From Margins to Centre: Relocating Youth Participation in Radical Politics of International Development

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Abstract

This paper focuses on youth participation in decision-making processes for economic growth and development. Very little is known of the effectivity of rural youth participation in the developing world. Drawing on recent empirical evidence of youth participation in economics and development research, the paper identifies the growing interest of policy makers on shorthanded interventions aimed at improving young lives. Going beyond official blueprints and the stated objectives of international development interventions, interventions have widely emphasized the mechanical aspects of projects rather than the direct impact of interventions on young beneficiaries. Understanding this is critical for development as recent projects' high rate of failure and unintended consequences for beneficiaries continue to grow. Based on the review of over 100 documented cases of youth participation in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the paper offers a conceptual guide, reinforced by methodological suggestions for studying the representational 'afterlives' of development interventions. Inspired by the phenomenological works of economic development research, the paper recognizes young voices as repositories of non-hegemonic knowledge with the ability to creatively re-appropriate development legacies. While such conclusions may have been kept under relative control, they come to fore upon the termination of interventions. A grassroots-based approach aimed at studying post-intervention communities would reveal the palimpsest-like multilayers of flagship programmes across the developing world.

Keywords: economic growth, development, youth-centred approaches, social inclusion/exclusion, participation, empowerment, projects and interventions, leadership, YALLI

1. Introduction

Since the last decades of development research have been characterized by strong disillusionment with prevailing government policies for achieving equity and economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa, it is perhaps not surprising that new professionals have looked increasingly to participatory governance and leadership as a providential escape out of the development dilemma (Brett, 2003, Green, 2000). New strategies based on decentralized or participatory development have strongly emerged from the academic landscape. These strategies have gained currency among international organisations (including the World Bank and the European Union) and bilateral aid institutions (Rangel, & Thomas, 2019; Harrison, 2008). They have advocated the development of better approaches to enhancing youth participation in global development work. Youth development programmes have become central to international discourse of economic development in recent times. Youth development programmes have represented multi-level metagovernance approaches to poverty eradication and empowerment of vulnerable households (Salifu, 2021).

Youth participation in economic development is favoured by international aid organisations because of the inherent belief in the idea that youth participation can be effective channels for genuine delegation of powers and responsibilities (Rossi, 2019). The point could nevertheless be made that big donor organisations have embarked upon participatory programmes grounded in operational guidelines designed to enhance youth participation in egalitarian societies. The optimism that have accompanied youth participation have nonetheless emphasized the development of youth capacity to address their own problems and to support their community-based initiatives and partnerships for economic growth and development.These initiatives have focused on increasing participation and

their representativeness. Several empirical studies have emerged on youth inclusion, participation, partnerships and governance. In these studies, social inclusion, civic engagement and participation are seen as desirable end-goals to economic growth and development.

The article offers preliminary consideration of the role of participatory governance in poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth. The article questions the veracity of development interventions as participatory. These questions are explored within the context of social inclusion, participation and partnerships. But it is still not clear as to whether development interventions to support youth development have been truly inclusive, participatory or partnership-oriented. The study examines this scenario through exploration of the current literature on the interlinkages between youth development, social inclusiveness and participatory mechanisms for bringing change. Although rich empirical case studies have intervened in modeling today's development context, either by focusing on development of new interventions or through improvement of pro-youth strategies for holistic growth, there has to date been no attempt to systematically analyze this case literature for lessons to be drawn from the antecedents and consequences of participatory approaches.

Therefore, Participatory governance mechanisms have been widely promoted to address this exclusivity (Mani, 2020). They are seen as channels for receiving public policy benefits including increased accountability, higher government responsiveness and better access to entrepreneurial opportunities. With increasing concerns for government responsiveness and accountability the question of 'who gets to participate' in development projects have come to the fore. Questions as to whether development mechanisms reach the most vulnerable have gained prominence in the evaluation of participatory mechanisms. Answers to how prevailing participative mechanisms overcome intergenerational barriers in the socially-rigid context are being demanded by funders of development projects.

1.1 A Systemetic Review Methodology

A systemtic review procedure was used to sieve the current body of large literature on participatory governance. The review applied an analytical framework based on several themes criticital to a grounded understanding of participatory governance in development administration around the world. These themes were identified in order to review the evolution of conceptual perspectives on participatory governance. More importantly, it presented experimental evidence of how social norms define youth participation. The study targeted economic science databases for the systemic review. It consulted databases which had a broad range of top tier journals on participatory governance. A range of peer-reviewed journal articles published over the last 20 years and appeared in social sciences were selected for discussion. The review focused on the implications of these themes on youth participation in economic growth and development.

