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Representation of Young People both Domestically and at the International Level

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Master's Thesis

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Table of Contents

Abstract	3
Chapter 1: Introduction	5
Hypothesis	6
Case Studies	6
International Institutions and Their Approach to Representation	8
Chapter Two: Literature Review	11
Chapter Three: The Importance of Youth Representation	16
Chapter Four: Case Studies	22
Sweden	23
Costa Rica	24
Nigeria	25
Brazil	27
Chapter Five: IPU Report and Recommendations	32
Chapter Six: Youth Representation at United Nations and World Bank	39
Chapter Seven: Policy Recommendation and Conclusion	49
Bibliography	54

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Abstract

Young people have played a crucial role in solving major global challenges. Their energy, innovation, passion, and creativity have allowed for the advancement and consolidation of society. However, till this day, youth continue to be excluded, discriminated against, and underrepresented within political spheres. This thesis evaluates youth representation within decision-making processes at the national and international levels. It comprises seven chapters that analyze the current narrative of inclusive participation of young people from international organizations, national governments, scholars, and independent institutions. Initially, this work considers the questions of how underrepresentation occurs and why young people are important today. The thesis examines the impact of young people in the most prominent sectors of society, such as education, health, migration, and labor. At the national level, Chapter Four looks into representation within four countries, Sweden, Costa Rica, Brazil, and Nigeria. The different case studies give a closer look at current national policies on the matter, and the restriction limiting youth participation that have prompted greater local activism. Moreover, the analysis of the IPU Report on Youth Participation in National Parliaments offers a general perspective on the current situation of low youth participation in parliaments, taking into consideration facts and figures from most recent data collected from national parliaments. Consequently, at the international level, this work evaluates

approaches and the current narrative of the United Nations and the World Bank in dealing with global youth issues. It concludes by confirming the argument that the cause of this underrepresentation is mainly due to age-restriction laws for public office positions within national governments, the wrong perception that youth lack experience and knowledge, and the preference of young people to participate in other forms of political participation. Lastly, the policy recommendation proposes strategies to improve the matter, primarily on a top to bottom approach. The suggestions entail strengthening research and data collection, holding governments accountable on their promises, increasing funding for youth programmes, educating the general population about the needed for youth representation, and fostering partnerships between governments, private sector, NGOs, and civil society.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The participation of young people in public affairs is among one of the most important concerns in the debate on the extension of the democratic process. It is evident that the presence of young people in other types of collective action contributes to the creation of different participatory social experiences, yet there is little youth participation in formal political spaces. Today, more than 50% of the world's population is under 30 years old (IPU, 2016). According to the 2018 Secretary-General Report, Africa is the youngest continent with 68% of its population under the age of 30, and Asia being the continent with the highest number of young people with 1.1 billion. Yet, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), people under 30 years old make up less than 2% of the world's members of parliament (IPU 2016). The Not Too Young to Run Campaign stated that 73% of countries restrict eligible young voters from running for governmental positions (UN DESA 2016). However, without extensive input from young people, we could risk the possibility of not considering youth as important contributors to the solutions of global challenges, such as climate change, peace, and security, and the protection of human rights.

Moreover, the underrepresentation of young people has been reflected within international organizations, such as the United Nations, where several Members States have not included youth representatives within their delegations. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), only 50 to 60 Member States, out of 193, have included Youth Delegates as part of their Permanent Missions (UN DESA 2013). For several years, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations have encouraged Member States to include youth representatives in their missions. UN

documents, such as the World Programme of Action for Youth and the Guide to Youth Delegates, have raised this issue of underrepresentation. However, there is no legally binding document that requires governments to include young people within delegations.

This comparative underrepresentation of young people in elected or international bodies raises the following question: Why are young people underrepresented in public office positions within national governments and international organizations? To address this question, it is important to incorporate the principle of inclusivity, including a balance of participation, where young people, who make up a great percentage of the world's population, are no longer left behind.

Hypothesis

The thesis asks this research question: Why are youth underrepresented in both national parliaments and international organizations? Are they systematically being discriminated against? By analyzing scholarly articles and reports, the thesis proposes the hypothesis that the lack of representation of young people in the political sphere is partially due to national age-restriction laws for public office positions, a sense that young people may not have enough experience, and the preference of young people to participate in other forms of political activism as a result of being left out of the democratic process.

Case Studies

Several scholarly articles, reports, and UN resolutions have previously addressed this issue of underrepresentation, at national and international levels, and lay out approaches to addressing the issue. Research has been undertaken by scholars from

Brazil, Costa Rica, and Sweden, as well as youth specialized agencies and organizations who have published important documentation regarding youth policies and youth development. Furthermore, this thesis analyzes previous UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as data from the Youth Development Index and Inter Parliamentary Union.

Defining “youth” as between the ages of 18 to 30, I have chosen four specific countries that will be the base of my research design and will guide me in answering my research question. I will further analyze current youth policies in Brazil, Costa Rica, Sweden, and Nigeria, as well as formal and non-formal ways for political participation of young people in each country. Moreover, by looking at documentation and data, it is useful to compare each case and deconstruct each nation’s youth policy to find answers to the issue of youth underrepresentation within governments. There is much more research and data to collect on youth governmental participation that could further explain: Why the lack of representation occurs; What the consequences are as a result of youth underrepresentation and; Why policy decision-making would benefit from greater youth participation. To address the issue, there is a need to examine the processes that involve creating national youth policies and youth intergovernmental resolutions, and how to reinforce Member State requirement to include more youth in policy-making positions and even consider establishing quotas.

Sweden, with a minimum voting age of 18, also has a minimum age of 18 for candidacy as parliamentarians and higher-level positions (IPU Parline Database, 2016). Moreover, 12.3% of Parliamentarians in the country are under 30 years old. Rated High by the Youth Development Index with 0.794, Sweden is a country with greater levels of political participation of young people. In the case of Costa Rica, the age of candidacy for

parliament is 21 with a minimum voting age of 18. Its parliament contains only 3.5% of people under 30. However, the Youth Development Index has rated Costa Rica Very High on political participation of young people overall with a 0.926 (YDI, 2015). Examining Costa Rica and Sweden, it becomes clear that political participation of young people is not solely based on age-restriction laws, but also that higher political engagement does not necessarily mean higher youth governmental representation. Within Latin America, Brazil has the largest number of young people. According to the Youth Development Index, Brazil scores medium to low in political participation of young people, where only 3.9% of its parliamentarians are under 30 years old (IPU Parline Database, 2016). Being among one of the biggest countries in the world in size, population, and economy, it raises the question of why youth underrepresentation occurs. Furthermore, Nigeria ranks Low in political representation of young people with no parliamentarians under 30. The age of candidacy for public office positions has a minimum of 30 years for the lower house, and 35 for upper houses. These alarming figures were even higher a few years ago when age of candidacy was over 40 years old.

International Institutions and Their Approach to Representation

In order to take the matter to a global perspective, it would be useful to examine international organizations that have constantly promoted and reported on youth political participation, in this case, UN resolutions and reports on the matter. Assuming that greater participation of young people would lead to changes in political outcomes, United Nations partners, compacts, and inter-governmental organizations have joined the discussion of youth underrepresentation. For instance, the *Youth Compact to Reshape Humanitarian Work* (2016) serves as an example of policy application within

international organizations. It provides necessary steps towards Member States' agreements on youth policy. One of the actions of the compact is to "Support systematic inclusion of engagement and partnership with youth, in all phases of humanitarian action through sharing of information and involvement in decision-making processes at all levels." (Youth Compact, Action 2). On the other hand, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) issued the report on *Youth Participation in National Parliaments 2016*. It highlights over 30 recommendations to national governments on increasing young people's participation within parliaments. It concluded that, "There is an urgent need for action by the world's parliaments to address the underrepresentation of young people in their membership," where "the number of young MPs under 30 remains stubbornly and persistently low, at 2.1 per cent of the world total." (IPU, 2016, 29). As explained in the IPU report, the issue of underrepresentation is not a self-correcting problem. Certainly, the evidence indicates that in countries with higher numbers of young people, the problem of underrepresentation continues and may be worsening. I will examine here the hypothesis that countries which proactively recruit youth to participate in politics or participate in international youth conventions are more likely to have higher youth representation in parliament. Levels of youth representation vary substantially across countries and age ranges. At the regional level, countries in Europe and the Americas have the greatest number of young parliamentarians in single and lower chambers, while countries in Asia and Oceania perform the best among upper political levels.

