth substantive leaders once they are elected.** There is need for additional research on youth quotas, particularly in the gathering of data in country-specific contexts to be able to understand when and how elected youth are able to play a substantive role once they are in office.

Recommendations for Implementers

1. **If adopting a youth quota, design a measure compatible with the broader electoral system that is likely to increase the number of youth candidates competing in and winning elections.** Youth quota design will vary by electoral system, but elements to consider are the numerical significance needed for a quota to yield the desired results, introduction of list order requirements that prevent parties from packing youth candidates onto the bottom of lists, and inclusion of an enforcement mechanism in case of non-compliance.

2. **If the decision is made to adopt a youth quota, thoughtfully integrate it with existing quotas to ensure youth is recognized as an intersectional identity, and that it ensures the election of male and female youth.** As the Kenyan and Philippines examples indicate, grouping youth in with other categories can result in variable outcomes and can limit the likelihood that youth will be elected. Consider incorporating youth as a cross-cutting interest group by adding age considerations to existing quotas, or adding

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238 These factors, and others, are explored in the context of National Youth Strategies and Party Youth Wings in Chapters 2 and 5, respectively, as well as the overview chapter of this report.

gender considerations to youth quotas — for example, a requirement that a percentage or number of candidates must be under a designated age threshold consistent with national definitions of youth and that a certain percentage or number of those candidates must be of different genders.

3. **Consider promoting subnational youth quotas, ideally combined with targeted capacity investment in youth candidates and legislators at the local level.** Existing examples of subnational youth quotas appear to provide a successful avenue for involving youth in elected office. Whether or not a national-level quota is considered in conjunction, a subnational youth quota can be a viable option. The leaders elected through a youth quota at lower levels of government in time can filter up to national level office, though they may no longer be youth by the time they make this transition.

4. **Consider encouraging avenues for national youth council members to be represented in mainstream political bodies.** Given the resources that are invested in the creation of national youth council structures and the capacity of youth leaders that can be built through these institutions, innovative mechanisms that build links between youth councils and state governance bodies are worthy of consideration.

Recommendations for Local Partners

1. **Consider voluntarily enacting youth quotas or newcomer quotas as a tactic to drive youth participation and increase voter base.** Placing youth in winnable yet non-assured seats on party lists can drive young candidates to mobilize their peers to vote, an effect that may be more significant in local elections, given the smaller size of constituencies and the greater likelihood of youth candidates having their own local networks that they can mobilize. In national level campaigns or single member constituencies, promoting and highlighting young candidates can be part of messaging that aims to dispel young voters' concerns about parties being out of touch or unresponsive.

2. **For political parties, invest in young candidates and future candidates by maintaining a pipeline of talent.** Invest in both skills used to get elected (campaigning and fundraising) as well as skills young parliamentarians will need in office in order to advance policy priorities. See the next chapter on youth political party wings for more ideas.

CHAPTER 5

POLITICAL PARTY YOUTH WINGS

Author:
Aaron Azelton, National Democratic Institute

YOUTH WINGS

Definition

Youth wings are semi-independent organizations tied to a parent political party. The structure of this relationship can be very different across parties and party systems. However, most youth wings are similar in that they establish a minimum and maximum age for membership (e.g., 16–35) and they can be found across the ideological spectrum of parties. There are also regional and international youth wing networks organized around ideological beliefs from the left to the right.

Source: NDI

Key Functions

In principle, political party youth wings should help initiate young people into politics and act as a proving ground for new leaders. Youth wings:

- Can be instrumental in the nomination of young candidates and inclusion of youth issues in party programs.
- Can offer training to members and help them develop the political awareness and acumen needed for leadership.
- Can hold the parent party accountable and can incubate new policies and challenge outmoded practices.
- Can target communications at young voters and open parties to new members through online and offline efforts.

Key Findings

The evidence suggests that youth wings can provide young people a formative political experience. There are factors, however, that influence these outcomes. For example, the youth wing's relationship with the parent party and the ability of youth wings to take relatively independent actions need to be considered. In those cases where a political party provides an enabling environment and young women and men can actively develop their agency, the results can be positive.

Key Data Points

Less than 10%
The number of young people joining parties is low in established and emerging democracies alike.

Not all parties
have youth wings.

Key Recommendations

- Political parties still play a central role when it comes to formally competing for power and earning the right to govern. To better balance formal and informal youth participation, support should be provided that helps young people find meaningful ways to enter party politics, so they can also work to influence change from inside the system.
- Multi-partisan approaches that bring youth wing activists from different parties together can help reduce political polarization and help promote more constructive forms of political discourse. In countries with a history of violent conflict (e.g., Bosnia and Herzegovina, Democratic Republic of Congo and Kenya), NDI has brought the youth wings of different parties together to find common ground and work collectively on policy issues. This has led to relationships that seem to discourage incivility.

Raising Their Voices: How effective are pro-youth laws and policies?

Introduction

There is growing acknowledgement that politics and participation are integral to the process of sustainable development.[239] This includes an active role for youth. However, young people face many barriers when it comes to political participation, while also being disproportionately affected by some of the world's toughest development challenges, such as unemployment; environmental degradation; violent conflict; poor physical, social, and emotional health; and insufficient access to education. Helping this demographic group find peaceful ways to take part in decisions affecting their welfare is a growing imperative,[240] and CEPPS is working to better understand the avenues for youth political participation and leadership. We examined the role political party youth wings can play in amplifying the voice and influence of young people, and how support for them can best be tailored.

Although political parties and party systems have been researched heavily when it comes to political competition and governance, there has been very little comparative research on party youth wings or how parties develop young leaders. In particular, the dynamics surrounding youth wing membership and young people's inclusion in political party decision-making processes has not been investigated fully. The research that does exist is generally tied to a specific party system or individual party.[241] Our research begins a wider exploration and draws lessons from programs in a range of countries, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Burkina Faso, Kenya, Macedonia, Nicaragua, and Pakistan. The research offers perspectives that can be instructive for both donors and political party development practitioners.

A recent guidance document from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) highlights the instrumental role that political parties can play in policymaking and government oversight. The document also recognizes the practicality of political party development assistance, with an emphasis placed on the inclusion of youth.[242] To this end, DFID recommends an analysis of internal party structures and the operation of youth wings as a first step in program development. This research can help organize such analysis and put it to work in the design of political party assistance programs targeting young people.

Our findings indicate that youth wings can offer young people a formative political experience, in certain circumstances, and tailored assistance can affect the agency of youth wing members and their enabling environment. However, the entire picture is rather complex, given the political dynamics and changing incentives found in most multi-party systems. These research findings will need to be combined with existing lessons about how political parties develop as they actively engage in political competition and manage unavoidable power struggles, both externally and internally.

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[239] "World Development Report 2017: Governance and the Law." 2017. World Bank. http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2017.

[240] "Youth in Development: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity." 2012. United States Agency for International Development. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/Youth_in_Development_Policy_0.pdf.

[241] Alymbaeva, Aida. 2010. "Youth Wings of Political Parties in Kyrgyzstan: Diminutive, but Promising?" Social Research Center of the American University in Central Asia. http://eercnetwork.com/default/download/creater/article/file/b14f3ab8358713c658e20346c1e39a7488cfad9c.pdf; Cross, William, and Lisa Young. 2008. "Factors Influencing the Decision of the Young Politically Engaged to Join a Political Party: An Investigation of the Canadian Case." *Party Politics* 14 (3): 345–69. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068807088126; Hooghe, Marc, Dietlind Stolle, and Patrick Stouthuysen. 2004. "Head Start in Politics: The Recruitment Function of Youth Organizations of Political Parties in Belgium (Flanders)." *Party Politics* 10 (2): 193–212. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068804040503; Malafaia, Carla, Isabel Menezes, and Tiago Neves. 2018. "Living, Doing, and Learning from Politics in a Youth Wing of a Political Party." *The Qualitative Report* 23 (1): 49–79.

[242] Power, Greg, Thomas Carothers, Aslin Baker, and Tessa MacArthur. 2018. "Guide to Working with Parliaments and Political Parties for Sustainable Development." U.K. Department for International Development. http://www.gpgovernance.net/publication/guide-to-working-with-parliaments-and-political-parties-for-sustainable-development/. pp. 20.