2. Youth Exclusion in Participatory Governance

Social exclusion of youth in development interventions is best illustrated by the two philosophical schools of participatory governance represented in modern industrial revolutionary perspectives of Durkheimian and Weber (Doss, & Quisumbing, 2020; Cahill, 2007; Green, 2007; Hall, 2005). These schools have been phenomenal in their description of participatory approaches and how they have acted to exclude the youth in civic engagements. In the same way neo-classical economists, tried to determine the form of authority suitable to the modern-industrial era, so too do monetary economists of today try to establish the participatory governance appropriate to changes brought about by globalization (Heath, Hidrobo & Roy, 2020; Hickey, & Mohan, 2005). In this vein, both Durkheim and Weber viewed democratic participatory governance as a political form that best projects the youth and their liberties.

For Durkheim, participatory governance was a dynamic political force which influenced all social spheres. Participatory governance is achieved through active integration of the whole population (Durkheim, 1958). For Weber, participatory governance represents a form of institutional arrangement which serves to protect the formal equality of all citizens. Inclusion is therefore political inclusion. In otherwords, universal suffrage provided by democratic governance ensures the right to vote. This intends places gross responsibility on parliament to ensure the equality of people.

The term 'social exclusion' gained such currency in the 1990s, when parliaments debated the motions for free and fair distribution of national resources (Kesby, 2005; Leap, 2007). 'Youth exclusion' has clear roots in Durkheimian tradition of participatory governance for economic and social development. Youth exclusion here refers to the lack of access to or denial of the youth a range of citizen rights such as educational success, employment opportunities and leadership positions in national administration (Munro, 2018). Lack of social intergration of youth through limited power or ability to participate in decision-making processes all reflect incidences of youth exclusion in development

work. The problem with exclusion is with insufficiency of political structures to allow for participation.

Youth exclusion is understood as focusing on 'relational problems' or low social integration of youth, lack of participation and powerlessness of young people in social issues of relevance to them. These have clear roots in universal declaration of human rights. This is why 'Youth exclusion' gained support in European Union social policy documents and the commitment to combating youth exclusion in development was written into the Maastritch Teaty and structural funds of the EU (Mookerjee, 2019) . In Europe, the ESRC, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion was established in 1997 to address issues related to youth inclusion. These development programmes have consistently referred to youth exclusion in participatory governance and have articulated new desires to foster youth inclusion. But these structures are not yet in place in African counties notably, Ghana and Nigeria.

3. Youth Inclusion in Participatory Governance

Social exclusion or inclusion has emerged onto the national paradigms of development with the agenda intuitively focused on youth inclusion as a worthy objective (Pain, & Francis, 2003). While youth inclusion and civic engagement are used interchangeably in economic development studies, they are different theorectical concepts. Exactly what civic engagement means is as debated as what youth exclusion and inclusion mean. It is generally understood to be individual or collective action, not motivated by objectives of making profit. It can be social, political or development –oriented (Lange, 2008). Both youth inclusion and civic engagement are seen to be contributing to social order and stability. Both are premised on social action. Yet youth inclusion is seen as dependent on openness of political structures to allow individuals to participate in a way that civic engagement is not. Civic engagement can operate outside the norms of politics (Lecoutere, & Jassogne 2019). It is a network of ties and groups through which people connect with one another and get drawn into community or political affairs; hence they are all unanimously supportive of the idea of participation to reach new heights of economic and social advancement.

4. Youth to Participate or Not to Participate?. That Is the Question

There is no doubt that youth participation in development work is central to all objectives of economic empowerment (Klodawsky, 2007). The dangers of non-participation of youth in development were seen to be intimately associated with many social vices. Sociologically speaking, with the advent of modern industrial society social disaffection is closely linked to incidences of homicides and suicides (Green, & Waterhouse, 2006). The socially isolated individuals who do not participate in development work are at a greater risk of facing these social vices. Therefore quality of life is compromised by non-participation (Craig & Porter, 1997). Development interventions are highly committed to participation and avoiding the exclusion of any group. There seem to be an inherent presumption that the default position is to participate and there is a problem if individuals do not participate**.** While participation is seen as human nature; an indication of social engagement and inclusion, it is not the case that non-participation equates with social exclusion (Cornwall, 2004). Non-participation can represent a valid choice and often made from position of power. Research has shown that different ethnic groups of West Africa experience different quality of participation and voices and views of some ethnic groups are given greater weight than others. Most of all the question of power differentials has to be negotiated in any group in which individuals participate, particularly when it is trying to advance social and economic welfare.

