The Impact of Government Policies on Youth Political Participation in Jordan

Musa waleed Alkhza'aleh [a,1]

[a] Department of Political Science, College of arts, Al- Yarmouk university.

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ABSTRACT

The actions and activities that go into planning, directing, and deciding on public policy are known as political processes. The term "youth political participation" describes how they engage and perform in political processes, voice their thoughts, and help to shape the political landscape and policies of their community. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between government policies and the degree and caliber of young political participation in Jordan. It covered electoral, educational, and social policy. The findings, which were obtained by a descriptive and aggregate technique, demonstrated how much young people depend on several forms of participation, including voting, protests, and membership in parties and groups. To better understand how to increase youth engagement in political life, it is helpful to identify the variables that either facilitate or impede their participation in the political process.

1. Introduction

As one of the essential pillars for guaranteeing the longevity of the democratic process and fostering communal development, youth participation in politics is clearly important. Youth are a diverse age group with unique traits, including the ability to be creative, vivacious, and change-oriented, as well as an awareness of contemporary technologies and digital platforms that can be used to improve the efficacy of political engagement. According to political and social studies, youth participation extends beyond simply casting a ballot in elections and includes a variety of activities, including engagement with political parties and non-governmental organizations, grassroots projects, awareness campaigns, and social media expression. This creates new opportunities to broaden the scope of political participation and improve democracy's sustainability [1, 2].

Even though adolescents are acknowledged to play a crucial role, their actual political engagement still faces numerous obstacles, particularly in nations with underdeveloped political institutions. This includes the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, where since the turn of the twenty-first century, there have been more initiatives to encourage young involvement, as seen by programs, policies, and legal changes meant to give them more political clout. Nevertheless, it is still unclear how effective youth political involvement really is and how much government programs have improved it. Without a strong intent to comprehend the factors that determine young engagement in politics, many research have neglected to examine how policies and measurements affect adolescent behavior, instead perceiving participation as a restricted or negative phenomena [3, 4].

The efficiency of government programs in promoting and including Jordanian youth in the political process, the degree of youth awareness of these policies, and their influence on their day-to-day political activities are all areas of substantial study deficiency. A methodical, scientific investigation that tackles policy analysis, assesses empowerment initiatives, and pinpoints the obstacles to successful youth involvement is required. In order to improve policies and broaden participation mechanisms, this study attempts to offer useful insights and suggestions [5].

By examining the types and levels of participation, identifying the obstacles it encounters, and assessing the efficacy of the policies and programs governing it, this study seeks to understand how Jordanian government policies affect young people's political engagement. Therefore, the goal of the research is to offer evidence-based suggestions for promoting and growing young engagement in order to enhance their position in political decision-making and increase their level of participation. This will guarantee that their opinions are more successfully incorporated into Jordan's political destiny and lead to the intended long-term democratic growth [6].

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Concepts of Political Participation

One of the key ideas used to characterize and explain how people and groups behave in representative institutions and political action is political participation. All actions taken by people or organizations with the intention of influencing political choices and policymaking are referred to as political engagement. It can be divided into various categories, such as engagement in party activities and civil society groups, electoral participation (voting and running for office), and non-traditional participation (protests and demonstrations). In addition to outward acts, participation also encompasses political manifestations through contemporary media, especially social media, which has emerged as a significant forum for youth activism and political engagement [7].

It is crucial to stress that the idea of political involvement is always evolving and changes depending on political, cultural, and historical contexts. Participation levels and forms range from passive to productive and positive contact. Since participation is not just restricted to external interaction, but also includes the degree of awareness and knowledge of how to interact and control societal resources and opportunities, we must also incorporate the extent of youth awareness and performance regarding societal issues and priorities within the framework of this concept [8].

2.2 Theories of Government Influence on Participation

The goal of theories of government effect on political participation is to clarify how government policies relate to the degree and patterns of engagement among society's members, particularly young people. This association can be explained by several theories, such as [9, 10]:

- Legitimacy Theory: According to this theory, government policies that represent the needs and preferences of the populace help to increase its legitimacy and, as a result, increase participation. Youth who are empowered and given access to education and work possibilities, for instance, feel more involved and a part of the community.

- Effect-Interaction idea: According to this idea, people's conduct is directly impacted by government policies, but the degree of this effect varies depending on how much they interact and engage with the policies. Youth effective engagement is more likely when policies are inclusive and open.

- Democratic Credibility Theory: This theory emphasizes how crucial youth involvement is to bolstering political institutions' credibility. It holds that laws that give young people the freedom to voice their thoughts and pursue their goals help to establish a strong sense of legitimacy and raise constructive expectations for the political system.