Methodology

In order to conduct this empirical study, we drew heavily on the first-hand knowledge of program staff members who have worked directly with party youth wings, and on the personal accounts of youth wing members. Six NDI senior field representatives, with the combined experience of working with party youth wings in more than a dozen countries, shared insights about how youth wings operate and relate to parent parties. This included providing information that had been collected through formal program assessments and reflections on program-implementation challenges. It touched upon the implications inter-party political maneuvering has on the incentives for party leaders to invest in youth involvement. Over the course of the research, we also spoke with field staff members from other organizations providing political party assistance, including the International Republican Institute (IRI), International IDEA, and several of the German Siftungs to gather their comparative perspective. Additional sources of information included existing literature, political party leaders, academics, and other development assistance practitioners. Structured field research work took place in BiH and is featured in a short country-specific case study.

NDI's youth political participation work is grounded in a theory of change and reflects the principles of positive youth development.[243] The theory envisions the need for programs to address the development of both youth agency and an environment that enables participation. It also unifies the various factors that influence the development of agency and an enabling environment, and places an emphasis on the role young people themselves can play in driving change. Rather than being passive recipients of assistance, young women and men are expected to play an active role in developing their agency and promoting an enabling environment. For this research process, the theory of change helped inform the specific lines of enquiry and was used as an analytical tool when examining the extent to which youth wings serve as pathways to political participation and leadership.

Analysis

A significant body of research suggests that young women and men are turning away from traditional political institutions and processes, including political parties. This is not a rejection of politics, but instead reflects growing discontent with formal systems that are viewed as inaccessible and unresponsive.[244] According to a European Commission study, "youth's distrust of institutional politics has been seen as a widespread problem within Europe. However, under what has been termed the 'paradox of youth participation,' alongside the decrease in formal (or conventional) forms of participation — such as voting and membership of political parties — in recent years there has been an increase in informal (or unconventional) forms of participation."[245]

Previous NDI research found young people beyond Europe felt the same way about formal types of political participation. They expressed dissatisfaction with vertical political structures that seem out of reach and out of touch.[246] As a result, the majority of young activists

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[243] "Youth Political Participation Programming Guide." 2018. National Democratic Institute. https://youthguide.ndi.org/all-chapters. A description of positive youth development can be found at http://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development

[244] Dougherty, Rachel, Erin Mazursky, Anh-Thu Nguyen, and Hemly Ordonez. 2016. "The New Global Citizen: Harnessing Youth Leadership to Reshape Civil Society." Rhize. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54c7f971e4b0d312f4d794ef/t/57e148d4c534a599a9d01b93/1474382047223/The+New+Global+Citizen-Exec+Summ.pdf.

[245] Crowley, Anne, and Dan Moxon. 2017. "New and Innovative Forms of Youth Participation in Decision-Making Processes." Council of Europe. https://rm.coe.int/new-and-innovative-forms-of-youth-participation-in-decision-making-pro/1680759e6a. pp. 15.

[246] National Democratic Institute, 2018.

interviewed preferred to find alternative ways to express their views, using everything from online petitions to youth-led street protests. Although these forms of activism can be effective in igniting change, traditional politics and the role of political parties cannot be ignored completely in democratic societies. Despite an overall global decline in political party membership and young peoples' disaffection with traditional politics, parties still matter when it comes to the peaceful competition for power and earning the right to govern. If young people only employ civil disobedience, they will inevitably be left out of many decisions. Recognizing that patterns of youth activism are changing, NDI is learning to partner with young people and to assist them with both formal and informal means of political participation. For example, in Macedonia, NDI helped political party youth wing members join forces with youth participating in social-media campaigns and public demonstrations to develop a set of youth-centered national policies.[247]

Youth Wing Structure and Function

Youth wings are semi-independent organizations tied to a parent party. The structure of this relationship can be very different across parties and party systems. However, most youth wings are similar in that they establish a minimum and maximum age for membership (e.g., 16–35).[248] The system of membership also differs. In some cases, any party member below a certain age automatically becomes part of the youth wing. In others, membership in the youth wing must be requested. In principle, political party youth wings should help initiate young people into politics and act as a proving ground for new leaders. Internally, the structures of youth wings often mirror the decision-making structures of the parent party (e.g., geographic branches that feed up to the center with a leadership committee and elected youth leader).

The oldest political party youth wing is the Young Conservatives Denmark, formed in 1904 as a reaction to the "miserable situation" of the Danish Right Party, which was "like a stiff old man party with increasingly fewer seats in each parliament."[249] In contemporary politics, youth wings are recognized by parties across the ideological spectrum as a way to mobilize youth. This includes regional and international networks of youth wings, such as the Young European Socialists, the International Federation of Liberal Youth, and the International Young Democrat Union.[250]

At the same time, some parties do not have youth wings. These parties may have other methods for recruiting and socializing young people, particularly through activities at the local branch level. Some of the parties assisted by NDI in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Tunisia have chosen to "mainstream" young people in order to create a membership base that reflects the size of the youth population. Having a youth-centric profile may indeed make these parties more appealing to young people, at least in the short term. There are questions, however, about how parties then adjust as active youth members and leaders inevitably grow older.

Young people are a heterogeneous contingent, and this diversity is reflected by those that choose to join parties. Although representation within a particular political party youth wing might be skewed in one way or another, young women and men from rural and urban areas, with varying levels of education and different socio-economic backgrounds can be found in youth wings globally. Yet the overall numbers seem relatively small. Although it is not possible

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[247]   Crowley and Moxon, 2017, pp. 32.

[248]   There is a significant variance in age across youth wings with members being as young 13 in Norway (which has experimented with allowing 16-year olds to vote in local elections) and as old as 45 in countries like Iraq and Morocco.

[249]   http://konservativungdom.dk/kontakt/

[250]   http://www.youngsocialists.eu/; http://www.iflry.com/; https://www.idu.org/about/youth-iydu/

to extrapolate across all multi-party systems, a recent NDI survey of youth in Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia found that less than 10 percent of them would consider joining a political party.[251] This aligns with other research done in Canada,[252] BiH,[253] and Kenya.[254] Likewise, many youth with an interest in joining political parties indicate that they are motivated, in large part, by the prospect of finding a job.

Despite the low levels of participation, there is still an important minority of young women and men trying to satisfy political aspirations through their involvement in political party youth wings. These young people have demonstrated an interest in party politics and working within the system. There are also examples of young people joining youth wings as they test different approaches to foster change. During the research, we spoke with a group of young women from Nador, Morocco, who complained about difficulties they encountered as members of civil society trying to influence politicians. As a result, they chose to join political parties to gain access to decision makers.

In principle, youth wings exist to fulfill particular functions that serve the members and parent party.[255] To start, youth wings can help aggregate the interests of their members, by facilitating networks and alliance formation. Organizational processes, including membership assemblies, committees and advisory boards, provide opportunities for young people to work together making decisions, while exploring political priorities and viewpoints. Youth wings can be instrumental in the nomination of young candidates and inclusion of youth issues in party programs. This can also be facilitated when parties set quotas.[256] For instance, the Social Democratic Party of BiH (SDP BiH) has a 30 percent quota for youth, which has resulted in more than 30 percent of elected SDP local councilors being young people. Combined with an active youth wing, quotas — over several election cycles — can also help ensure that there are influential members of the senior party who are youth wing alumni and can act as champions and mentors for successive generations.

A second function of youth wings is to train members by organizing skill-building workshops, mentoring programs and policy research activities. SDP BiH regularly join their counterparts in the Young European Socialists for policy dialogues. Youth wings need their own financial basis in order to sustain these and other activities, which may be challenging to generate through membership fees alone. In countries such as Germany, governments provide funds for the civic education activities of youth wings. Additionally, many political parties set aside funds, realizing a vibrant youth wing is more likely to attract young people to the party.

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[251] "Youth, Democracy, and Politics: Public Opinion Research in Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia." Forthcoming. National Democratic Institute.

[252] Turcotte, Martin. 2015. "Political Participation and Civic Engagement of Youth." Insights on Canadian Society. Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/75-006-x/2015001/article/14232-eng.pdf?st=82sDM9_I.

[253] Đipa, Dino, Mahir Hadžić, Mladen Mijatović, and Mersad Bukva. 2016. "Voices of Youth Research into Youth in BIH: Consolidated Report on the Quantitative and Qualitative Research." Prism Research and Consulting. http://ba.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/bih/PDFs/UNICEF%20pics%20for%20publications/VoY2016/VoY2016.pdf.

[254] "Youth in Political Party Participation in Kenya: Baseline Study." 2015. Center for Multiparty Democracy Kenya.