This thesis takes into consideration four important national cases of youth political participation, as well as analyzing the matter at a more global level by addressing the current narrative within international organizations. The methodology use in this thesis is based on analysis of scholarly articles, reports, data sets, and United

Nations Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions. To further address the question of youth underrepresentation, this research also examines specific alternatives that could be taken to regulate, educate, subsidize, conduct further research, and create partnerships that develop platforms for youth inclusion. Subsequently, I propose the need to seek partnerships between international agencies, national governments and local authorities that build a policy dialogue with young people on political issues that concern them, such as unemployment, political corruption, voting fraud, malicious campaigning, health, education, among others.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The World Programme of Action for Youth was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1995. It complied with the obligations stated in Resolution 45/103 and 49/152 where Member States formally addressed the necessity to include young people as part of their delegations, as well as to highlight them as important partners for the betterment of global issues. The resolution presents arguments that recognize youth as drivers of social change and innovation. It also brings into perspective the need to recognize young men and women as full participants in society. The resolution proposes ten priority areas to be addressed by governments, but also encourages the inclusion of non-governmental organizations and other partners. Some of these areas involve health, hunger and poverty, drug abuse, and full and effective participation in decision-making processes. The resolution recalls the importance of giving spaces for youth to develop, challenge their potential, and influence policy that will bring better economic, social, and living conditions to future generations. This resolution offers important information that is useful to my research. The report collects data from Member States on health, education, unemployment and outlines specific actions to be taken by states and local institutions on the issue of underrepresentation. However, the resolution does not offer alternatives to critical issues of funding, research improvement, data collection, and policy alternatives. It does not emphasize strongly enough the challenges that confront the most vulnerable youth, especially in developing countries, and also avoids pointing out the most critical regions of the world where many issues that youth face are being ignored. Nevertheless, Resolution 50/81 sets a precedent

for future UN youth-related resolutions and inspires agencies to offer platforms for young people internationally.

In December 2015, The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2250 on youth, peace, and security. The motion aims to “increase inclusive representation of youth in decision-making at all levels in local, national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict...” (SC RES 2250, pg. 3, 2015). This resolution was inspired by the *Amman Youth Declaration* that was launched at the Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security and which represents the voice of young people who advocate for peace building initiatives and political participation worldwide (SC Res 2250, pg. 2). This resolution urges Member States to increase the representation of young people in decision-making at all levels. It defines youth to be between the ages of 18 and 29. Here, countries highlight the importance of protecting youth in conflict and post-conflict situations, while also “Recognizing that today’s generation of youth is the largest the world has ever known, and that young people often form the majority of the population of countries affected by armed conflict” (SC Res 2250, pg. 1). The resolution bases its argument on previous General Assembly resolution 62/126 and 50/81, *World Programme of Action for Youth*, as well as data from the UN DP report on *Enhancing Youth Political Participation throughout the Electoral Cycle*, and the *Amman Youth Declaration*.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development presents an extensive set of targets that address the major issues of the 21st century. The agenda was agreed upon by United Nations Members States at the 70th General Assembly. It includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including 169 targets that challenge issues of human rights, inequality, poverty, climate change, quality education, among others. The plan is to

achieve these goals, the SDGs, by the year 2030. The documents showcase specific areas of improvement to be accomplished in a 15 years period. The agenda brings together multi- stakeholders from other international institution. For instance, the World Bank and the IMF are committed to be equal partners for the achievement of the goals, as stated in the resolution among other international organizations. Moreover, the resolution brings into perspective problems that are, and will, affect the younger generations, such as a climate change, peace and security, and inequality. This agenda provides important information, relevant for my thesis, by bringing into the discussion major development issues worldwide and their effect on young people. For instance, the set of targets on the goals of education and inequality, highlight that the most vulnerable population in these matters are young people, where global institutions play a key role. However, the resolution does not specify major enforcement mechanisms or alternatives for compliance of Member States. Therefore, it is difficult to understand how effective the impact of the agenda will be within specific national government plans. Nevertheless, the resolution enumerates ways to follow up with states and partners on the development of each issues on a yearly basis.

The outcome document of the World Bank Youth Summit provides updated information situation on the major challenges that young people face today, particularly in the economic and development fields. The report highlights gender equality in education, skills for the economy and workforce, and technology and innovation as some of the major themes that concern youth around the world (WB, 6). Moreover, the document brings into perspective what are some of the current programs that the World Bank is working on for the benefit of young people. The document lays out the argument that participants around the world expressed, namely that issues of funding, inclusive

participation, and the lack of multi-sector partnerships, are obstructing the process towards youth development. Therefore, the World Bank is willing to continue, in collaboration with states, to create and improve programmes that will tackle the issues more effectively in the most vulnerable countries. This report provides relevant information for my thesis in regards to a more global view on the current situation of youth development worldwide. However, the report is mostly based on the perspectives of participants at the forum, which limits the understanding for those sectors of society and countries who were not involved in creating the outcome document. However, the document provides relevant information when it comes to the stage of current World Bank projects on youth, and the measures to be taken for their improvement.

The World Development Report published by the World Bank Group (WBG) presents detailed information on the current stage of the world in addressing the major challenges youth face today, including detailed content on the advancement of development worldwide. Some of the major topics addressed in the report are quality education for a more skilled and trained society, the crises in learning for the most vulnerable, unhealthy politics and low accountability that do not prioritize the development of society, among others. The document provides important information in regards to young people's development in society. Chapter 8 demonstrates some of the data that reflects youth unemployment and job skill training in countries, as well as the opportunities and challenges that youth face in the workforce. It also presents some of the successful cases where institutional programs improved the economic and educational opportunities for the younger generations and the improvement of their capabilities through education (WBG, 154). The report provides useful information, relevant for my thesis, on young people's representation in society for the improvement of issues on

quality education and inclusive participation. However, the document mainly focuses on development in the educational sector, without considering much of the political and economic side of it. Moreover, it would be important to use some of the data available through this report, in order to contrast cases of specific countries that are, or are not, advancing the issues of youth development.

Chapter Three: The Importance of Youth Representation

Public figures have constantly mentioned in their discourse how important it is to consider youth because they represent the future. However, youth are also the “Now.” And their concerns and experiences must be heard. Yet, young people continue to be discriminated against. In many instances, this sector of the population is being neglected because of the perception that they lack maturity and experience. However, how can the world’s greatest issues be solved without the participation of young people who make up a large part of the global population? This chapter evaluates the critical role of young people in different sectors of society including education, health, labor, migration, and entrepreneurship, where they have important contributions to offer.

Young people are important decision-makers for the betterment of education. Sustainable Development Goal 4, Quality Education, highlights the need to give young people appropriate spaces to develop. However, the latest progress report on the SDGs reveals that there are many developing countries where youth lack personal and professional skills due to the low quality of education they receive in early ages. Understanding the priorities and needs of young people in formal and informal educational spaces means listening to their concerns and bringing them to the national conversation. Student councils, in schools and colleges, are crucial for this conversation. How can we make sure that there is representation of young people within the educational sector? Academia is and should be a safe space for youth to develop their ideas and be listened to. It does not only mean hearing and giving space, it is also about taking action on those ideas to transform them into reality. Academic institutions are places where young people should be heard and taken into account.

Furthermore, children and youth are some of the most vulnerable populations during health crises. The health sector must ensure that young people's health needs are being treated. Bullying, for instance, is one of the greatest issues that affect the mental health and well-being of young people. Depression, high levels of stress, and anxiety are common conditions that young people go through every day. SDG number 3, on promoting healthy lives of people, highlights the target to reduce mortality rates of children and youth, as well as ensure access and education on sexual and reproductive health, family planning, and the prevention of substance abuse. These are some topics that affect young people every day. Another critical factor that explains why youth are important and need to be represented, not mentioned in the SDGs, is suicide prevention, which becomes a critical condition of young people every day. These and many other issues that affect people constantly are proof of the necessity of giving young people a voice in society.