Expectancy idea: According to this idea, young people's expectations about the results of their involvement have a significant impact on the degree of participation. They are more inclined to take political action when policies are supportive and accommodating [11].

These ideas offer a more thorough comprehension of the elements that connect youth participation and governmental policies. They also offer a framework for study and assessment based on sound theoretical underpinnings, which aids in explaining why some policies are successful in promoting participation while others are unsuccessful [12].

3. Government Policies in Jordan

The enactment and use of laws intended to increase young people's involvement in politics and civic life has grown significantly in Jordan over the past few decades. This chapter explores the efficacy and effects on young involvement of educational and social policies, youth programs and seminars, and electoral reforms [13].

3.1 Educational and Social Policies

Social and educational policies are essential for empowering young people and broadening their political perspectives. These policies include initiatives to raise political consciousness, create curricula that integrate ideas of democracy and human rights, and offer workshops and training sessions targeted at helping young people become more capable leaders and communicators. The "Party Schools" project, which tries to raise students' political and party consciousness, and national programs that focus on social change and getting young people talking about local concerns are notable examples [14].

It is important to note that the government is working to improve the social circumstances of young people by implementing initiatives that help underprivileged youth and give them access to jobs and education, which increases their sense of involvement and integration in the political process [15].

3.2 Electoral Reforms

Numerous improvements have been made to Jordan's electoral system with the goal of increasing young participation and giving them more influence over decision-making. The Election Law change and the implementation of a new electoral district system, which emphasizes proportional representation and expanding the number of seats allotted to youth, are two of the most notable of these innovations. In order to facilitate young exercise of their right to vote, a provision was included in 2016 that encouraged youth engagement in electoral blocs and improved electronic registration and nomination processes [16].

Even with these changes, it is still difficult to translate them into meaningful and successful young participation because higher levels of participation still call for more cultural and awareness-raising assistance [17].

3.3 Youth Programs and Seminars

In order to promote youth political involvement, the government and civil society organizations have started a number of seminars and programs. These include political job training programs, political rights workshops, and forums for discussion between young people and decision-makers [18].

Initiatives like the Youth Forum and the National Youth Forum, for instance, have arisen with the goal of offering a forum for the exchange of ideas and perspectives as well as the organization of contests and awareness-raising events via a variety of media platforms. National Youth Days have also been established to promote youth participation in politics and society, as well as to cultivate a sense of patriotism and belonging [19].

3.4 Analyzing Their Effectiveness

Notwithstanding the endeavors undertaken, an evaluation of the efficacy of the previously described legislation and initiatives shows noteworthy achievements in educating young people about their political rights and offering some resources to improve their involvement. Economic impediments, social and cultural limitations, and a lack of institutional empowerment, however, continue to be barriers to greater direct political participation [20].

Research also shows a discrepancy between stated policies and real-world implementation. In crucial sectors, youth engagement is still low, necessitating a review of policies and the creation of more potent plans to turn the vision into reality [21].

4. Results

An To evaluate the degree of political engagement among Jordanian youth and the effects of governmental policies, a theoretical approach was used for analysis based on theoretical and documentary evidence.

In order to apply concepts and theories in a way that was suitable for the Jordanian context, the theoretical analysis drew on a thorough assessment of conceptual and theoretical frameworks pertaining to youth political engagement, as well as earlier research and pertinent published reports.

4.1 Theoretical Articulation of the Level of Political Participation

The research is predicated on the idea that a number of factors, such as personal perspective, the culture in place, the availability of opportunities, and the environment for political preparation, affect how involved young people are in political processes. Theoretically, active participation and symbolic participation share a number of notions. While the latter calls for greater levels of direct engagement with political institutions or striving to bring about partial or total changes in policies or national concerns, the former is gauged by involvement in formal activities like elections and voting.

Numerous scholars concur that Jordan's young participation rates show a varied trend, with symbolic participation—especially during elections and official gatherings—growing at the expense of deep participation, which necessitates hands-on involvement and actual decision-making power. Cultural, social, and political factors—most notably, a lack of faith in institutions, a lack of efficient channels of communication, and the underrepresentation of young people in parliamentary and political bodies—are to blame for this state of affairs.

Furthermore, research indicates that although youth involvement in political volunteering and community service is vibrant and active, its direct influence on governmental policies is still limited, as political change is primarily dependent on how responsive the institutions and mechanisms in place are.