[255] Lührmann, Anna. 2013. "Enhancing Youth Political Participation Throughout the Electoral Cycle: A Good Practice Guide." United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Electoral%20Systems%20and%20Processes/ENG_UN-Youth_Guide-LR.pdf. pp. 28.

[256] Quotas are becoming a more prevalent practice to help increase the election of youth (See Chapter Four of this report). However, this might simply mean putting them on a party list, but at the bottom rather than top. It also may not preclude party leaders from handpicking youth from outside the youth wing. Youth wing members in Morocco and Burkina Faso, for instance, complained about these practices.

A third function of youth wings is to hold the parent party accountable for party policies and leadership selection. In addition to providing fresh and innovative ideas, they can also challenge outmoded policies and practices. Youth wings can incubate new policies and serve as a powerbase during party conventions. In Canada, the Young Liberals hold a policy camp each winter where they prioritize resolutions that youth then push at party conventions and organize youth to vote as a block. Similar instruments can be used for having influence over leadership selection processes; particularly where there is a one member/one vote system, rather than having one delegate represent the entire youth-wing vote.

Finally, youth wings can target communications at young voters and open parties to new members. During elections and recruiting campaigns, youth wings are better positioned to know what language is most effective with their peers and what kinds of activities are attractive to other youth. At the same time, young people's energy and enthusiasm can be a powerful resource when it comes election campaigning and getting out the vote. This includes both online and offline efforts. Youth wings have traditionally played a central role in conducting face-to-face voter contact, including door knocking. Young people are also at the forefront of applying new communication technologies, from organizing Facebook communities to retweeting campaign messages.

There are numerous examples of party leaders and heads of government rising up through political party youth wings. In some cases, this was the result following in the footsteps of previous leaders and demonstrating party loyalty. In other cases, youth wings have been used as a fast track to leadership. A recent example is Sebastian Kurz, the current chancellor of Austria. He became the chairperson of the youth wing of the Austrian People's Party at the age of 23 and chancellor of Austria at the age of 31, making him the world's youngest head of state at the time. Nelson Mandela helped establish the African National Congress Youth League in 1944 to help galvanize young people's support in the fight against apartheid. During this research project, we interviewed the 24-year old secretary general, and youth wing member, of a prominent Bosnian party. His selection as party leader happened when members agitated for internal party reforms after a poor electoral showing. There are also cases like Belgium, where more than 40 percent of all city councilors got their political start in youth wings.[257]

At the same time, there are examples of youth wings being used by parent parties to disrupt political processes and occasionally take violent actions.[258] The use of youth wings as "shock troops" seems more common in political systems where violence, coercion, and intimidation have been used traditionally as political tools. There are many examples where this type of behavior becomes more pronounced around elections, including places like Bangladesh, Burundi, and Haiti. Breaking these cycles of violence can be extremely challenging. However, it is possible to help parties and their youth wings move beyond these behaviors. One example can be found in Kenya, where NDI helped establish the inter-party youth forum in response to deadly election violence in 2007.[259] The forum has helped youth wings members work together and find peaceful ways to manage conflict and has been actively supported by party leaders.

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[257] Hooghe, et al., 2004, pg 201

[258] Paalo, Sebastian Angzoorokuu. 2017. "Political Party Youth Wings and Political Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Case of Ghana." *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies* 8 (1): 1–14. https://doi.org/10.5897/IJPDS2016.0284; "Political Party Youth Wings in Nepal." 2011. The Carter Center. https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/democracy/nepal-political-party-youth-wings-022811-en.pdf.

[259] Lührmann, 2013, pg 50.

Source: NDI

Challenges for Political Party Youth Wings

Based on our comparative examination, the evidence suggests that youth wings can provide young people a formative political experience and can act as a proving ground for emerging political leaders. There are factors, however, that influence these outcomes. For example, the youth wing's relationship with the parent party and the ability of youth wings to take relatively independent actions need to be considered. In those cases where a political party provides an enabling environment and young women and men can actively develop their agency, the results can be positive. Our research identified structural factors that can enable or inhibit active, substantive youth participation and leadership. These can include how youth wing leaders are selected, whether financial resources are made available, what roles youth wings play in party decisions, and how they are expected to engage during elections. There are also factors related to how youth agency develops. For example, young people need opportunities to gain practical political knowledge and skills, interact with senior party leaders and other adults, and increase their visibility through positive public action.

Finding the Pathway to Youth Participation and Leadership

The research identified a number of specific, and often interrelated, challenges facing youth wings in transitioning democracies. Some of these challenges, however, are also found in established democracies where parties can become set in their ways and find it difficult to change, particularly when the overall political incentives support the status quo.

1. **Lack of clarity on the role and relationship with the parent parties:** Frequently, youth wings are established without any effort to locate them within the structure of the parent party or define their role and mandate. The token gesture of creating a youth wing can give rise to resentments once the parent party rejects or ignores initiatives from the youth wing or assigns the youth wing tasks without consultation or direction.

2. **Un-democratic leadership selection:** Youth wing leaders are frequently appointed through a closed process, often as a reward bestowed by a party leader. These "young" leaders will occasionally stay in these positions for years.[260]

3. **Lack of representation in party governing bodies:** In many cases, the youth wing is a separate entity without any participation in the decision-making processes of the party's executive organs. Even when included as a voting member of the party's executive organ, the youth wing leader may feel isolated and without the confidence to speak up. In other cases, a youth representative on the party's executive body might not even come from the youth wing.

4. **Lack of resources (office, equipment, finances):** If youth wings are expected to perform active roles in political party mobilization or policymaking, they need to have access to some basic resources that they can manage independently. In many places, youth wings do not have an independent budget agreed in advance or dedicated office space. Instead, they rely on their relationship with the parent party headquarters for resources provided on an ad hoc basis, which makes planning difficult. Youth wings in northern European countries, in contrast, often have an autonomous budget approved by the party executive based on a clear proposal for annual activities outlined in advance.

5. **Lack of organizational management and development experience:** Young people often do not possess sufficient knowledge of organizational management principles to be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their own organizations. As a result, they will often simply replicate the parent party's structure (e.g., headquarters and branches in geographic regions) without any knowledge of how — or sufficient resources — to manage the structure effectively or to consider a revised structure that might respond to the needs and interests of youth.

6. **Lack of a recruiting message and consequent stagnant membership:** In the absence of a defined role and — often — the parent party's own lack of an ideology or program, it is hard for youth wings to define an attractive reason for young people to join. As a result, the party youth wing can be more like a club of friends, without a dynamic character or clear sense of purpose.

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260 "Youth Wings of Political Parties Must Reflect a Young India." 2017. *Hindustan Times*. July 26, 2017. https://www.hindustantimes.com/editorials/youth-wings-of-political-parties-must-reflect-a-young-india/story-5kgr1xtgI1vGftpwzIHBCL.html.

7. **Lack of knowledge about the political process and making public policy:** Throughout the world, youth wings will identify higher education, youth employment, sports and recreation, social ills (e.g., drugs and addiction, gangs and violence) as among their priority issues, depending on the country. However, they frequently do not possess sufficient knowledge of how — or sufficient resources — to study and propose effective policy-based solutions. Given the limited resources of any government, a youth demand for "more government money for…" is often just ignored. Similarly, youth have less capacity to assess the viability of measures being proposed by their own or other parties. Thus, in addition to dedicated funds and a strong organizational structure, the youth wings require some advanced training on governing and policymaking processes to be able to add value.

Configuring Assistance for Youth Wings

Efforts to support political party youth wings should be designed in terms of the needs and opportunities presented by the enabling environment and agency of the young people involved. This starts with a general analysis of the overall political environment and involvement of youth and drills down to the level of parties and youth wings. NDI has a tool to help conduct an analysis of how parties operate and how they relate to their youth wings.[261] The tool can offer insights into youth wings by overlaying specific questions about the enabling environment and agency of young people within a party. This can include determining how much space exists for youth wing involvement in party decisions and the activism among youth wing members. Based on these determinants, subsequent programs could then follow a couple different tracks.

One track helps create space for youth to play a more substantive role in party decisions. In this case, a program might work with party leaders on structural reforms. For instance, in Pakistan and Tunisia, NDI has assisted with the development of new statutes that give youth wing members a seat on decision-making bodies and provides them greater access to the party's electoral lists, if they are seeking elected office.