Unemployment continues to be one of the major problems of our time. The generation most affected by this issue is youth. Millions of young people who had finished high school or university find themselves in a very competitive, limited, labor market, which offers them very few alternatives to combat this obstacle. Companies and institutions are demanding much more experience, skills, and time. However, they do not balance this with a commitment to adequate monetary incentives. For instance, thousands of internships offered by big institutions demand tens of hours per week for no payment, at the cost of 'getting experience.' Countries with large numbers of unemployed youth will be unable to advance their economies and strengthen their private and public sector if they ignore their youth. It may cause the brightest, educated people, to migrate to places where they can find better opportunities, creating brain drain. The lack of opportunities

may cause certain youth to look for informal jobs that do not offer them the necessary protection and career guidance. In some occasions, it could force them to undertake illegal activities or work in the black market. Some major international institutions need to reevaluate their policies of employment and increase compensation, therefore, giving the necessary attention to the needs of young people. As an example, the UN constantly takes on thousands of interns in each of their offices at headquarters, the Secretariat being the one with the highest number of interns. Some of these young professionals or students, travel from all over the world for these internships. All of these expenses are paid by the interns. Even though, the organization demands full time hours per week and in many instances overtime. However, there is no monetary compensation for these efforts. What can be analyzed from this case is, that only those people with enough resources to pay for their travel, room and board, can have these opportunities. Therefore, even if a person has the potential and the skills to be an intern, but does not have the money, he or she cannot take advantage of this opportunity. On a more positive note, the constant complaints made by young interns, especially those who are in very expensive cities like New York and Geneva, have made the organization reevaluate its internship policies. UN specialized agencies, such as WFP, are now giving monthly stipends to their interns. However, the Secretariat continues to offer nonpaid opportunities.

Representation of youth at the national and international level does not only mean representation politically, it also implies representation in the labor market. There cannot be inclusive participation at all levels, if youth continue to be underpaid, overworked, and undervalued. Even though the Secretary-General has launched the Youth 2030 Strategy, which intends to bring young people into formal structures of decision-making, representation still remains unclear and shallow, where participation only remains within

scope of events, conferences, and ludic activities. It may suggest that the UN is using young people as a marketing tool for global outreach. These campaigns, such as the SDGs, would not be successful without the promotion and participation of young people. And in terms of work, the decimal number of young staff and non-paid interns, may imply that youth are just a tool for cheap labor. On the other hand, the UN has a very minimal, almost null, young professional staff. UN Human Resources website indicates that only 0.0095% of male professional staff and 0.027% of female professional staff are under 30 years old (UN Human Resources). Therefore, it illustrates how most of the decision made at the UN on youth programmes, platforms, and resolutions are made by non-youth groups.

In the current refugee crises, young people and women have been the most effected. Fleeing from conflict not only interrupts and changes the lives of youth, but also affects their normal development. Young people that suffer from forced migration go through several traumatic experiences. Having representation and advisement from young people within decision-making processes and policy making exercises allows international institutions and states to understand the necessities of young refugees, who make up a huge number of people fleeing from conflict. UNHCR has revealed that during times of conflict the most vulnerable are mainly children, youth, and women. Refugee camps are filled with hundreds of young people who are unable to continue their education. Even within camps, there must be ongoing processes that allow young professionals and students to be meaningfully involved in local decision-making platforms. They are not only relevant actors who must be heard, they are also the generation that will take over the unsolved challenges of refugee crises. Youth must not be left out of the conversation on solving the refugee crises. The recent New York

Declaration on refugees and migrants states the necessity of ensuring the protection of the younger generation in times of conflict. States and international organization are the main actors to provide the necessary measures to assist young refugees.

In the current stage of technology, the innovative and creative ideas of young people are needed more than ever. Entrepreneurship programs, startups, and incubators are ideal spaces for youth to develop their ideas. In these circumstances, the private sector is a great player. Companies may provide sustainable funding for idea-developing projects by young people and continue fostering innovative minds. Participation of youth in the private sector, as part of advisory boards or in leadership positions is necessary for promoting inclusive conversations. The United Nations Global Compact serves as a platform for private companies and businesses to take action on global challenges. Signatures to this partnership are advocates for the SDGs and other UN related initiatives. Many of these corporations may employ a considerable number of young people to allow for a more balanced representation. The younger generation is the one that takes the lead on technological advancements. States and academic institutions are the main source for providing the necessary tools and knowledge to further advance the industry. For instance, there are many universities that provide funding for ideas to develop entrepreneurship competitions to help build the base line for starting youth-led businesses.

Having youth represented at all levels is important because it brings inclusion and equitable decision-making. Young people's problems cannot be solved without having young people as part of the conversation. The concerns encountered by the sectors described above cannot be solved without the contribution of young people because it affects them as well. Youth underrepresentation affects not only communities in the most

vulnerable countries, but also in developed nations as well. There is a need to create spaces for young people to be active members of society worldwide.

Chapter Four: Case Studies

Countries around the world have approached youth representation in different ways. Asia, for instance, is the continent with the greatest number of young people. As a continent, Africa has the youngest population. Some countries in Latin America are slowly transforming themselves into more youth-oriented nations. Nevertheless, Western nations continue to be at the top when it comes to representation. This chapter evaluates the historical evidence of four countries, two more positive cases and two others that are less positive.

Countries such as Sweden and Costa Rica are more positive cases on improved representation. They have gone through an exhaustive process of policy change and activism. Youth groups and advocates have come together to call the attention of national governments, through formal and informal channels, to promote their ideas and opinions. Costa Rica leads youth representation in Latin America and has reduced the age limit for candidacy to 21. It also created a Vice Ministry for Youth. The Youth Vice Minister holds public hearings and is building a closer relationship with non-governmental organizations and civil society. While Sweden, with an age minimum of 18 for parliamentary positions, continues to be at the forefront of the movement. The constant involvement of their youth in public conversations has kept the matter relevant and the discussion constant. The European Youth Forum possess high numbers of delegates from Sweden and stimulates a constant youth discussion within the European Union. On the other hand, in countries like Nigeria and Brazil, youth are still struggling to get their spot at the table. In Nigeria, being among one of the countries in Africa with greatest number of young people, policies continue to be discriminative and public office positions are

much more difficult to achieve due to the age-restriction laws. Brazil is currently facing a change of government that does not seem to be beneficial for young people. This chapter offers a more extensive analysis of the Brazilian case. Even when voting is mandatory, young candidates running for public office positions receive less support from political parties. This forces Brazilian youth to search for more informal ways to participate politically.

Sweden

Youth policy in Sweden has gone through several periods of development. For example, since 1991, Sweden allows for greater involvement by the younger generation in democracy. Torbjörn Forkby, in *Youth policy and participation in Sweden: a historical perspective*, describes “Youth and Power” as the time where young people challenge institutions and local authorities to persuade them to rethink their traditional way of approaching youth affairs. He highlights this period and “called for a structure for youth participation to be built up through various forms of local youth councils, but also by allowing youth access to power in a more direct way, for instance through youth organized meeting points. In this period, the municipality was not the enemy, but the counterpart that was challenged to become more involved” (Forkby, 58). Here, we could observe how organized forms of youth advocacy in the country bring about positive changes for young people in governmental policies and institution. In addition, Anna-Britt Coe studied the multiple processes that Swedish youth developed for effective political action. According to her findings, “youth constructed political action based in an approach to power that was not state-centered” and build this action as four different processes: “moving from consciousness to action, moving from personal experience to

shared goals, moving from social activities to political activities, and moving from single to multiple arenas” (Coe, 2). Changes in policies in Sweden have allowed young people to actively engage in political processes. Yet, how can we make sure that they are listened to? Having the platforms to engage does not necessary mean that the higher levels of authority listen to their requests.

Costa Rica

Costa Rica continues to be a country of focus for youth involvement and policies. The Global Index of Parliamentarians ranks the country at 23, which is above bigger countries such as France, India, or the US (IPU, 10). Researcher Ilka Treminio Sánchez has found that the political engagement of young people in Costa Rica is not directly linked to formal processes of participation and decision-making, such as running for public office. In her article, *Youth and democracy: Electoral behavior and attitudes Policies in Costa Rica*, Sanchez delves into some hypotheses that yielded paradoxical results. On the one hand, although young people are those who are less engaged in formal bodies, they are the ones who are most involved and participate in informal political dynamics in general. On the other hand, although they participate to a greater extent, they are the most critical of democracy and its institutions (Sanchez, 339). The most active young people are inclined to participate in politics, but they do so especially through new political forces or through other means, have a high perception of internal efficacy and seek to bring their demands to the public sphere (Sanchez, 340). However, although active, they are critical and distrustful of the mechanism of representation. As she states, “Young people are conceived as politically alienated by the adults, so they resort to forming their own strategies to solve this alienation, which has found its focus in two

main areas: social movements and social networks from the Internet” (Sanchez, 341).