5. Participatory Approaches

The existing models of development such as the top-down approaches have not worked well at all for actors. Top-down models constitute neither good practice nor good theory (Doss, & Quisumbing, 2020; Green, 2000). Experience of the deficiencies of this model in actual practice has led to the development of a different conceptual system based on participation (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995). The criticism of the top-down approaches emphasised the need for a paradigm shift which led to widespread development of participatory approaches during the late 1970s and 1980s. This included the farmer-first or beneficiary-first methodologies which aimed to foster more equitable interactions among beneficiaries of development programmes and partners of change.

The participatory approaches are interdisciplinary approaches intended to project beneficiaries such as the youth as clients. The emergence of participatory approaches sought to initiate a two-way dialogue between the youth and development partners which in theory challenges the assumption that development agencies are to educate ignorant youth (Cooke,& Kothari, 2001). This framing reconceptualised youth as active agents responsible for defining problems and creating possible solutions. So instead of starting with the knowledge, problem analysis and priorities of development agencies, it starts with a dialogue on the knowledge, problems and priorities of the youth regarding their interest and future goals. Instead of the development agency as the main experimentor, the youth becomes the central focus in the design of programmes for change (Amin, 2005).

Participatory approaches recognize the importance of youth knowledge, ideally allowing young people to become involved in experiments that could impact their livelihoods and community. In valuing place-based knowledge development, interventions are able to engage with the complexity of social landscapes and hetergenous dynamics between young people and the real world. In theory this approach, interventions collaborate young people and allow them to engage more equally in the development of problems that affect them (Campbell, 2000).

As part of the efforts to improve youth inclusion in development, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) introduced the Farmer Field Schools in 1989 (Millán, Barham, Macours, Maluccio, & Stampini, 2019). Farmer field schools were initially introduced to promote a reduction of pesticide use while increasing profits through reduction of inputs. Efforts to train farmers started in Indonesia and were later conducted in more than 78 other countries (Campbell, 2001). The use of farmer field schools involved the development of a model used to educate individuals and promote knowledge diffusion. These farmer schools promoted participation and empowerment and subsequently emerged as an innovative approach for rural youth education and involved centralized development of a curricula, relying on researchers and extensionists to facilitate on-site learning activities and training (Chatterjee, 2004).

The intensive training applied participatory methods to deliver expert-crafted messages and foster the development of learning and problem-solving through experimentation and group activities. In this more collaborative context, participatory approaches were interpreted as mechanisms for changing rural youth practices, enhancing learning, assisting with decision-making and helping young people improve their living standards as they respond to change and uncertainty in a globalized economy.

6. Participatory Extension Approaches and Livelihood Improvements

The participatory approaches facilitated the study of livelihood strategies for rural development (Chambers, 1983). The body of work focused on examination of people's lives and the analysis of rural youth realities through participatory approaches. In positioning young people as active agents, participatory approaches did not problematize the socio-political context in which development occurs. The farmer schools adopted non-formal education that aimed at teaching young people in their context and life situations, focusing on how to identify their own needs and problems.

The circula also focused on development of the knowledge and skills to cope effectively with those needs and problems. The participatory approaches inspired rural youth populations to action (Jennings, 2007). The problems they faced provided the foundation for the instructions which followed. They were basically meant to help rural youth in their own context and with their own concerns. The participatory approaches at it best attempted to improve the rural youth condition (Brett, 2003). It endeavoured to help young people 'convince themselves' of the potential merits of adopting the right livelihood strategies and attitudes as change agents of the nation. In otherwords, they sought to empower youth to manage their own affairs. The financial independence that it brought were to link young people to tested knowledge and perspectives that could be in their own interest. The mission of the approaches was to help the young in their own social and cultural context to cope with the realities of globalization and progress.