A second track assists youth wing members in developing political know-how and making constructive contributions within their party. For example, when they appear on their party's electoral list, programs can help youth wing members learn how to campaign effectively and to develop policy proposals. In countries with a history of violent conflict (e.g., BiH, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Kenya), NDI has brought the youth wings of different parties together to work on cross-cutting policy issues. This has led to relationships that seem to discourage incivility and that continue as youth wing members assume different responsibilities and play different political roles. These efforts have contributed to young people playing more active and influential roles within their respective parties and in their communities. The BiH case study below provides examples of young women and men becoming more capable political candidates, having greater access to party leaders and actively working to engage other citizens on policy issues. As one young woman from Our Party in BiH stated, "Leaders are becoming more open to our involvement and recognize how we can help make the party more competitive."[262]

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[261] "Context Analysis Tool." 2014. National Democratic Institute. https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI_ContextAnalysisTool_proof_f.pdf.

[262] Anonymous. Interview with Aaron Azelton. 2017.

Source: NDI

In Pakistan and Tunisia, NDI has worked with the parties and youth wings on structural reforms to give youth wings more explicit influence (improving the enabling environment)

Youth wings can be a source of creativity and dynamism when they are encouraged to participate meaningfully within their political party. NDI supports youth wings to develop and propose structural reforms that foster more explicit influence within their parties and also strengthen the enabling environment for party youth. For instance, in **Pakistan**, NDI assisted youth wing members to develop rules and regulations for their respective wings, guided participants through consultation exercises with peers, and provided trainings on developing advocacy strategies. Participants then used these strategies to persuade party leaders to adopt the proposed structural reforms. While some advocacy efforts stalled, some leaders took concrete steps to increase youth participation in decision-making bodies. In **Tunisia**, NDI supported a cross-party youth wing steering committee to create pressure for youth representation in decision-making and platform-drafting bodies. As a result of youth-targeted capacity building on effective advocacy strategies, some party leaders were convinced that youth inclusion benefitted their parties long-term. Several youth wings succeeded in securing quotas for representation in party structures, including their party's elected bodies**.**

Source: NDI

In BiH and Macedonia, NDI has helped youth wing members develop political know-how, pursue elected office, and work on policy development across party lines (increasing youth agency)

Fostering agency builds the capacity and confidence of party youth to act individually and collectively for applied political action. To strengthen their political agency, NDI supports youth wing members to develop political skills, pursue elected office and develop youth-focused policies across party lines. For instance, in **BiH**, NDI established *Rokada*, a cross-party youth network that fostered peer-learning and strengthened abilities to identify youth priority issues. Through advocacy efforts, NDI assisted youth wings to pressure their respective parties to address these policy priorities. NDI also invited senior party leaders to networking and skills-building events, both to discuss their experiences in advancing in the party as well as to see firsthand the capabilities and enthusiasm of party youth. As a result of NDI assistance, *Rokada* members built a country-wide network of youth activists and launched statewide initiatives to reform legislation important to youth. In **Macedonia**, NDI fostered collaboration between youth wings and the National Youth Council of Macedonia (NYCM), a leading umbrella youth organization. With NDI guidance, NYCM led skill-building workshops for youth wings on how to develop cross-party cooperation on youth policies. This included consultations on how to coordinate collective action and advance policy recommendations within their respective parties. NYCM also organized forums for youth candidates and party representatives to discuss youth priorities head of parliamentary elections, strengthening the candidates' ability to address constituent concerns as they pursued elected office. As a result, youth wings and civic youth groups recognized the value of cooperation to elevate Macedonian youth priorities, and succeeded in advancing public policy.

Conclusions and Recommendations

KEY CONCLUSION

Political party wings, under different circumstances, can emphasize substantive, constructive youth engagement in the political process, or act as a vehicle for the mobilization of political patronage or violence. Within democratic systems with relatively programmatic political parties, party wings can facilitate the recruitment of young leaders, provide technical training and experience, and help parties appeal to youth through substantive policy contributions to the policy platform.

However, where political systems are characterized by political patronage or violence, political leaders reward loyalty and control youth wing activity, while denying substantive youth contributions to party agendas.

Recommendations for Donors

1. Young people the world over want to be involved in decisions affecting their future and are increasingly turning to new ways of political organizing that fall outside the bounds of formal institutions and processes, because these are viewed with distrust. A majority of youth find political parties opaque and disinterested in their perspectives. Yet turning away from parties completely has a cost, since political parties still play central roles when it comes to formally competing for power and earning the right to govern. To better balance formal and informal youth participation, **donors should provide support that helps young people find meaningful ways to enter party politics, so they can also work to influence change from inside the system**.

2. Within political parties, youth wings can offer young people a pathway to participation and leadership, when the parent party provides an enabling environment and young people can actively exert influence. However, too often youth wings serve more as a tool of the parent party, further marginalizing youth voices. Under these circumstance, young people are rewarded for loyalty to party leaders, and can become socialized to a structure of top-down decision making and young people waiting their turn.

3. The number of young people who join political parties and enter youth wings seems relatively low, with some surveys showing less than 10 percent of this demographic being involved. Youth representation from marginalized groups such as the Roma is often even smaller. However, this small number does represent an important segment of youth with political aspirations. Many of these young people view politics as a potential vocation and youth wings can offer this select group a formative political experience.

4. This research only begins to a fill a gap in understanding about how political party youth wings can amplify the voice and influence of young people. There is clearly room for additional study, especially related to gender issues within youth wings and male-dominated parent parties. **Greater examination of the factors that attract young people to party politics in the first place would also be of relevant for assistance providers, as would an exploration of how to better align formal and informal forms of youth participation**.

Recommendations for Implementers

1. **When designing assistance programs to promote youth participation and leadership through party youth wings, it is necessary to understand the structural dynamics that exist between a parent party and the youth wing.** In cases where a reform-minded party is open and receptive to youth wing participation, then a program can focus on helping young people step into different roles, including running for office. On the other hand, parties that are relatively closed and controlled by an elite establishment require programs that encourage internal reforms, so that youth wing members can play more meaningful roles**.**

2. Even in cases where there has been concerted development support offered to youth wings and the buy in of party leaders, short-term political imperatives can keep youth wing members standing on the sidelines. In this way, political calculations, made in order to gain and maintain power, have implications for how parties approach the participation of young people. For instance, if polling showed that the electorate of a country is more likely to vote for someone over 40 years old rather than under 30 years old, then party leaders can be easily dissuaded from running young candidates.

3. Multi-partisan approaches that bring youth wing activists from different parties together can help reduce political polarization and help promote more constructive forms of political discourse. **In countries with a history of violent conflict (e.g., BiH, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Kenya), bring the youth wings of different parties together to find common ground and work collectively on policy issues. This leads to relationships that seem to discourage incivility.**

Recommendations for Youth Wing Partners

1. **Make the secretary general of the youth wing an automatic member of the party's top decision-making body and treat the youth wing as the primary source of youth leaders within the party.**

2. **Create a long-term strategy for promoting youth into electable positions and ensuring constant party renewal.** This could include quotas for youth candidates and a mechanism for them to select their own candidates.

3. Rather than funding youth wing activities on a case-by-case basis, **give the youth wing a budget for operating and activity costs that it can manage independently based on an established plan and reporting requirements**. This could also include providing the youth wing with an office at the party headquarters.

4. **Train youth wing members as candidates, campaign managers, spokespeople, and party branch heads**, both in terms of skills building and political knowledge. Additionally, foster tighter cooperation between youth wings and party caucuses in parliament through policy discussions and internships.

5. **Define youth membership limits to reasonably include those who will soon be voters (teenagers) and those who are beginning their lives as independent individuals (no older than 30)**.

Source: NDI

APPENDICES

Recommendations for Collection, Management, and Dissemination of Data on Youth Engagement

As identified in the introduction to this volume and in the substantive chapters, the lack of coordinated and easily accessible data on youth civic and political engagement is an impediment to understanding how public policy affects youth participation. Certainly, there is no lack of data on youth engagement per se. Several cross-national survey projects, including for example, Eurobarometer, Afrobarometer, AmericasBarometer/LAPOP, and the World Values Survey; national-level surveys from polling firms like Pew and Gallup; and public opinion polls from implementers like IRI, NDI, and IFES contain data on the extent and type of youth civic engagement. Unfortunately, these data are difficult to compare across space and time. Survey instruments are often worded differently, presented in different order, and may change or be dropped between different survey waves. For example, the World Values Survey, as one of the most comprehensive survey projects on political attitudes and behavior, contains several survey instruments on political and civic engagement, for which data can be disaggregated by age. However, although the entire project now covers almost 100 countries across 40 years, surveys are conducted in waves, and each wave does not include every country. This survey structure therefore precludes drawing precise inferences about the effect of policy changes on youth engagement over time. Furthermore, within-country measures of youth engagement may not be measurable across cases due to variation in instrument design, framing, sequencing, or sampling. Surveys and public opinion polls may therefore provide reliable snapshots of youth engagement, but are inadequate for policy analysts to draw causal inferences about the effect of public policy on youth engagement without sophisticated statistical techniques.