Therefore, young people channel their interests at the level of their local reference space or in organizations that are outside the formal political sphere.

In the latest ECOSOC Youth Forum, countries in Latin American, such as Argentina and Costa Rica, were active participants in the conversation. The Youth Vice Ministry of Costa Rica has tried, even with a very low budget, to bring all parties together into the dialogue. Youth-related NGOs in the country have continuously organized themselves, in formal and informal discussion, to raise the question of representation. The government allows youth to run for public office at 21 years of age minimum. This is a positive feature, since the voting age starts at 18. The state has considered that by having youth more included in the formal structures of power, there is no need to think of them as the opposition.

Nigeria

Nigeria is among the countries with a very large population of young people. The analysis conducted by Jonathan Maiangwa on the relation of poverty and youth in democracy indicates the direct relationship that poverty in the country stimulates youth involvement in democracy. As explained by the author, for many decades, youth movements have fought for democracy in Nigeria. For instance, the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) stood up against the colonial administration and demanded equal rights and treatment of young people (Maiangwa, 05). As a consequence of this activism, many young people lost their jobs, and some felt forced to leave the country because of constant threats. Later on, the still remaining colonial institutions prioritized those with the biggest economic power and neglected greater amounts of the young population by

blocking their opportunities for participation. In his article “Youth and Ethnic Movements and Their Impacts on Party Politics in ECOWAS Member States,” scholar Taiwo Olaiya gives a clear picture of the few opportunities that youth in Nigeria face within ethnic-oriented political movements. Even though young people were important actors in the fight against colonial rule, today they continue to be ignored. As mentioned by Olaiya, youth’s role within political parties is still minimal. One of the reasons is the ethno-religious discourse where these political parties were created (Olaiya, 01).

Therefore, many young people became agents of democratic destabilization as they joined other alternative, violent, political movements, or became members of ethnic militias and terrorist groups. These forms of alienated demonstrations in the absence of meaningful engagement are the result of constant marginalization within Nigerian politics (Olaiya, 2). Fortunately, student movements and youth organizations continue to fight against exclusive political ideas and advocate for more inclusive policies. Particularly, the Not Too Young to Run campaign, led now by the United Nations, started with youth activism in Nigeria. The age of candidacy for political positions was over 40 years old, therefore, it raised concerns among youth who organized themselves to change this situation. Young activists advocated changes to age-restriction laws. This attempt was somehow successful. A few years ago, the national government reduced the age minimum to 30 years old for lower houses, and 35 for upper houses. Although, the country still fails to provide the necessary tools for youth to develop and participate and is unable to align voting age with age candidacy. Nigeria is a country with millions of young people who have the potential to improve national concerns. However, the government and political parties continue to marginalize and neglect their contributions.

Brazil

Research conducted by Antonio Teixeira De Barros and Lucio Meireles Martins in political engagement has shown that giving platforms for participation to young people, such as youth parliaments, increases the level of trust and engagement in the political process. The simulation of a youth parliament in Brazil brought crucial data on the participant's engagement. Based on the analysis of each response from the participants of the parliament, it was possible for the authors to affirm that "participation in training activities and also of parliamentary simulation significantly interferes in the confidence in relation to the Legislative Power and to the political parties, which is also directly related to the motivation to participate in politics through political parties" (De Barros, 419). The data shows that a youth parliament significantly changes young people's view of politics, interferes, in many cases, with the longing for social positioning and the choice of professions. The simulation of a youth parliament stimulated the participants to change their perception politics and increase optimism to participate in decision-making. It generated the activation of citizenship and a critical view about politics. One of the participants mentions that his participation in the youth parliament simulation has made him a young person with more courage to take political action and fight for equality, respect, ethics, democracy, and popular participation (De Barros, 421). De Barros and Martins believe that "it is possible to affirm that the Young Brazilian Parliament, based on results reported by its graduates, strengthens democracy by broadening the civic culture of young people from different parts of the country, who have a clearer opinion about politics and become involved in in non-institutional political activities and in political parties" (De Barros, 423). It explains how necessary it is to

allow spaces for youth to actively participate in democracy, and therefore, to stimulate their talents and increase their trust in the government.

The current political environment in Brazilian politics enables an opportunity to examine how young people could take the lead on engaging in the electoral process. For instance, the use of technology also plays an important role in the political engagement of Brazilian youth. In the Article *Politics and Youth: Political Participation of Young People of the South of Brazil*, the author Renata A. de Oliveira highlights two main aspects for political engagement through technology. First, there is a greater willingness to participate online and for non-conventional off-line modalities. Second, although there is no preference for direct actions and the online environment, there is a mutual strengthening between them and a convergence between modalities and environments (Oliveira, 189). She also states, “Individual motivations play a fundamental role in political engagement. Only in the electoral modality the family environment was relevant, indicating a possible direct effect on participation” (Oliveira, 216). The data showed that the forms of off-line participation (community-religious, electoral and protest) are mutually reinforcing, since they present some predictors of other modes, and this indicates a convergence of the modalities of participation among young people (Oliveira, 217). Thus, we can say that when citizens have a convergent participatory attitude, they activate both institutional and contestation modalities. However, when talking about online participation, Oliveira claims, it is influenced only by the modalities of protest.

As understood by Marcos Ribeiro in his study of national youth policies, the political motivation and engagement of young people in countries depends highly on their religious, cultural, and political affiliation. Interviews conducted by Ribeiro to Brazilian

youth between the ages of 18 to 29 may prove this hypothesis. In his article, *Youth and Participation: Understanding Politics, Values, and Social Practices*, Ribeiro analyzes the results of his research, which showed that the religious, cultural, or political affiliation of the young person, says much about their understanding of politics and ideals of participation (Ribeiro, 288). The spaces in which these young people are involved say a great deal about their conceptions and ideals, as is the case when they choose a classic participatory sphere of action. The institutional path is an important space for dispute and democracy building. For example, when young people opt for less traditional spaces, such as social media, they still recognize the importance of the institutions (Ribeiro, 296). These less traditional spaces occur when “youth do not see in representative politics a valid possibility of action, given their limitations in meeting current demands. Youth seem to signal that representative politics must reinvent itself if it wants to ensure greater participation of young people” (Ribeiro, 296). However, politics is not limited to its formality, to the constituent groups, and spaces of the political game; it also affirms itself as a relation, and therefore it is impossible not to participate. Politics is also a transformative element of young people themselves, crossed by experiences that speak of conflicts, clashes, criticism, solidarity, citizenship, and struggle.

Throughout the years, the National Youth Policy of Brazil has faced many challenges of implementation, reinforcement, and expansion. Brazil currently has around 50.2 million young people aged 15-29, representing 26.4% of the population (IBGE / PNAD, 2007). Of this total, 14 million live with a per capita family income of up to half a minimum wage (PNAD, 2007). In the Article, *National Youth Policy: Trajectory and Challenges*, the author Roselani Da Silva highlights some of the most critical obstacles Brazilian youth face today. It points at the urgency of public policies adapted to the

specific needs of youth (Silva, 663). The article also takes an approach on the genesis and development of youth policies and existing youth programs. As mentioned by Silva, one of the challenges is to improve the structuring of the national policy, reconciling the different age groups established by the National Youth Policy (NYP) with the service ranges adopted by the different public agency programs. It is important to point out the long road that still needs to be covered. It is not enough to have a body responsible for monitoring the development of youth programs and a legal contribution to cover all the existing demand. Studies by IBGE / PNAD (2007) indicate that almost half of the country's unemployed people are young. The data reveals that young workers, on average, earn less than half of what adults receive (PNAD, 2006). Half of the 54% who are employed work without a formal contract. That is, of the total number of young people, only 27% have jobs with a formal contract, and therefore, labor and social security rights (IPEA, 2008) (Silva, 664). One of the main challenges, stated by the author, for the implementation of a public policy that assures social rights for the youth is “to obtain the permanent mobilization of civil society, combined with the will and the political decision to enlarge, improve, evaluate and monitor current initiatives” (Silva, 670). It is essential to invest in the construction of new youth programs to enable proper participation and development of youth in order to effectively meet the current needs.