The participatory extension approaches were distinct from other forms of education and empowerment. They were concerned with helping young people to solve their own problems and were directed towards progressive learners and groups using scientific learning systems to deliver their message (Chaligha, 2008). The approach created and nurtured learning that was immediately valued in the context of the learners' everyday life. The outcomes were tangible and manifested as material well-being, productivity, self-awareness and ability to control the environment (Hall, 2005). In using this approach, substantial autonomy and control was vested in the youth, their leaders and local community. The main advantage with this approach was that, programmes were dictated by practical use with which ideas were to be used. The programmes were conducted close to the where rural youth lived, thus economizing on resources. The information was specifically knowledge for self-reliance and self-determination.

7. Youth Participation in Public Policymaking

Evidence of youth participation in development work shows that participation leads to better outcomes for development projects (DFID, 2010; UNDESA, 2003; UNFPA, 2007). Any public process that induces young people to contribute ideas to the development process of their communities are considered a good practice in public sector development; Hence, crucial in shaping and monitoring decisions that affect national growth. Contrary to the notions that young people are not yet ready to assume proactive roles in policymaking, literature shows that they can be involved directly in planning processes and evaluation of programme effectiveness for national development. Encouraging young participation in programme evaluation and decision-making processes supports national objectives of building responsible adult citizens (Akiva, Cortina, & Smith, 2014).

It is for this reason that participation of youth in accountability mechanisms in agenda 2030 was made a key objective in the implementation roadmap of the agenda. The agenda streamlined the process of democratic engagement of the youth in decision-making processes that have new impact on their livelihoods. Young people engaged in these processes have gained the right midsets to change their living conditions as the territories they live in diversify and integrate into new value chains. This is particularly relevant for youth in the rural areas. Youth lifestyles have become modified by the events of change as rural populations increase. The modifying effects of this diversity accentuated by immigration and mobility have made it difficult for those in authority to adequately understand youth' (UNDESA, 2013. P. 275).

The conflict arising from the misunderstanding of youth is resolved when young people's knowledge, perceptions and ideas are intergrated into the development of effective public policies. The extent of youth participation in public policy discourse is evaluated using the Public Participation spectrum (OECD, 2017). This framework sets out the five levels of public participation mechanisms by which young people may influence decision-making process. These are; (1) informative processes (2) consultative mechanisms (3) involvement (4) collaborative mechanisms and (5) Empowerment

- First level is *informative*, young people are informed about policies relevant to them through communication technologies, or face to face interactions.

- A second one is *consultative*, young people's views are listened and relevant institutions representing governments provide feedback on how consultations with public shaped their decisions.

- *Involvement*; the youth work with officials usually in top-down model, for inclusion of the former's opinion. Governments provide justifications for their decisions and actions to the public.

- *Collaborative*: young leaders partner with government officials in the whole process through iterative dialogue to set up work agenda.

- *Empowerment*; Young people as citizens take final decisions that government enforces as public policy.

The levels given above do not only indicate the stages of meaningful youth participation but actually hints on the incremental nature of the influential power of participation. In otherwords, participation can take place at any level of the policy discouse from conception of the development idea to mainstream project execution (Salifu, 2021). Through the various steps of policymaking process, young people are empowered to attain satisfactory levels of engagement with public officials on situation analysis, policy design and planning, implementation, monitoring or evaluation.

Much as these different participatory techniques provide illustrations on levels of participation, it begs the question as to exactly how these various stages of participation could be implemented or harnessed into creative opportunities for the rural youth. In most parts of the developing world it is difficult to imagine citizen advisory committees or juries as tools that youngsters in rural areas can use. The social norms clearly dictate different terms for the youth and participation is placed in the hands of only the elderly. This was what inspired Keller to utter the famous "Seldom Heard Young People" axiom in his description of non-participation of youth in the policy entreprise of development.

This depicts a stark reality of young people who do not have a collective voice or are often under-represented in consultation or participatory activities (Kelleher, Seymour, & Halpenny, 2014, p.1). Most public policies that have inculcated youth participation frameworks have only being "youth focused" rather than "youth-centred" (OECD, 2017, P. 149). Young people are objects of public policies rather than agents whose concerns feed into the design of policies relevant to them. A trend that is particularly true for rural people (Vargas-Lundius & Suttie, 2014, p. 51). This probably is due to the power dynamics implicited in participation as participation in many developing countries tend to be more 'hierarchy-oriented' than equality-minded.