To facilitate the study of the determinants of youth engagement across space and time, including the effect of public policies, we recommend that donors and implementers develop a common knowledge management process to coordinate collection, management, standardization, and dissemination of data on youth engagement.

Age-Disaggregated Voter Turnout Data and Voter Registration Data

When possible and appropriate, election management bodies (EMBs) should consider collecting and making public voter turnout data disaggregated by age.[263] This effort should be tied to efforts to increase the collection of gender-disaggregated data. Age-disaggregated voter turnout data across time would allow researchers to evaluate whether 16- and 17-year-old voters are more likely to keep voting later in life as the lifecycle and habitual voting literature suggests. Researchers can also look for correlations between changes in policy and changes in turnout over time. This data should be disaggregated by age *and* gender so that researchers are able to examine any gender differences in experiences of young women and young men. Certainly, the development of publicly accessible voter records at the individual level as in the United States and Western Europe would aid the study of the effectiveness of youth participatory mechanisms. However, given concerns for privacy and safety, especially in more coercive political contexts, donors and implementers should press for the collection and release of individual-level data only with extreme caution. Often, individual identities may be determined with only a few pieces of personal information or demographic variables. But in most cases, voter turnout reported by age and gender at the aggregate level should be sufficiently general to protect the identities and voting behavior of any individual.

Surveys and Public Opinion Polls

Surveys that collect self-reported voting behavior should be coordinated so that data can be compared across space and time. Given constraints in resources, no single project is likely to be able to collect standardized longitudinal data across all countries, so we recommend that survey projects and public opinion polls coordinate around existing large-scale projects like the World Values Survey or the Global Barometers, using these survey instruments and age classifications as a model.[264]

Longitudinal Data on 16- and 17-Year-Olds' Levels of Political Knowledge and Political Maturity

The two widely cited studies that investigate whether 16- and 17-year-olds have comparable levels of political knowledge and political maturity reach opposite conclusions. Whether voters in this age group have the capacity to make informed vote choices is a central bone of contention in whether they should be enfranchised. Collecting data before and after the change is made is essential to proper measurement. Additional study on this topic is needed, and Norway and Austria present two examples of how this can be done.

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[263] While turnout is an imperfect measure of political participation, it is a valuable proxy. Additional standardized, longitudinal survey measures of youth political participation would also be of great value.

[264] While self-reported data on voter turnout is susceptible to bias, longitudinal data still allows for comparative insights to be developed.

MEASURING POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE IN NORWAY

Every two years since 1989, the Norwegian Social Science Data Services has collected interview-surveys from high school students on political attitudes, concurrent with mock elections that are held in high schools prior to the actual Norwegian parliamentary or local elections. This survey enabled researchers to assess comparative political maturity among municipalities that had the lowered voting age and those that did not, as well as between 16- and 17-year-old voters and their slightly old peers. The data led them to conclude that Norwegian case does not support the argument that the extension of voting rights leads to increases in political maturity or political interest.

MEASURING POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE IN AUSTRIA

Survey data on political interest among Austrian 16- and 17-year-olds was gathered as part of an EU survey of 15- to 25-year-olds conducted three years prior to the lowering of the voting age in Austria. This data allowed researchers to show an increase in political interest after the change was passed (though not a causal connection). Because the change to the voting age was unexpected, researchers observed that comparative data from before the change is limited, and additional data to study shifts in political interest levels over time would have necessitated the collection of additional data from youth who were roughly ages 10 to 18 at the time of the change. This data is non-existent because there was no window to collect it before the lower voting age was implemented. This example illustrates why it is important for countries that are considering lowering voter and candidate eligibility ages to start collecting data immediately in order to observe effects on political knowledge or other hypothesized variables related to participation.

Field a data-driven study of Latin American experiences with voting at 16.

Given the longer track record with voting at 16, Latin American data on the impact of lowering the voting age is a potentially untapped source of insight for other countries considering the change and looking for comparative experiences. If studies have been done on the impact of lowering the voting age in Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador, or Nicaragua, then they are not widely known outside of Latin America. This region is a potentially rich data source to explore some of the key questions above, namely are levels of political knowledge and political interest among 16- and 17-year-olds comparable to that of their slightly older peers and with the rest of the voting age population? What has citizenship education looked like in Latin America, and what does the data suggest about the relationship between enfranchising youth and support for extreme or protest parties? Although researchers would not be able to gather "before" data — which would enable observation in any changes correlating with the change in voting age — as other countries in Latin America consider lowering the voting age, the "after" data should be gathered and analyzed.

Case Study: Georgia

Source: IRI

Introduction

Youth political and civic engagement in Georgia demonstrates several of the dilemmas around youth participatory mechanisms. Georgia is often viewed as a youth engagement success story because of the cadre of young officials recruited into government by then President Mikhail Saakashvili following the country's Rose Revolution in 2003. However, beyond periodic urban youth activism, most survey evidence and expert assessments suggest that youth political and civic engagement in Georgia is relatively low — youth are disengaged and suspicious of politics and politicians; there are limited opportunities for youth to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes; and limited participation in civic activities, including clubs, issue-based organizations, and formal sport, cultural, and leisure groups.[265]

Research Approach

This case study takes a holistic approach to understanding youth civic and political engagement in Georgia. To this end, CEPPS/IRI conducted two weeks of intensive field research in Georgia, consisting of 34 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with government officials, parliamentarians, local government representatives, civil servants, representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs), and young people. Our goal was to understand the interaction of national-level youth participatory mechanisms, and their effect, if any, on youth engagement. The research was primarily inductive — interview questions were designed elicit respondents' expertise, perceptions, and opinions on the development and implementation of youth participatory mechanisms in Georgia. More specifically, the interview questionnaire consisted of one core set of questions, and three modules geared toward the three youth participatory mechanisms under study: national youth policy strategies, legal and political instruments, and intra-party policies.

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[265] Omanadze, Sopho, Nino Gachechiladze, Ana Lebanidze, and Sopo Chachanidze. 2017. "Generation in Transition: Youth Study 2016 - Georgia." http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/georgien/13150.pdf. pp. 45–46.

Introduction

Our research suggests that Georgia is grappling with three major dilemmas surrounding youth participatory mechanisms. First, the trade-off of experience for youth in decision-making processes mitigates any strong demand for the implementation of legal and political instruments like reduced voting ages or minimum ages to hold office that would increase youth participation. Second, the patronage-based nature of Georgian politics allows incumbents to use new participatory mechanisms, especially within parties, to recruit and reward political supporters. Third, underlying both these dilemmas is a paradox of legitimacy: young people are largely suspicious of, and disengaged from, politics, meaning that there is no sustained public pressure to implement youth participatory mechanisms. Whatever symbolic value an initiative like the national youth policy strategy generates is squandered when its provisions are not implemented, leading to the vicious cycle of youth disengagement and disillusionment identified by Stockemer and Sundström.[266]

Overview of National Politics

Regime Type

Georgia has a semi-presidential system of government with executive power vested in a president, prime minister, and government. The president is elected directly by absolute majority for a five-year term and is relatively weak in terms of domestic political authority. Georgia's parliament is unicameral, with, as of writing, 150 total members, 77 elected by national proportional representation, and 73 elected by simple majority to 73 majoritarian districts for four-year terms. The prime minister is nominated by the ruling coalition in parliament and formally appointed by the president. The prime minister nominates the government, the Cabinet of Ministers, for approval by the parliament. As of writing, the Georgian Dream Coalition dominates parliament, holding 115 seats, with the United National Movement, European Georgia, Alliance of Patriots, and Industry Will Save Georgia parties also holding seats.