Young Brazilians have shown visible signs of denial of traditional forms of participation, such as those expressed by membership in parties, trade unions, and student organizations. The Polis Institute has done an intensive study of youth participation in Brazil. In its publication, *Brazilian Youth and Democracy: Participation, Spheres and Public Policies*, written by Elaine Ribeiro, it highlights some of the main issues that affect young people in Brazil today, through the democratic process. The author mentions

how juvenile collective actions are no longer noticed or valued due to the discontinuous, topical and very often devoid of easily recognized ideologies. The new forms and themes through which young people mobilize in the public sphere also indicate the crisis of traditional forms of participation and political socialization (Ribeiro, 8). Undoubtedly, thinking about the different meanings of political participation for youth can represent an important contribution to capturing not only how they are portrayed, but also, how they construct new answers to this question (Ribeiro, 9). Taking into account the different realities and needs of young people in Brazil, most of them unmet needs, is a necessary condition to determine the precise public policies that can effectively relate, especially to the poor youth who face the most difficulties. As mentioned in the study, one of the democratic challenges is related to social participation, and how it becomes an objective and achievable goal in a society in which so many young people are in processes of economic exclusion and social marginalization (Ribeiro, 8). Therefore, Brazilian youth seek other forms of political participation while looking for opportunities to address their own economic needs.

Chapter Five: IPU Report and Recommendations

The Inter-Parliamentary Union issued in 2016 the report on Youth Participation in National Parliament. The document is a very complete report on the situation of youth representation within national parliaments. It contains data on the current number of parliamentarians under 30, the age restrictions laws for public office positions, as well as state's eligibility rules and inclusiveness of parliaments. The IPU surveyed 128 countries and divided the key findings into best performers, youth policy-making in parliaments, and the following trends in age groups.

In terms of best performers, some of the major findings of the report include that the only parliaments in the world with more than 10% of members under 30 are Ecuador, Norway, and Sweden (IPU, 03). Overall, only 2% of legislative members are under 30 years old. Moreover, countries like Denmark, Ecuador, and Andorra possess the highest number of members of parliaments (MPs) who are under 40 years old. When it comes to the promotion of youth and policy making, the report finds that MP networks and caucuses are starting to bring the discussion more often and in growing numbers of parliaments. Many committees in the legislature have youth issues on their agenda, but most of the time these are discussed among other matters such as sports, education, and culture. For instance, the youth matters in Costa Rica are being discussed under the leadership of the Ministry of Culture and Youth, which is a combination of factors mostly related to social issues. The document also states that the Americas and Europe have higher numbers of youth representation within lower houses and, on the other hand, Asia and Oceania within upper houses (IPU, 8). The trend of lower and higher numbers of

youth in public office positions is related to the age-restriction laws imposed by the state, which limits youth ability to participate in the democratic process.

The report also proposed some strategies to engage youth in legislative bodies. Youth parliaments exist in almost 64 countries. However, these parliaments are mostly managed by NGOs, academic institutions, state's ministries, or local public agencies. In addition, the new technology has allowed the population of young people, and the public in general, to easily monitor and analyze the performance of legislative bodies. It incentivizes transparency among members and accountability of promises and projects.

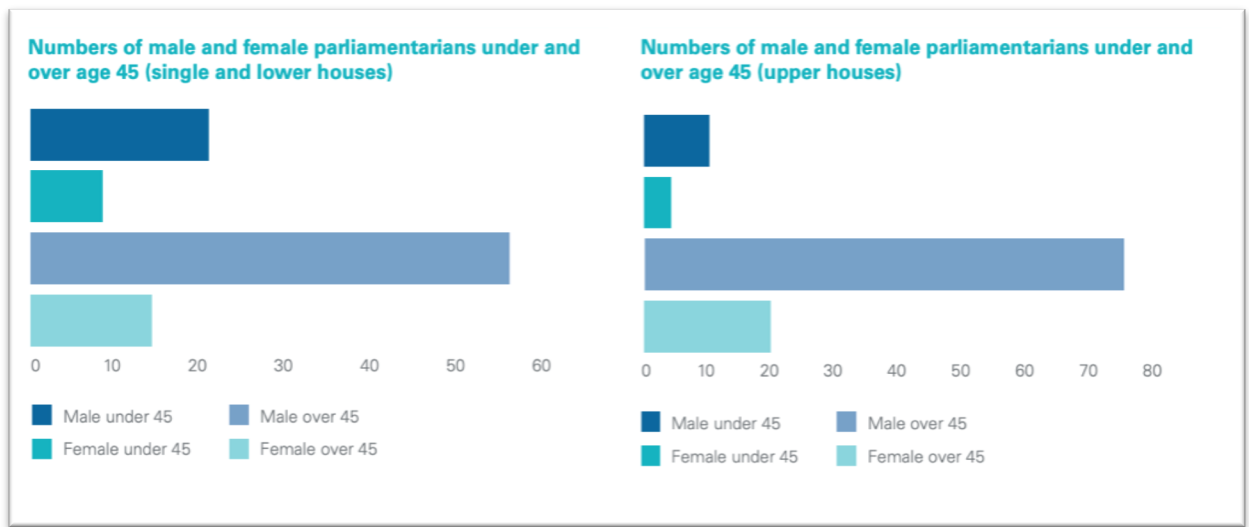
After the 2014 and 2015 elections, in the countries surveyed, the information obtained helped draft a series of recommendations for best practices. MPs in countries like Uruguay, the Netherlands, and Argentina helped draft a few proposals on action to be taken. The first recommendation is that the collection of data and information on the ages of candidates and elected officials allows for a more transparent and informational process, which helps to track progress and ultimately incentivize youth to run for office. (IPU, 10). Recommendation two suggests that current legislative bodies should build strategies to increase the number of public officials in their 20s and 30s, since they are the groups most underrepresented. As observed in Figure 1, Sweden, Ecuador, Finland, Andorra, and Macedonia are the top 5 countries with the highest numbers of people under 30. On the other hand, countries like Denmark have over 40% of parliamentarians under 40 years old. Oman ranks number one in countries with the highest number of people under 45 with 65.9%. The progress charts also indicated that countries like Bulgaria, Uganda, and Latvia made significant progress on youth representation after holding elections.

Figure 1. Source: IPU 2016 Report (Pg. 13)

2015 election results for parliamentarians aged under 30, 40 and 45 (lower and single chambers)								
Under 30			Under 40			Under 45		
Rank	%	Country	Rank	%	Country	Rank	%	Country
1	12.3%	Sweden	1	41.3%	Denmark	1	65.9%	Oman
2	10.9%	Ecuador	2	39.3%	Andorra	2	60.7%	Andorra
3	10.5%	Finland	3	38.0%	Ecuador	3	59.6%	Seychelles
4	7.1%	Andorra	4	37.9%	Finland	4	55.6%	Bhutan
5	6.5%	the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	5	36.1%	Bhutan	5	54.8%	Namibia
6	6.5%	Tunisia	6	35.0%	Kyrgyzstan	6	54.7%	Ecuador
7	6.1%	Denmark	7	32.5%	the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	7	54.2%	Kyrgyzstan
8	5.9%	Suriname	8	34.1%	Sweden	8	53.6%	Denmark
9	5.6%	Bhutan	9	31.8%	Oman	9	50.7%	Netherlands
	5.6%	Slovenia	10	28.8%	Bulgaria	10	48.7%	Bahrain
10	5.2%	Somalia						

Recommendation 4 suggests the necessity for national legislative bodies to draw strategies to include a diversity of youth, but specifically taking into consideration the disparity among young women and men. The suggestion addresses the discrepancies between young male parliamentarians and female parliamentarians. As observed by the study, women, and especially young women are considerably more underrepresented than men. In some case, men outnumber women as high as 5 times. As observed in Figure 2, parliaments in single and lower houses have more men under 45 than women under 45, almost twice (IPU, 12). It reflects the same pattern for upper houses of legislative bodies.