8. Hierarchies or 'Ladder' of Participation in Policymaking

As we examine the ladder of participation in detail, youth participation in development work becomes rather challenging to administer (Commonwealth, 2016). As the paper examines the many diverse practitioners that participate in policymaking, either in discussing alternative approaches to specifies issues or arguing for changes in policy designs, social scientists envisage outcomes that sometimes resemble the Tower of Babel, with all the busy builders quite unable to a communicate with one another. Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation clearly depicts the tower symbolism with provocative perspectives on the redistribution of power to enhance meaningful participation of actors along the chain (Arnstein, 1969). Arnstein's ladder describes eight rungs-two levels of non-participation

(Manipulation and Therapy). Three degrees of tokenism (Informing, Consultation and Placation) and the three degrees of citizen power (Partnerships, Delegated Power and Citizen Control) in development work (Farrow, 2016). The ladder asserts that stakeholders' power of participation is not always distributed as neatly as the divisions used. That, some significant road blocks emerges in forging real participation. Hence the ideal of participation is often defeated in development projects that claim to be participatory

While we acknowledge these challenges in participation, other scientists have argued that political economy factors of ethnicity, regionalism, and paternalism, resistance of power holders and disorganization of powerless stakeholders could be critical factors limiting true engagement (Salifu, 2021; Karsten, 2012). In this section the eclectic mixture of what seems to challenge true participation is well illustrated in the new hierarchies presented. These hierarchies are quite different from the ladder of participation. It is customized to suit the new context of development re-engagment. In agricultural development work for instance, Arnsteins ladder has some limitations. Instead of eight rungs, the real world of powerless people might require as many as 100 rungs to cover the range of actual citizen involvement in development work. Besides, the ladder analogy suggests no logical progression from level to another. In this section, study seeks to illustrate the hierarchical nature of participation in development work.

Hierarchies and social power relations dictate levels of participation (MercyCorps, 2016). The hierarchy of participation is visualized as a 'progressive ladder' or an arbitrary arrangement of project activities by which rural people are designated to different ranks of activities. As hierarchies denote status, those activities that are considered low level activities represent the preparatory stages of participation often ascribed to the youth. These activities consequently are informative in character that has less importance in relation to other ranks of participation. For instance, information of youth about policies of government has little value for youth's livelihoods in comparison to their actual empowerment with hands-on technical skills to improve their livelihoods.

Empowermet represents the highest level of youth engagement in public discourse. In a broader sense, top-down participation may be likened to a hierarchy of order. In looking at a hierarchical top-down ladder, each rung seems to have an appearance more or less similar to other rungs. Futher if the ladder is laid on the ground, there is still no great distinction between the rungs of participation. They seem to have uniformity that suggests equality. However, as soon as the ladder of participation is placed in a vertical position for use, the relationship of their rungs in their importance changes. One of the rungs is immediately at the top and one is at the bottom and the other rungs are in their respective positions relative to the two. If we conceive the ladder of participation as levels of participation in policymaking, then obviously other levels are supreme to others. When the supreme level of participation is reached, the finality of attainment of a desirable end-goal in policy framing is also reached. The five levels of participation constitute the arrangement of levels of participation in stepwise order for policymaking to become useful and adequately implementable for the youth. For instance the first level, information constitutes the beginning of the engagement. Participation must go on from this first grader status to higher levels of engagement, thus empowerment.

The major contention with participation is that when government policymaking assigns the youth to surbodinate levels of participation, poverty and inequality grows. Many government programmes seem to engage rural youth in volunteering, sports and ludic ctivities instead of intergrating them in a wider range of livelihood diversification activities. Young people need to be intergrated into higher rungs of participation that promote 'meaningful participation'. Thus, empowering the youth to take up new opportunities relevant to their own lives; activities that excite and challenge them and "count as real" (Jennings, Parra-Medina, Hilfinger-Messias, & McLoughlin, 2006, p.43). This is related to the broader issue of creating an "enabling environment" for youth participation. An enabling environment of participation maximizes youth assets, agency, access to services and opportunities (YouthPower, 2017b).

9. Collecting Rural Youth Voices

Desirable initiatives that foster youth excellence in development are broadly inclusive in character. Programmes and techniques that specifically work to project youth well-being are extremely limited (Youth Power, 2017a). As we will see in this document, youth participation in educational workshops, councils and the national parliament are extremely pathetic. This is at variance with the striking consensus in literature to rope in hard-to-reach young people in development work. The article reviews both institutional arrangements promoting youth participation and holistic interventions that occasionally give a semblance of social determination to trigger youth inclusion.