Political History, Dynamics, and Parties

Perhaps the episode of Georgia's modern political history that is most important for the study of youth participation was the country's Rose Revolution, in which a student-led anti-corruption movement resulted in the resignation of Georgia's second post-independence president, Eduard Shevardnadze in 2003. By the 2003 parliamentary elections, Shevardnadze's Citizens Union party operated primarily as a patronage machine for the distribution of state resources to political supporters. Frustrated with pervasive corruption, a group of student leaders initiated the *Kmara*! Movement, a campaign of protest and civil disobedience that succeeded in mobilizing young people against Shevardnadze's government around the issue of corruption. When Shevardnadze and the Citizen's Union resorted to electoral fraud in the 2003 election, *Kmara*! played a central role in mobilizing the mass protests that annulled election results and forced Shevardnadze's resignation.

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[266] Stockemer, Daniel, and Aksel Sundström. 2018. "Age Representation in Parliaments: Can Institutions Pave the Way for the Young?" European Political Science Review 10 (3). Cambridge University Press:467–90. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773918000048.

Following the subsequent election of reformer Mikheil Saakashvili as president, several prominent *Kmara!* leaders went into government or parliament associated with Saakashvili's United National Movement (UNM) party. Saakashvili also recruited several young technocrats both from within Georgia and from the Georgian diaspora to take high level posts in the government ministries. This cadre of young reformers presided over two years of dramatic anti-corruption reforms in which state agencies, notably the Interior Ministry, dismissed employees wholesale, instituted meritocratic hiring and promotion, and implemented draconian monitoring and punishment of corruption, resulting in the virtual elimination of petty corruption in what was one of the most corrupt countries in the world as recently as November 2003.

Members and supporters of the UNM continue to argue that the appointment of young people to high-level positions was necessary to rid the country of the "Soviet mentality" that kept it stuck in a cycle of corruption and political patronage. In contrast, opponents contend that these inexperienced young people in positions of power made significant mistakes, including miscalculations surrounding the 2008 Russian invasion of Georgia, and the authoritarianism of the UNM reform agenda, especially surrounding the 2008 and 2012 election cycles.

While the young reformers therefore made significant gains in reforming the public sector, the UNM did relatively little to reform the political system or the nature of party politics in Georgia. As a result, Georgia continues to struggle with the dilemmas of youth participation identified above. Following the initial optimism around the Rose Revolution, Georgian parties remained insulated from popular participation. Party youth wings operated primarily as patronage vehicles, employing partisans for election campaigns and protests with few opportunities for constructive participation or advancement outside of election cycles. Lacking a coherent youth constituency that is engaged in politics and civic life, elites have little incentive to initiate participatory mechanisms, including the national youth strategy, that would result in increased youth engagement in decision-making processes.

Explaining Youth Participation in Georgia

National Youth Policy Strategy

The Government of Georgia approved the National Youth Policy Document in April 2014 following an extended period of development, feedback, and revision, in keeping with the recommendations of UNICEF. Although the development process engaged a cross-section of young people and youth CSOs, there has been little movement to implement the provisions of the strategy document. The Government of Georgia established a coordinating council, consisting of deputy ministers, representatives of the parliamentary Committee of Sport and Youth Affairs, UNICEF, and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to consult on revisions, and a State Youth Policy Development Action Plan to coordinate actions of state bodies, CSOs, the private sector, and international organizations.[267]

Beyond these formalities, however, there is little evidence that the Youth Policy Document has been implemented in any meaningful way. Both representatives of CSOs and political opponents of the ruling Georgian Dream Coalition were quick to label the initiative as a purely symbolic enterprise designed to conform to norms of international organizations and

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[267]   http://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/georgia/

Western liberal democracies — in the words of two respondents, "We just tick the box."[268] This sort of criticism is to be expected in a polarized political environment, but even Georgian Dream representatives and supporters expressed concern over the degree to which the National Youth Policy Document had been advertised or implemented.[269]

Despite the apparent lack of a coordinated implementation campaign, there are isolated examples of state officials using the policy document to guide agency actions. In one example, Irakli Zhorzholiani, director of the Children and Youth Development Fund under the former Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs described how the fund used the strategy document to establish criteria for evaluating project proposals.[270] This use of the youth strategy document could provide a positive example to managers in other state agencies, but a more comprehensive implementation approach would institutionalize this practice so that adherence to the policy document was not dependent on sympathetic individuals.

Legal Mechanisms: Minimum Ages for Candidacy and Voting and Youth Quotas

In Georgia, there has been no significant advocacy for legal and political participatory instruments like lowered voting ages, lowered minimum ages to run for office, and youth quotas. With a few exceptions, there was broad agreement among our respondents across sectors that 18 years old was an appropriate minimum age for voting, and there was little support for the idea of lowering the age to 16. However, these opinions seemed to be largely driven by ambivalence. Opinions were much stronger, however, on the issue of minimum ages for office and youth quotas, both of which are shaped by the dilemma of youth versus experience.

Georgia has a staggered set of minimum ages for office. Currently, the minimum age of candidacy for the presidency is 35, with that age set to increase to 40 with the implementation of proposed amendments to the constitution. The minimum age of candidacy for parliament is 21. However, these ages for candidacy are politicized because of Georgia's experience with Saakashvili and the UNM starting in 2003. Following Shevardnadze's resignation, the Georgian constitution was amended to lower the age of candidacy for the presidency to 35 so that Saakashvili could run. However, the UNM's polarizing tenure, including several ministerial or deputy level appointments to people under the age of 35 resulted in a backlash that led to recent increases in ages of candidacy, and increased suspicion of young people in positions of authority.

Much of this backlash is due to the dramatic turnover in state offices following the Rose Revolution, and the polarizing actions of the Saakashvili administration. If people remain largely suspicious of young office holders, it is because the political system and political parties offer few avenues for upward mobility to gain constructive experience. Party organizations typically rely on young members to mobilize for campaigns, but allow little input into policies or programs, and few opportunities for advancement for young members.

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[268] Maisuradze, Keti (Chief of Party, Georgia, International Foundation for Election Systems). Interview with Bret Barrowman. January 2018. Tbilisi, Georgia; Leyraud, Jerome (Former Chief of Party, Georgia, International Foundation for Election Systems). Interview with Bret Barrowman. January 2018.

[269] Tskitishvili, Dimitri (Member of Parliament, Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia). Interview with Bret Barrowman. January 2018. Tbilisi Georgia; Mikheil Kavelashvili (Chairperson, Sports and Youth Issues Committee, Parliament of Georgia; Member of Parliament, Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia). Interview with Bret Barrowman. January 2018. Tbilisi, Georgia.

[270] Zhorzhorliani, Irakli (Director, Children and Youth Development Fund, (fmr.) Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs). Interview with Bret Barrowman. January 2018. Tbilisi, Georgia.

Intra-Party Policies and Party Youth Wings

The third dilemma surrounding youth participatory mechanisms is at the party level. While several parties employ mechanisms to facilitate youth membership, including formal party wings, many respondents were suspicious of these outlets offering any chance for meaningful participation or advancement within the parties. Political parties in Georgia are largely non-ideological. While the UNM post-2003 had a distinguishable center-right orientation, the major parties still rely on political patronage, the targeted exchange of private goods for political support, to link voters with elites. In this context, positions in youth party wings operate as a patronage mechanism; parties pay youth activists with little ideological loyalty for campaigns and demonstrations, and positions in youth wings and party lists are doled out to loyal political supporters.[271] In this sense, parties in Georgia have mechanisms that might, under certain circumstances, foster constructive youth participation, but the lack of an ideological basis for membership leads politically inclined youth to gravitate toward whatever party is currently in power to maintain access to jobs and resources.[272]

One recent example of this dynamic was the student protests in response to an embezzlement scandal surrounding the Student Self-Government, a state body that acts as a national student union or council at state universities, and that receives funding from the state budget. The scandal surrounds Student Self-Government officers who allegedly were politically connected to the UNM, and who therefore were able to use a significant amount of funds from the state budget for personal trips and entertainment with little oversight.[273] This scandal has been largely perceived as an example of politically connected individuals receiving influential positions with access to state resources in exchange for keeping the organization loyal to the ruling party.

In the case of Georgia, therefore, the effect of youth participatory mechanisms like party wings or youth representative organizations depends on the underlying nature of politics. Without significant reform of the way politics are conducted writ large, participatory mechanisms like youth party wings may help reproduce non-constructive forms of civic and political engagement.