Figure 2. Source: IPU 2016 Report (Pg. 14)



Subsequently, recommendation Four mentioned the necessity for parliaments, national governments, and political parties to increase their efforts for increasing the participation of young women at all levels. This implies that youth engagement strategies need to specifically address the need to increase the number of women in public office positions. This disparity is not only reflected on young people. It is also among older ages.

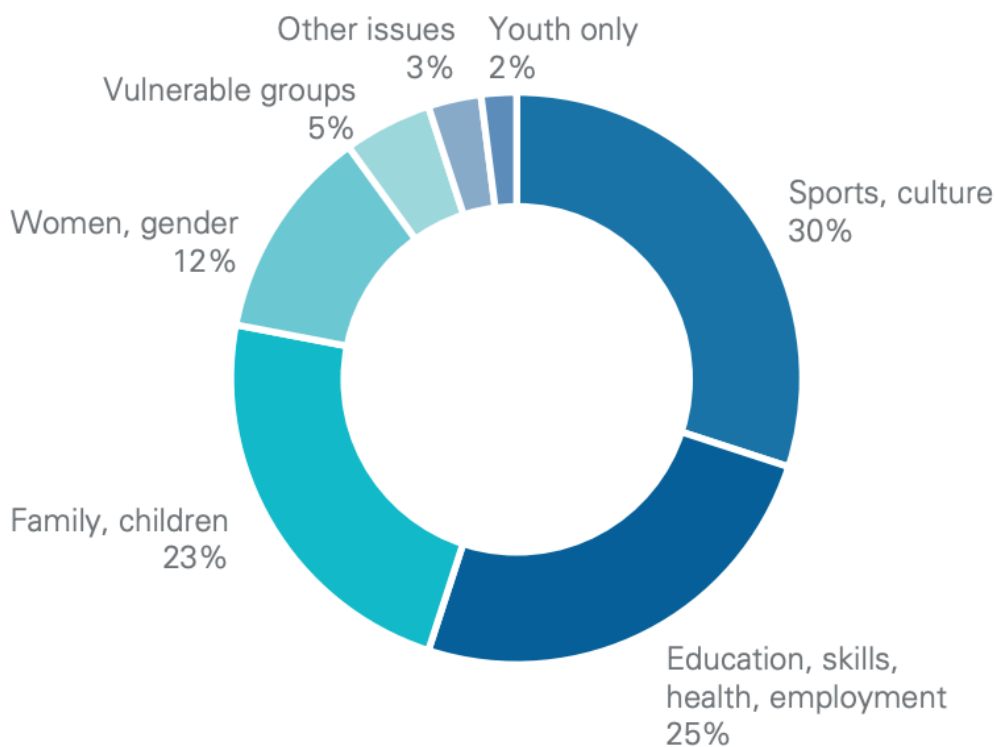
One of the most important recommendations of this report, which is aligned to the thesis of this work, is number Five. It suggests that the minimum age for running for parliaments should be the same as the minimum voting age of the county. This can give more access to young people and prevent them from waiting many years to become a candidate (IPU, 16). Subsequently, it implies that some countries may have to lower their minimum voting age. Moreover, suggestion Six encourages parliaments and political groups, in countries with high numbers of young people, to create the necessary means for a proportionate representation of the population and the legislative. The disproportion

could ultimately undermine democracy and increase disengagement of big sectors of the population. Furthermore, Recommendation Seven talks about quotas. The creation of youth quotas requires parties to nominate a number of young candidates for public office positions. This would increase, proportionately, the number of youth within parliaments. As suggested by the report, the most useful system for youth quotas would be by reserved seat or legislated quotas (IPU, 17). Quotas within political parties could also encourage nominations and reduce barriers for candidacy.

Connecting elected young candidates and build a network to foster cooperation is the report’s recommendation Eight. Members of these networks can empower other young people to participate in the democratic process. It would also help future candidates to gain skills and educate themselves on youth issues and national policies (IPU, 18).

Figure 3. Source: IPU 2016 Report (Pg. 20).

Parliamentary committees on youth and other issues



The above graph suggests that in most of the cases, governments address youth issues while dealing with other matters. For instance, only 2% of legislative bodies have placed youth issues as one independent committee, without being mixed with other topics. Youth matters need to be given the priority their need. In Recommendation Nine, IPU encourages states, parliaments, and local governments to invest in more in spaces for young people to be politically active. These spaces can be youth councils, skill training, and youth policy dialogues, which would give more priority to the problem. However, these actions need to be more focused towards youth below the voting age, that way it will not obstruct or become an alternative to actual youth representation in parliaments. And lastly, Recommendation Ten emphasizes that all sectors of society need to constantly monitor parliaments and be informed of the transparency and accountability of its work. With the help of technology, states and youth-related organizations can create greater access to this information (IPU, 22).

The IPU report concludes on the urgent need to address youth representation. As demonstrated in their detailed analysis, legislative bodies continue to have very few representations of people under 30, even in countries with higher amounts of young people. The age gap is an obstacle to making youth policy decisions more realistic. Without young parliamentarians, decisions are made by those who have not experienced the same and cannot relate to the current problems of youth. It is alarming to see that most of the countries surveyed in this study had fewer of female parliamentarians under 45. It implies that there is gender inequality within the underrepresented youth also. Lastly, the promotion and stimulation of greater levels of youth participation in legislative bodies is a multi-sector effort. National and local governments, as well as civil

society and NGOs, are relevant actors in the improvement of the issue. A multi-stakeholder cooperation is needed to increase representation of people under 30 in all levels of public office positions.

Chapter Six: Youth Representation at the United Nations and World Bank

International organizations and global financial institutions are taking into consideration some of these core problems in order to properly understand the behavior and thinking of the younger generation. The United Nations and the World Bank are two of the most important global entities for addressing youth issues globally. They have issued resolutions and multi-sector plans to tackle global challenges and encourage Member States to increase youth participation. This section of the chapter addresses how the World Bank, as an international economic institution, addresses the issues of youth development that currently affects inclusive participation of youth everywhere. Moreover, this chapter returns to the cases of youth representation in Latin America and Africa within the scope of the World Bank and its development initiatives, and whether they impact the economic system.

The 73rd General Assembly revealed the continued lower representation of young people within delegations of Member States. According to UN DESA, only 55 TO 60 countries included youth representation (UN DESA, 03), even though Security Council Resolution 2250 encourages all 193 Member States to have youth representation, defining youth between the ages of 18 and 30 (SC Res 2250, 01). Moreover, at the ministerial level, only 35 Youth Ministers and Vice-Minister participated in the last 2018 ECOSOC Youth Forum. One of the most relevant United Nations resolutions on youth is Security Council Res 2250. It is divided into sections that intend to answer questions on young people's participation, protection, prevention, partnerships, disengagement, and

reintegration, and presents future steps to be taken on representation. Although the resolution restates the necessity to include young people in decision-making structures, the arguments within the resolution are weak when it comes to the following three subjects: regulating Member States to comply with the recommendations, the reinforcement of financial support to youth initiatives, and support for further research on youth political participation. This is evident in paragraphs 1, 9, and 10 urging countries to implement specific actions that will lead to wider participation of the younger generation. yet there is no regulating mechanism that will make Member States comply with their obligations. This may be a fair limitation, although perhaps a limitation of the UN as an organization rather than the document itself. The resolution does not specify ways of following up with Member States by evaluating their commitments to increase youth's participation. There are no standards of enforcement that allow for a more transparent process of inclusion of youth within governments, or application of measurements to countries that are not complying. Similarly, paragraph 14 urges member states to provide financial support to UN youth-related programs, however, it does not specify the necessity to subsidize youth initiatives from those countries that lack resources. For instance, the UN Youth Delegates Fund, not mentioned in the resolution, is crucial for assisting the least developed countries to include youth representatives in their delegations every year at youth-related meetings. Furthermore, paragraph 20 requests the Secretary-General to lead a progress study on young people's contributions to peace. In addition, it does not include strengthening research and data collection on youth political participation. There is limited data on this issue. International agencies and youth-related institutions lack resources to collect information from remote places. In developing countries, for instance, local authorities need to improve research and data collection that

can help make more accurate decisions, in both rural and urban locations. Governments would have to invest in regional and local research that could build youth's capabilities on political, social, and economic opportunities. Nevertheless, resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security has been the first Security Council resolution on youth, and it sets a precedent for future advancement of youth inclusion. However, the resolution does not tackle critical issues of funding, research, data collection, and enforcement mechanisms.