10. Youth Participatory Programmes

10.1 Informing Mechanisms

Informing mechanisms represent the fundamental stages of participation. These mechanisms seek to educate and raise youth awareness of essential policies of relevance to them and how they may harness it. For the purpose of informing and inciting youth participation in new public policies, online information, television, radio, printed material, and other communication tools are used to disseminate information. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) such as the internet and social networks have been distinctively utilized by youth in an a frantic attempt to engage with society and what they perceive as vital to their basic needs (Commonwealth, 2016).While face-to-face engagement with youth are considered high-cost in information dissemination, opportunities related to the expansion of ICT to dialogue with young people on regular basis are vast. Moreover, even excluded populations considered rural territories are now using information mechanisms to creat new synergies with growing ICT sector in unexpected ways. Much as informing networks support youth participation in development work, it still does not bridge the information assymetry barrier of policymaking. Besides, meeting the information needs of the youth goes further from information supply to providing relevant information which solves the major problems of youth. Providing education in a timely fashion would help to bridge the barriers between knowledge and education. As most rural people cannot access the print word, direct contact by extension agents could be critical to meeting the information needs of rural youth.

10.2 Consulting Mechanisms

Consultations represent a process of interaction between two profesionals. One has a specialized competence in the area and the consultee, invokes help with regard to a current problem with which he is having some difficulty. Consultation could expand into a tripartite interaction of professionals and civil organisations to facilitate change in areas of benefit to the youth. Literature identifies three types of consultation in development work; Client-centred consultation, Consultee-centred consultation and Programme-centred administrative consultation (Vargas-Lundius & Suttie, 2014). With client-centred consultation, the goal is to provide specific services to youth as clients whereas Consultee-centred consultation seeks to facilitate growth assisting youth to learn and use new skills to improve delivery in a specific area of livelihood. The programme-centred administrative consultation helps in making changes to existing programmes with the goal of enhancing effectiveness and outreach of the programmes.

The programme administrative consultation provides the means by which rural youth exchange ideas with policy makers. Policy makers help youth to see clearly, the policy objectives and implications of participation. Here the youth find direct answers to nagging questions about new policies.This form of engagement gives attention to rural youth concerns whiles also providing public feedback on policies.

Most common consulting mechanisms for engaging youth are delivered through national and international meetings, worshops, and youth councils. Sometimes face-to-face communication is used to promote interactions with youth. In-situ communication has been the most preferred avenue of international organisations (Skalli, & Thomas, 2015). For instance, annual meetings abroad with national youth representatives are common in the framework of international organisations such as commonwealth, African Union (AU), ASEAN, SAARC, and pacific countries.

Their commitment to holding these annual engagements are co-ordinated by binding regulations written into the organisations mandate. For example, AU activities with African youth are supported by a binding legal charter which regulates member states obligations to African youth both at home and in the diaspora. To be specific, Article 11 spells out the rules of engagement with African youth. In accordance with the provisions of the AU act guiding youth engagement, AU is mandated to strengthen creative platforms for youth participation in decision-making through promotion of Youth Councils or youth representation in national Parliaments.

The Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) which is the largest youth-led organisation in the world organises meetings annually to deliberate global challenges and issues of relevance to the youth (Commonwealth, 2016). They receive widespread media coverage on CNN and other international agencies. The aim is to bring attention to youth challenges, spearhead youth leadership and to solicit international support for worthy youth projects. The CYC activities are funded by multilateral corporations. They are dotted around the world with regional chapters in the Caribbea, Africa, and the Pacific. In 2015, the Caribbean Regional Youth Council, part of the CYC, organised and chaired a meeting with state oficials of the Caribbean origin. Youth leaders and government ministers discussed policy issues which centred on youth employment, business entrepreneurship and participation of youth in civic and political processes**.** The forum was dubbed "the role of young people in peace building and professionalization of youth work sector" (YouthPower, 2017a).

Other international organisations have built on the successes of this conference. In 2016, South Asian Associationfor Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries organised a regional dialogue as a follow up to the previous agenda. This meeting advocated for greater Youth participation in the implementation of SDG's whose main goal was to share best practices and experiences across SAARC countries in policy development involving young people. In 2020, the REAF (Reunión Especializada en Agricultura Familiar, in Spanish) inaugurated its own 'Working Group' with promising young leaders to discuss issues related to agriculture (Rikolto, 2017). The first cohort having gone through the training in agribusiness management, have assumed leadership positions in the agribusiness industry in the region.