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[271] Shengelia, Maka (Ministry of Youth and Sports). Interview with Bret Barrowman. January 2018. Tbilisi, Georgia; Saladze, Sulkhan (Director, Georgian Young Lawyers Association). Interview with Bret Barrowman. January 2018.

[272] Saladze, 2018.

[273] Shakulashvili, Lasha (Project and Reporting Officer, International Foundation for Election Systems, Georgia; Former Georgian Youth Delegate to United Nations). Interview with Bret Barrowman. January 2018. Tbilisi, Georgia.

Other Factors

Georgia, therefore, has experience with several youth participatory mechanisms, including a national youth policy strategy, lowering minimum ages of candidacy, and intra-party youth mechanisms. However, the implementation and effect of all of these is shaped by dilemmas of youth engagement. Young people in Georgia are interested in politics, but disillusioned and apathetic about a political system that resists input. Previous experience with low ages of candidacy helped renew the political system, but also led to inexperienced policymakers forced to handle a string of crises. Finally, participatory mechanisms within parties reproduce the clientelistic nature of the political system, leading to temporary opportunities being offered to politically loyal youth without opportunity for meaningful policy input or advancement.[274]

Our respondents largely pointed to structural and institutional underlying factors that might explain why youth participatory mechanisms in Georgia might be counterproductive, increasing disillusionment and alienation from politics rather than constructive engagement. As noted above, the clientelistic nature of the political system is a major contributor to a general feeling of disillusionment with a political system insulated from public input. However, our respondents almost unanimously identified the economy and education as factors that inhibit constructive youth political and civic engagement in Georgia. High youth unemployment and poor educational capacity, especially outside Tbilisi, effectively prevent youth from participating in decision-making processes.[275] As the argument goes, youth that are worried about securing income for their family, and/or those who lack training and education in civic processes do not have the opportunity to engage in less pressing activities like politics or civic life.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that the perception of the majority of our respondents in this case works against the theory of change underlying donor-driven youth participatory mechanisms. According to the logic of national youth policy strategies, reduced ages of voting and candidacy, youth quotas, and intra-party mechanisms, youth participation is a prerequisite for achieving good outcomes on policy issues that most directly affect youth, including the economy, education, and health. However, our research suggests that in Georgia, politicians, government officials, CSO representatives, and young people might perceive that causal chain as reversed. While it is difficult to generalize to other cases, in Georgia, material conditions including poverty and lack of employment opportunities and access to high quality education, as well as institutional factors like the nature of the political system, have significantly impeded constructive youth civic and political engagement.

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274 Saladze, 2018; Chubabria, Mariam (Youth Programs Coordinator, International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy). Interview with Bret Barrowman January 2018. Tbilisi, Georgia.

275 For example, Saladze, 2018; Benidze, Mikheil (Executive Director, International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy). Interview with Bret Barrowman. January 2018, Tbilisi, Georgia; Chubabria, 2018.

Case Study: Uganda

Introduction

With 78 percent of its population under the age of 30, Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world.[276] Since 1993, Uganda has had a reserved seat quota for national parliament and for district councils, and also has one of the longest-running experiences with a youth quota. Uganda's youth quota has been consistently implemented, filling five reserved seats in the unicameral national parliament. However, the youth quota is not the primary avenue through which young candidates make it into parliament; overall, 39 members of the 452-member parliament are under the age of 35 and a full 20 percent of MPs are under the age of 40.[277] Nonetheless, Uganda's quota experience provides interesting insights into a political ecosystem in which youth representation is an acknowledged priority.

Overview of Youth Representation in Uganda

The five reserved seats in the Ugandan national parliament are only the most visible tip of an elaborate, multi-layered youth council structure that, at the village level, starts with more than 500,000 youth elected to Village Youth Councils across the country, according to the CEPPS/NDI Field Office in Uganda, and data from the Village Youth Councils. Village Youth Council members in turn elect representatives to Parish Youth Councils, who then elect members to a sub-county level, who then elect members to a district level and, finally, district members elect from amongst their membership the representatives of the National Youth Council (NYC).[278] The five members of the national parliament are then elected via the general assembly of the National Youth Council, as are two youth members to serve on each of the 112 District Government Councils, one male and one female. In this way, by the time a youth representative has been elected to parliament or to a seat on the district council, they have already been

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[276] http://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/uganda/
[277] https://www.parliament.go.ug/find-an-mp
[278] The National Youth Council Act, 1993 Part III. Amended 2003, 2010.

repeatedly selected by their peers in lower-level elections.[279] As a result, the impact of Uganda's youth quota is intimately linked to the structure and nature of their multi-layered youth council.

Interlocutors across the spectrum endorsed the design and purpose of the youth council system, though all also acknowledged that implementation is full of challenges. The vast majority of investment in the youth council structure goes toward facilitating the multi-layered elections; in 2015–2016, the government of Uganda spent more than 50 billion Ugandan shillings (approximately US$14 million) on administering youth council elections — the same process that culminates in the election of the five youth members of parliament. In contrast, the annual operating budget for the entire youth council structure is two billion shillings ($540,000).[280] These cost constraints have significant implications for the functionality of the entire structure. Lower levels of youth councils (village, parish, and sub-county) do not function in practice, existing only to elect members of the higher-level youth councils.

The NYC is a permanent structure represented by a National Executive Committee (NEC) with the support of a full-time secretariat. In theory, even after the selection of individuals to fill the quota seats, the general assembly of the NYC retains a relationship with the youth representatives that have been selected to serve at both the national and district level. The general assembly of the NYC is, by law, supposed to meet annually. However, funds to host an annual meeting have not always been allocated, and this avenue for accountability is not well utilized. The NEC has been known to approach the youth MPs if there is a measure they want brought to parliament, though interlocutors indicate that the NYC and youth MPs can at times be working at cross-purposes as they sometimes advance competing agendas.

At the district level, the relationship between youth serving in quota seats on district councils and the national youth council structure is variable. Interlocutors indicate that the relationship depends largely on the capacity and interest of the NEC. At the initiative of the previous chair of the NEC, training on the budget cycle was organized for youth representatives serving on District Government Councils to enhance their ability to influence the priorities of those bodies at the most effective time in the legislative cycle. This initiative, however, was not continued after the election of a new NYC and its associated NEC. There is reportedly minimal coordination between district-level youth councils and the youth members serving on District Government Councils.

Interlocutors who see the national youth council system for its potential point to how vibrant the structure could be — at all levels — if it were adequately resourced and its members were trained. Others viewed the entire structure more cynically as a deliberately constructed tool that the ruling party uses to mobilize youth members for the purposes of capturing youth votes and support for government policies. A significant majority of NYC members are affiliated with the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party, although this is indicative of the larger state of party politics in Uganda, where almost 70 percent of members of the national legislature are affiliated with the ruling party as well. Multi-party politics was reintroduced in Uganda in 2005 and party affiliation — at least in the case of the national youth council structure — is for many candidates an opportunity calculation. Affiliating with the ruling party is seen to enhance one's chances to pass through to higher levels of the youth council structure and/or to gain access to resources, not necessarily an endorsement of party ideology.

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[279]   There are other avenues into the youth council structure that bypass lower level elections, including the inclusion of two representatives of the National Students' Association on all District Youth Councils. The current chair of the NYC National Executive Committee entered the structure through this route. National Youth Council (amendment) Act, 2003, Section 5(iii)

[280]   Budget figure reported by interlocutors at the National Youth Council.

In theory, the decentralized, grassroots origins of candidates in their respective village or neighborhood would suggest that candidates who eventually assume the reserved quota seats are able to achieve their positions regardless of access to the political center. In reality, political finance constraints are highly influential in determining which candidates are able to achieve success at the highest levels of the NYC structure. The monetization of politics was consistently mentioned by interlocutors as the largest barrier to meaningful participation. The cost of being elected at the higher levels of the National Youth Council structure are often significant, with interlocutors relaying stories of candidates paying to transport and accommodate district youth council members to the capital ahead of the vote, or "dumping out bags of cash" to induce youth council members to vote for them.

Even with the system as it is, multiple interlocutors endorsed the belief that if there is any organ where young people have defied money, it is the National Youth Council. There are certainly measures that can be taken to limit the impact of money on which youth candidates progress to the top of the youth council structure, but multiple interlocutors, even those skeptical of the independence of the NYC system, point out that every year at least one candidate selected for the quota seats achieves that position due to charisma and talent, which enables them to build a base of support and national visibility.