Currently, the overall UN system has many youth-related programs; some of them are administrated by specialized agencies such as UNICEF, UN Women, UNESCO, and UNFPA. Commissions, like CSW, have developed elaborated platforms with hundreds of young leaders around the world. Another relevant example is the DPI NGO Youth Representatives Programme, administrated by the UN Department of Public Information. This Programme started about 6 years ago. All NGOs formally associated with consultative status with DPI are allowed to register up to two youth representatives. There are over 600 youth representatives to DPI currently. This platform brings them together at the annual conference to discuss the most relevant issues of the UN's agenda. For instance, the 66th DPI/NGO Conference in South Korea brought together over 1,500 youth and 4,000 delegates. The youth delegates at the conference produced the Gyeongju Youth Declaration, which talks about representation of young people within formal structures of power. It was the first ever youth declaration produced at the conference. It became a milestone for NGO youth leaders at the United Nations and brought the discussion of youth representation to a higher level. As stated by the declaration, education is key to fostering participation of youth in decision-making processes. Furthermore, the document urges Member States to "Fill Youth Delegate positions at the United Nations, ensuring they represent diversity and allow for their meaningful

participation with the Permanent Missions, UN processes and Civil Society Organizations.” (Gyeongju Youth Declaration, 2). The declaration not only discusses current NGO-related UN platforms, but also supports governmental youth representation as a key for inclusivity. Programs like the DPI/NGO Youth Representatives open meaningful opportunities for youth to engage with Member States, UN staff, and network with other NGOs. The success of this initiative has inspired many agencies, and even the Secretary-General, to create strategies and draft new programs for meaningful inclusion.

International financial institutions may take into consideration some of these matters in order to properly understand the concerns and challenges of the younger generation. For instance, the World Bank, as a global economic institution, is slowly opening the doors to young people through its programmes. The creation of a youth advisory group has allowed the organization to look deeply into the perspectives of young people and understand their actual needs, dedicating an entire chapter to youth in their annual report. For the past decades, the World Bank has given higher relevance to youth development issues, including employment, quality education, and political participation. It has created the Youth Advisory Group and the annual youth summit. However, the World Bank’s plan to address youth issues is limited. Particularly, the organization’s budget for programs to improve youth employment is small; its old policies impede the openness to better funding conditions for educational projects; and its narrow platforms for youth limit the participation of the most vulnerable young population. Therefore, the institution’s youth conferences, reports, and projects, become more of a promotional strategy, having narrow impact on the most affected people, which also undermines proper inclusion, skill training, job creations, and the adequate transition from the academia to the work force.

This research focuses on several approaches for addressing the matter. The first approach is the World Bank's programs that tackle youth development, including its outdated policies that undermine finding solutions to major contemporary challenges. Consequently, this paper analyzes the previous and current budgets for the IBRD and IDA to fund youth employment projects, and the areas where the projects are present. Moreover, it is necessary to give a closer look at the main themes that the World Bank considers when addressing youth development, particularly unemployment. Ferguson Ross helps us understand whether the World Bank is avoiding some of these themes and in reality, gives more considerations for business interests. Furthermore, this research expands the conversation by examining the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which the Bretton Woods institutions have pledged of their commitment and present specific targets that affect the younger generation. Lastly, it would be necessary to evaluate youth development within three main areas: education, employment, and participation, by evaluating specific country cases.

The World Bank has been an important player in global economic governance. However, some criticism has been raised concerning its old-fashioned policies to address current global issues. These include harsh conditions imposed on developing countries to pay back loans, its decision-making process, and its funding allocation. As described in the previous paragraph, it is necessary to look at different sides of the spectrum. These include documentation of scholars who evaluate the performance of the organization, as well as specific country cases, reports and data published by the Bank, as well as independent articles that do not address the World Bank directly, but that address the issue of youth in a more general scope.

International scholars Maysoun Sukarieh and Stuart Tannock have conducted an analysis of the major World Bank decisions to tackle youth employment in their article: *“In the best interests of youth or neoliberalism? The World Bank and the New Global Youth Empowerment Project.”* The authors highlight that the issue of youth employment has become a major political and economic discussion among international institutions. The World Bank, for instance, has allocated financial resources, in partnership with other organizations, to address unemployment. The institution has conducted research and data collection that has been laid out in their reports. However, Sukarieh and Tannock argue that “the new turn to youth serves primarily to serve the goal of insulating the increasingly contested neoliberal project from further political and ideological challenge.” (Sukarieh and Tannock, 301). The authors claim that the institution has used the rhetoric on youth inclusion as a way to put forth business interests or political ideas. Maysoun and Tannock’s analysis of the World Development Report implies that the organization utilizes traditional policies for youth employment projects, while addressing youth interests and business interests as one (Sukarieh and Tannock, 302). In reality, this approach would only benefit business elites and political powers.

On the other hand, the Independent Evaluation Group conducted an extensive analysis of the current stage of youth employment programs supported by the World Bank and the IFC. Chapter Four describes an extensive data analysis of the bank lending portfolio for the youth development, as well as their actual impact and current limits for addressing the issue. The report presents mostly positive outcomes from the intervention of the Bank in current youth development projects. However, the report exposes the year-to-year financial support for youth employment by the World Bank since 2001, through the IBRD and IDA. From 2006 to 2007 the budget of the IBRD on youth employment

initiatives increased dramatically from 100 million to 600 million dollars, in reaction to the continuous high level of youth unemployment, rated at 13%. Furthermore, IDA increased its support from 100 million to over 500 million dollars from 2008 to 2009. Yet, after 2010, IBRD and IDA started to decrease their financial support, showing less support for youth employment projects after the global crisis (IEG, 18),

Moreover, Fergusson Ross offers an extensive view of the current World Bank's approach to youth employment in his article "*Business, as usual: the policy priorities of the World Bank's discourses on youth unemployment, and the global financial crisis.*" He identifies the four priority areas that cause youth employment rates to increase and how some of these are being avoided by the World Bank due to their policy discourse. The first one is skills deficits, which is mostly caused by the lack of educational sources, informal and formal, for the younger population. This deficit is directly related to the institutional and financial capabilities of a state to provide education for its population. As the second theme, Fergusson mentions wage regulation. Low income salaries for young people transferring from academia to the work force limit the ability to find a suitable job opportunity. The third aspect is the burgeoning of youth employment. Low income salaries and low-quality formal job opportunities force young people to pursue informal jobs, which do not offer security and benefits that could be protected by law. And lastly, there is the influence that social instability and criminal activity have over youth employment. The current security situation of a country highly affects the opportunity given by young people. World Bank financial resources provided to socially unstable countries with current conflict situations would not be the most appropriate way to tackle unemployment. Providing funding to increase jobs may not be effective in war-torn areas. However, conflict situations could destroy formal job opportunities and create

migration flows that drive brain drain. Therefore, Ross, in collaboration with Nicola Yeates, conclude that the current approaches of the World Bank to tackle youth unemployment are a direct result of the continuation of their neo-liberal discourses and the omission of the actual needs of the people without jobs (Ross, 64).

In order to address both sides, it is also important to analyze some of the current literature from the World Bank, as well as from other international organizations. There is a wide range of literature by the World Bank that specifically addresses youth. Since 2013, the World Bank Group has hosted an annual youth summit. The 2016 World Bank Youth Summit, which published a completion report titled: “Youth Summit: Rethinking Education for the New Millennium,” brought together people between the ages of 18 and 35 from all over the world. There were over 400 delegates and young professionals that discussed innovative solutions to improve education in their regions. The report argues that participants around the world highlighted the issues of funding, inclusive participation, and the lack of multi-sector partnerships, which are obstructing the process towards youth development (WBG, 24). Therefore, the World Bank is willing to continue, in collaboration with states, to create and improve programs that will tackle the issues more effectively in the most vulnerable countries. As an illustration, the World Bank President recently pledged support to the UN Youth 2030 Strategy, which aims not only to give a space to young people for participation, but also to tackle development. The outcome document of the World Bank Youth Summit provides important information on youth and their current place within international economic institutions. This report provides relevant information to measure some of the impact that the summit has had in certain population of young people, even though the participation may not represent actual disadvantaged youth globally. Nevertheless, the report is mostly based

on the perspectives of participants at the forum, which exclude those vulnerable sectors of society that did not have a voice of representation. However, a criticism is the selection process of the participants and the outreach limitation. This especially affects the most vulnerable population who are not considered and are unable to access or participate in these conversations.