Although youth councils have been spaces for consultations with governments in an institutionalized fashion, much remains to be done to improve the consultative processes and outcomes. For instance, Youth councils are regulated by the state and functions they perform are assigned by the state politicians (OECD, 2017, p. 151). While these regulations help to monitor and supervise the business of the councils, they face problems of irregular political support by national authorities. This poses a new problem, as Youth councils governed by traditional elites fall under strong political co-optation by local parties, the youth become instruments of political patronage and clientelism.

10.3 Collaborating Mechanisms

Collaboration for development work is visualized as an exercise in convergence for construction of shared meaning in development work. In other words, it provides interactions that enable participants to reach convergence through construction of an abstract understanding of the goal of development projects. In reaching understanding, collaborative mechanisms help to assess the effects of the broad interplay of 'development metaphors' and an iterative cycle of knowledge display and confirmation (Roschelle, 1992). Development collaboration is a coordinated, synchronous activity that is the result of a continued attempt to construct and maintain a shared conception of a development goal. Collaboration is sometimes distinguished from cooperation in that cooperation is typically accomplished through division of labour with each stakeholder-participant responsible for some portion of the end to be achieved. Collaboration on the other hand, involves participation of different stakeholders working together on the same task. Rather than working in parallel directions on separate portions of the task, a true marker of collaboration is demonstrated in the quality of interactions, degree of interactivity and negotiability in performing a joint task. In the collaborative stages of policymaking, participation progresses from mere consultations with government officials to actual implementation of a joint action with youth (Cornwall, 2006).

Government and youth as co-implementors of programmes exchange vital information on regular basis to achieve policy end-goals in a timely manner. Here stakeholders honour their part of the bargain to reach desirable outcomes. Many international organisations have collaborated with youth to design important programmes for youth development in business and other areas of relevance to economic growth and social welfare. For instance, the UNFPA works closely with "Youth Advisory Panels" in many countries (Phillipines, South Africa) to promote youth participation in global peace-building and national development. These collaborations provide new windows and opportunities for dialogueing with youth organisations on the strategic actions to address the needs of young people globally (Dhanaraj & Mahambare, 2019). Over the years the collaborations have been sensitive to needs of youth in vulnerable places of the world.

In 2007, UNFPA recruited rural youth from Pakistan as implementing partners in the promotion of educational reforms in Pakistan. Over a perid of 12 months, rural youth performed various functions helping to design UNFPA's annual work plans, supporting advocacy and awareness-raising champaigns for the World Youth Day. One of the major challenges of enhancing collaborations in rural Africa is poor human capital (Craig, and Porter, 1997). To support continued engagement with rural youth, IFAD's Rural Youth Vocational Training, Employment and Entreprenuership Support Project' was inaugurated to help address the intellectual capital gaps in rural Africa. In Mali, the initiative supported vocational training of agricultural youth in modern methods of production and animal husbandry. The programme targeted the selection of 'good-perfoming youth' including major achievers at school and community institutions. The major priority was to get the youth in top implementing positions in the agricultural value-chain industry. However, adult bias towards 'good-performance youth' had a negative impact on these collaborative actions. The absence of empowering mechanisms to support youth participation in adult dominated industries was instantly recognized as the major cause of youth under-participation in development work.

10.4 Empowering Mechanisms

The feminist movement in the Global South can officially be credited for the appearance of the term "empowerment" in international development literature. Although, the notion of youth empowerment features widely in the contemporary discourse of international insitutions on "participation of the vulnerable" in development programmes,

empowerment as a dynamic mechanism for development became prominent in the feminist theories of the Global South (Kesby, 2005). Empowerment emerged on the back of the radical activism of ferminism and gradually became institutionalized in the policy vocabulary. Since the 1980s, empowerment as a concept has radically transitioned from an overemphasis of radical transformation of inequitable political structures to a consideration of individual's power to assimilate economic decision-making. In recent times, the infatuation with self-empowerment has also highlighted the need to de-policize collective power in development policies and to protect the individual's interest in policymaking.