4.2 Evaluating the Quality of Participation and the Impact of Government Policies

The theoretical study is predicated on the idea that various government policies encounter various obstacles that impact the caliber of participation. These issues revolve around disparate responses from various youth groups and minimal influence. Youth programs and seminars, as well as political awareness and education initiatives, are seen as instruments for empowering young people and increasing awareness. Their efficacy is still constrained, though, if they are not supported by modifications to institutions and infrastructure or if they are not made to promote the implementation of what is learnt through tangible, real-world applications.

Regarding electoral reforms and policies aimed at promoting voting rights and participation, they frequently rely on legal and regulatory strategies, but their influence on altering participation patterns is not always long-lasting, particularly when cultural or social barriers are present, such as youths' lack of faith in the efficiency of institutions or preconceived notions about political work.

4.3 The Impact of Policies on Youth Political Identity and Perceptions

According to the theoretical study, government actions influence how young people perceive their place in the national process and help to shape their political identities. They are seen as instruments for enhancing a sense of national identity and fostering beliefs about the value of involvement. On the other hand, it shows that inadequate direct communication policies or the lack of policies for ongoing encouragement and follow-up restrict the rise in political consciousness and, as a result, lower the caliber of participation.

The analysis also emphasizes how policies that prioritize skill development, capacity building, and the execution of initiatives that foster communication between young people and decision-makers can help to improve the quality of participation, turning it from merely symbolic to effective, lasting, and influential. But in order to create initiatives and show measurable results, this calls for some regularity and supervision, which will help bring about the intended political and cultural change.

The theoretical analysis concludes that government policies, in spite of their diversity, should embrace more comprehensive and integrated approaches that aim to improve trust, raise political awareness, and offer a variety of transparent and varied avenues for participation, thereby increasing their influence and relevance among young people. Periodic assessments of their results and effects on young people's conduct and responses to Jordan's political system should also be part of this.

5. Discussion

One of the most crucial aspects of the study is the discussion section. In order to better understand the relationship between government policies and the quantity and caliber of youth political participation in Jordan, it interprets and analyzes the theoretical findings derived from the theoretical framework, contrasting them with pertinent conceptual frameworks and broad trends. The conversation highlights the potential and difficulties that policies impose on young behavior and political involvement, and it is based on an interactive dialogue between theoretical facts and research assumptions [22].

5.1 Interaction between Policies and Participation

When considering the ways in which government policies either promote or inhibit youth political engagement, it is evident how they affect this phenomenon. Theoretical research indicates that educational and awareness-raising initiatives, including seminars and programs, might increase youths' real participation by promoting a sense of duty and political knowledge. However, these

policies' longevity, flexibility to adjust to social and political changes, and integration with pertinent institutions all play a significant role in their efficacy [23].

Increased involvement can result from electoral reforms that make voting easier, open up more digital channels, and encourage social media engagement, particularly among the most marginalized populations or young people who want to have a more significant impact. However, these programs' effects are not necessarily immediate because participation behavior is influenced by a number of other factors, including the dominant political culture, unfavorable opinions about political action, and a lack of faith in the legitimacy of institutions [24].

5.2 Challenges Facing the Government and Youth

The efficacy of government measures in promoting young political involvement is impacted by a number of issues. The absence of clear policies aimed at boosting effective and sustainable engagement, as well as the lack of continuous contact between youth and policymakers, are two of the most notable of these issues. Furthermore, stereotyped perspectives on political engagement and the detrimental consequences of sentiments of exclusion or disempowerment reflect a cultural and societal barrier that restricts young people's desire to participate fully.

The accumulation of discrepancies between declared policies and actual outcomes is facilitated by the lack of comprehensive monitoring and evaluation processes as well as tools to gauge the efficacy of programs and policies. If considered, the potential for creating a suitable setting to increase involvement is limited by the absence of a supportive legal framework or the inadequate money provided for youth activities [25].

6.   Conclusion

The study demonstrated that youth political awareness is significantly shaped by government policies, especially those pertaining to education and youth initiatives. However, issues with restricted performance evaluation, a lack of continuity, and rigid standards limit their effectiveness and lessen their beneficial effects on participation. In order to improve the efficiency and openness of election processes, it is necessary to integrate contemporary technological tools and broaden communication, even though electoral changes have made the process easier.

In terms of participation quality, it was discovered that existing regulations frequently prioritize traditional involvement over digital participation and sustained awareness-raising, which lessens their long-term influence. Real and effective engagement is nevertheless hampered by cultural issues including low institutional trust and a lack of receptivity to young people's perspectives.

Last but not least, increasing youth participation in Jordan necessitates initiatives backed by creative tactics and adaptable laws that keep up with social and technological advancements. Additionally, youth must be involved in the creation, execution, and assessment of policies to guarantee their efficacy and the accomplishment of their long-term objectives.

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