Moreover, the World Bank Group launched the World Development Report 2018: Learning to Realize Education's Promise. The Report offers chapters dedicated to youth and the necessity of countries to increase the quality of education for the betterment of the younger population. The World Development Report presents detailed information on the current state of the world in addressing the challenges of education, calling it a 'learning crisis, as well as detailed content on the importance of skill training, better relationship of the public and private and to advance innovation. Some of the major topics addressed in the report are quality education for more skilled and trained society, the crises in learning for the most vulnerable, unhealthy politics and low accountability that do not prioritize the development of society, among others. The report argues that the issue of quality education is impacting disadvantaged youth the most. Therefore, the organization is giving special attention to education projects, mainly in Africa (WBG, 4). It argues that in places like The Gambia, with the Education Sector Support Program, and in Ethiopia, with the Education Quality improvement Program for Equity, the education situation in the region has greatly improved. However, the report mainly focuses on development in the educational sector, without considering much of the political and economic side of it. Although, it is important to use some of the data being exposed in this report, in order to contrast cases of specific countries that are, or are not, advancing the issues of youth development.

The World Bank continues to be a major player in the improvement of youth unemployment, quality education, and political participation around the world. The organization has provided frameworks, strategies, and allocated funds to address the challenges that many countries have encountered to improve the situation of their younger populations. However, the institution continues to decrease its funding for youth projects, and encounter limitations for new project implementation due to their outdated policies. Therefore, some of its major contributions on youth conferences and advisory groups become a very shallow alternative to tackle the real challenge. It is necessary for the organization to rethink its policies and funding strategies. This implies a stronger effort from Member States to increase their contributions and give higher priority to young people in decision-making process. The Banks needs to stimulate more conversation among countries and become a priority for national and local institutions. The youth development agenda will continue to be of high importance in the global discussion, with or without financial institutions bringing the issue forward. The World Bank needs to give youth the importance needed. Otherwise, the criticism of its effectiveness to address the major challenges of our times will undermine its relevance.

Chapter Seven: Policy Recommendation and Conclusion

The problem of youth underrepresentation has many different causes. Some of these factors are directly related to national policies that restrict young people. And other factors mainly come from a general societal perspective that youth have a lack of experience to participate in high levels of decision-making. Yet, many young people prefer to participate in informal channels of political activism and less in democratic political processes. This thesis suggests the following five actions to be taken to address the issue of representation: Regulate countries on their commitments; Subsidize youth programs; Educate the population on the importance of the matter; Promote further research and data collection to promote more accurate decisions and; Create a youth global compact that assists countries regularly on youth policy and develop platforms and programs for youth inclusion.

In the case of the United Nations, the organization may establish a global policy framework recognizing and addressing the specific needs, assets, potential and diverse identities of youth in political scenarios by 2030: regulate, subsidize, advance research, educate, and create partnerships. A Convention on the rights of young people to run for governmental positions recognizes the role of youth and institutionalizes their participation at all levels, while also call upon Member States to live up to their promises. International organizations should stimulate governments and local authorities to build policy dialogue processes with young people on issues of political corruption, voting fraud, and malicious campaigning. This commitment should go beyond symbolic consultations.

The Convention could create an oversight committee that would regulate Member States by inspecting their commitments to increase youth's participation, enforcement of standards that allow a more transparent process of inclusion of youth within governments, and the possible application of sanctions for those members that have ratified the agreement but did not comply with it. National governments should create spaces with specific context on the issue, where it provides young people with the ability to engage effectively in civic structures. All levels of authorities have established mechanisms to meaningfully involve young people in current and future political processes, including formal and informal political negotiations and debates from local to global levels. These mechanisms must ensure youth are included as equal partners.

Member States, international organizations, and the private sector could subsidize the youth representation, for instance, the youth delegates of those member states that do not have enough resources. The UN Youth Delegates Fund is important to maintain and assist those governments who lack resources. The lack of youth participation within governments also relies on the decreasing opportunities for them. Donors may allocate long-term, sustainable funding and material support to youth-led organizations, groups, and initiatives. Youth may also be included in a donor's decision-making structures to ensure that the resources are accessible and appropriate in extent. Member States and special contributors have to work with youth organizations to determine to what limit current funding structures meet actual need for youth's open participation within politics. There are young people who live without the possibility of progress, because they do not have the resources and have not experienced a perspective beyond what they have in their home regions. At the same time the economic situation in which they live requires them to work to help their families. The low level of education of the most vulnerable sectors

of the population may prevent young people from accessing government positions. Education informs young people about politics, as well as encouraging them to be critical and actively participate. The higher education sector makes it easier for young people to question their government and look for alternatives to solve the problems of their community. Less developed countries need to foster and strengthen opportunities for young people to access higher educations and support them on running for office.

Educating the population on programs to inform the public is key, especially young people, on youth's rights and duties to political participation. The UN and other global institutions should explain to the population the needs of having a more inclusive society, leaving no one behind. Additionally, international organizations should educate governments that do not have youth councils and assist them in the process of creating youth participation in such bodies. Education plays an important role in building equal, democratic societies. Safe spaces must exist for young people to not only develop their talents, skills, and abilities, but also engage in meaningful political discussions and learn about the ways to be involved within their governments. Only through such dialogue can young people not only be equipped with the skills needed to gain employment and contribute to the development of their own countries, but also learn to engage with different cultures, and systems of belief, and build the bridges between their countries and the world. Similarly, there is a need to provide this valuable right of education to young women especially, and to all displaced persons – who are often among the most neglected. Both the family and the community must take steps to provide this. Achieving education, and being educated in the values of peace, justice, freedom and mutual understanding and respect, youth can promote the equal rights of all human beings and all nations, as well as their economic and social progress, and their local and global security.

The United Nations should be used as a tool to promote political education and to preserve and maintain equal and just societies through its unique platform, to foster and guide international dialogue and cooperation.

Further research is essential, with the assistance of youth policy specialists, on youth representation within governments. International agencies and governments lack resources that allow them to collect data from remote places because they are difficult to access. Member States and local authorities should give access to research and offer spaces that will stimulate and make it easier for collecting data, in both rural and urban locations. Governments have to invest in regional and local research that could build youth capabilities and offer adequate policy information.

The creation of a youth compact would foster partnerships and support current and future youth platforms. The interagency coordination group, such as the Youth Compact on Humanitarian Work, is an example of the success of such partnerships, where the private and public sector support compromises to work together on the achievement of a more inclusive society. Here, youth delegates are taken into account. International and regional agencies, and national governments need to offer support to, and partner with, youth-led organizations engaged in political participation and electoral cycles, with a focus on inclusiveness and capacity development.

Talking about representation and inclusivity is a very complex topic, but a necessary one. It is important to understand why, in some places more than others, young people are discriminated against and muted. The constant activism of youth, and the support of relevant sectors and senior leadership, has allowed the problem of representation to be more and more discussed every day. In national governments, the advocacy of youth has sown their strength and capacity to fight for their rights and

influence policy decision. They have participated in changing major public laws and have intervened in the destruction of old formal structures of power. This is matter that not only involves young people, but all sectors of society. The various ideas discussed in this work, not only give a partial answer to what is wrong with underrepresentation, but it also shows us the greater complexity and major causes of the problem. It is therefore necessary to talk more about this within academia and international platforms. Therefore, scholars should give this issue the priority it deserves. Putting more age-restriction laws, stereotyping the capacity of young people, obstructing formal political participation, and placing youth as only listeners but not actors, will not make a more inclusive, participatory, society. Without the power, innovation, and capabilities of young people, we will not be able to solve the current, and the future, major challenges of the world. The growing proportion of youth on continents like Africa and elsewhere, where countries are struggling to educate and provide jobs for young people, makes this an urgent issue on the global agenda.

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