Analysis

Given the prevalence of national youth councils in countries around the world, the Ugandan model of linking their youth structures to national and subnational governance bodies is highly interesting. While the NYC structure in Uganda has proven to be subject to the same political currents at play in the general political arena — predominant party politics and the monetization of politics in particular — the clear linkages to state governance structures does create a visible platform for youth to be included in national agenda setting.

Uganda is not alone in creating a bridge between their national youth councils and national or subnational legislative bodies. Rwanda's two reserved youth quota seats are also selected via their national youth council structure. In other countries, however, the lack of linkage between national youth council structures is a source of frustration. A national youth council senator in Sri Lanka lamented the lack of a platform or bridge from the national youth parliament into mainstream politics, noting that though mechanisms to bring youth council resolutions to the attention of lawmakers have been discussed, they have not been implemented in practice. Given the resources that are invested in the creation of national youth council structures and the capacity of youth leaders that can be built through these institutions, innovative mechanisms that build links between youth councils and state governance bodies, including but not limited to reserved seats for national youth council members in the national or subnational legislative bodies, are worthy of consideration.

Case Study: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Source: NDI

Introduction: Political Context of BiH

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is a Balkan country that was once part of Yugoslavia and experienced a violent ethnic conflict in the early 1990s. As the result of the 1995 Dayton Agreement that ended the war, BiH is divided into two fairly autonomous entities (e.g., they have their own education systems and curriculum) with distinct ethnic makeups: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska (RS). Each of these entities has its own government down to the municipal level. There is also a national government with a presidency that rotates between the three largest ethnic groups.

More than 22 years after the war, BiH remains a deeply divided country across ethnic, entity, and ideological lines. A lack of meaningful reconciliation has left the country locked in a frozen conflict, where real and perceived grievances remain unresolved and prevent unified efforts to advance a public agenda. Top-down politics rooted in nationalistic rhetoric is pervasive and continues to spread deep divisions in the country. At the same time, prospects for membership in the European Union are being diminished, while public institutions are failing to serve BiH citizens, causing many people, especially youth, to leave the country with no plans to return. A high unemployment rate coupled with feelings of insecurity and little hope for a better future is driving this behavior.

Despite the political polarization and limited space for reform-minded political discourse, BiH still has a functioning multi-party system featuring ideological alternatives and different party structures. This includes parties with and without youth wings, which allows some comparative examination of how youth participate within parties and the general challenges faced by politically motivated young people. As part of a wider effort to understand the role political party youth wings can play in amplifying the voice and influence of young people, CEPPS/NDI undertook field research in BiH. The resulting case study sheds some light on the complex interplay between youth agency, the enabling environment inside individual political parties, and the political system that encourages zero-sum behaviors to maintain the status quo.

Methodology

From February 19 to February 26, 2018, we held a series of individual interviews and small-group discussions with a range of Bosnian actors familiar with national-level party politics. These included political party youth wing members, party leaders, assistance providers, academics, and civil society leaders. The research also involved observing a multi-partisan gathering of youth wing activists deliberating public policy priorities. We organized the research around specific lines of inquiry:

- What pathways do youth use to pursue political ambitions?
- How do political parties view the role of youth?
- How do youth advance as political leaders in parties?
- What are the roles of party youth wings?
- How do young women and men benefit from youth wing membership?
- What type of support has helped increase youth inclusion in BiH politics?

Analysis

Like many other countries including established and emerging democracies alike, less than 10 percent of 15–30 year-old Bosnians belong to parties, with 80 percent of this group primarily seeking employment opportunities. Those that do join represent a cross-section of the overall population, but with members of marginalized groups such as the Roma and persons with disabilities joining at much lower rates according to the "Voices of Youth" research conducted on behalf of the United Nations in 2016. With these numbers in mind, it is clear that party membership does not appeal to the majority of Bosnian youth. Yet this does not mean that young people are passive or disinterested in public affairs. There are a few established local Bosnian groups, such as the Institute for Youth Development (KULT), that are actively supporting the civic and political participation of interested young people across the country.

According to some of the young people interviewed, parties are often viewed as leader-driven machines that represent narrow, vested interests. They are also viewed as out of touch and closed to alternative viewpoints. As one young man said, "Party politics seems like a board game to young people with an interest in playing video games."[281] Some party leaders acknowledged the challenge of attracting the most talented young people, given negative perception among youth about the country's future and political gamesmanship. Nonetheless, some youth still join parties and party youth wings with the hope of influencing change through formal forms of political participation (e.g., developing public policy, campaigning, or running for office).

Over the course of the BiH study, we met with leaders and activists from seven parties with national-level parliamentary representation. Six of these have youth wings and one does not. Those with youth wings had varied structures defining the relationship between parent parties and youth wings. In some cases, young people who join the party automatically become youth wing members. In other cases, they have to request membership. Several of the parties give youth wing leaders a place on party boards, which was appreciated by the youth wing members interviewed. The young people interviewed, however, expressed different levels of satisfaction regarding the opportunities to influence decisions. They also mentioned the need for greater financial support from parent parties to plan and carryout independent activities, which they

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281   Anonymous. Interview with Aaron Azelton. 2017.

Source: NDI

argued could draw more young people into the party. Likewise, more resources would help them engage regional and international groupings with ideological ties, such as the Young European Socialists or International Young Democrat Union. A few of the parties organize internal training academies for young members, which youth identified as an important benefit. Young people from parties without training academies lamented the lack of structured learning opportunities available to them.

The one party without a youth wing takes the approach of "mainstreaming" youth throughout the party. This includes both regular political academies that educate youth on party functions and set-aside seats for youth on decision-making bodies. The young people interviewed appreciated this model, but also felt that their involvement does not always carry the same weight as that of older members.

Across the board, the parties expect their youth wings to play active roles during electoral campaigns by communicating messages and getting out the vote on behalf of their party. All of the parties also claim that they want to see young people running for office and have taken measures to this end. Many have established internal quotas to ensure young people find their way onto party lists. According to those interviewed, these mechanisms are probably used to greatest effect at the local level. At the national level, political calculations by party leaders seem to supersede internal policies aimed to elevate youth. The few exceptions are smaller parties that are apparently willing to take some political risks by putting young people near the top of their electoral lists.

The youth quotas are applied differently across parties. In some cases, the youth placed on electoral lists necessarily come from the youth wing membership. In other cases, however, party leaders hand pick youth who may come from outside the youth wing or outside the party altogether. At the same time, there are no hard and fast rules governing where the youth are placed on the list of candidates.

Beyond the election processes, there seems to be more room at the local level for youth wings to undertake activities. For instance, young people noted there are municipal-level youth development plans and budgets in the RS that can be influenced by local youth wing branches.

NDI has been working to support youth wings in BiH for several years. This has required taking an Individualized approach to work with each party. In some cases, assistance has focused on helping youth self-advocate for more access to decision making and resources inside their parties. In others, NDI has helped youth wing members learn how to organize campaigns and run for office.

According to those interviewed during the research, the most notable NDI program with youth wing members took place across party lines. In 2012, the Institute supported a group of young politicians from different political parties who worked jointly across party, ethnic, and entity lines to create joint policies on issues identified as important for young people all over the country, regardless of their differences. Some of the group members became the youngest secretaries general of their parties, some became MPs, some became party spokespersons, and, thanks to their joint work in the group, they continue looking for ways to cooperate across party lines, doing everything they can to get their parties closer in cooperating for the interests of BiH citizens. Following this unique example, in 2017 the Institute started supporting a second generation of young politicians from eight political parties. In consultation with civic leaders, academics, young entrepreneurs, and other party members, this multi-partisan group is working on policy recommendations that would stem the tide of young people leaving the country. As part of this process, the group has issued joint declarations to raise awareness and demonstrate common cause.

Conclusion

Despite continual developments in youth agency and changes to the enabling environment within a number of political parties, youth wing members are relatively limited in their ability to influence major political issues. There are significant systemic forces, in the form of entrenched leaders from the dominant ethnic-based parties, working to gain and maintain power. The same forces prevent shifts in the national discourse or bridging of ethnic divides. As a result, young people have little political space at the top and must find ways to make political inroads by working nationally on select policy issues or focusing on local-level efforts.

For more information please contact:

IFES
2011 Crystal Drive, 10th Floor
Arlington, VA 22202
Phone: 202.350.6700

IRI
International Republican Institute
1225 I (Eye) Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202.408.9450

NDI
455 Massachusetts Ave, NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20001-2621
Phone: 202.728.5500