The theory of youth empowerment is sincerely anchored in the philosophy that gives priority to the points of view held by oppressed people. Empowering mechanisms delegate decision-making into young people's hands. In this manner, projects are directed and executed by youth albeit structural limitations of budget constraints. Youth parliaments are assigned policy-making roles for consideration by national parliaments (Jennings, 2007). This is considered good practice for youth engagement in policymaking given that regular parliaments have low levels of youth representation. In other countries, Youth Parliaments are recognized as formal institutions affliated to national bodies. Many have debated graduate level unemployment in the African sub-region and pushed to forge brighter connections with employers. The only challenge has been that, youth parliaments are assigned informing roles that have zero effect on youth empowerment as a vital group with specific concerns about national development and growth. In recent times, many Youth parliaments in Africa have deviated from their primary mandate of policymaking. They are consigned to regular education of young people on how the real parliament works, instead of acting as responsible stakeholders tasking government to fulfill its mandate to the people.

Elsewhere not only do youth parliaments make a real dent on policymaking, they set the policy agenda for government's consideration. In the Phillipines, Youth Parliaments are empowered to set their own youth agenda and to influence policy in the Upper Houses. Sri Lankan government has been praised for engaging the youth in policymaking and embacing Youth parliaments as a vital arm of government. Representatives of youth parliaments are not only elected at district-wide polls but fully supported and commissioned by the state to act as autonomous institutions widely consulted along the various stages of the policy cycle (OECD, 2017, p. 154).

11. Capitalising Rural Youth

Capitalizing rural youth activities means equipping them with adequate resources to sustain livelihood activities that are profitable (Green & Hulme, 2005). Sustainable livelihood framework offers an intergrated approach to helping young people generate adequate incomes from pursuit of livelihood strategies in the rural no-farm sector. Levels and amounts of incomes generated from economic activities are premised on total availability of assets and household factor endownments. Scarcity or shortages of one or more of the essential capital inputs such as human and financial capital reduces potential incomes that can be generated by youth from undertaking income activities. It is the limitation of critical assets that reduce the potential of youth to generate livelihoods from economic activities that increases vulnerability and propensity to propagate violence and mayhem in society.

Many new participatory programmes for youth empowerment require some availability of assets. Participatory interventions are built on pre-existing income generation activities of youth. The implication is that rural youth who have no access to assets are automatically excluded from participation even if they fit the criteria as beneficiaries. One major problem youth face in pursuing economic activities or enagaing in rural entrepreneurship is lack of start-up capital. Even if rural youth are able to raise adequate start-ups to run retail businesses, funds are still required to sustain their personal drive and support innovative projects (Hall, 2005). This is why there are no businesses in rural areas. Capitalising youth via holistic approaches that provide material support to young entreprenuers without assets could be critical to bridging high rates of youth unemployment and poverty. To reduce rural youth poverty, many new interventions have called for skill-building of youth in vocational training.

Much as this approach helps to accelerate income-earning possibilities, they remain advoc measures without an attempt to improve efficiency and labour productivity of youth. There can not be poverty reduction in such a short time without active participation of young people in relation to employment and maximization of labour productivity. The review of cross-sectional programmes for poverty reduction shows that these two distinct characteristics could complement interventions to support youth. A preamble to this is to first improve strategies for youth acquisition of employable skills, particularly 'Intellectual soft-skills'. Improving adaptive skills of millenials are key to building 'intergenerational partnerships'. It is important that youth participation in markets do not constitute a collision cause with adult professional but rather trigger complementarity between the new and older generations.

11.1 Soft-Skills

The soft skills of relevance to development are those attributes essential to navigating the business world. Adequate development of soft skills would not only help the youth to intergrate faster with modern trends, these personal qualities would complement professional technical abilities to deliver under pressure. Soft skills are just as applicable to worklife as acquisition of other skills such as technical and academic skills (Gates et al., 2016, p. 1). However, the educational system which prepares the youth for careers do not adequately prepare the young in adaptive skill acquisition beyond acquisition of academic skills. It is not clear how young people gain adaptive knowledge and develop foundational skills to meet the rising demands of soft-skills on the job (MicroLinks, 2017). Moreso, as the prevailing educational systems cannot be easily changed to intergrate youth attitudes in practical worklife; it is difficult to gauge youth interests without a thorough development of their attitudinal complexes gained from over reliance on technical academic aptitudes. It is important to change this narrative so youth can adequately participate in the higher echelons of national development such as serving on assemblies and other influential consultative boards. Some of the soft skills critical to working at the higher levels of participatory governance include interpersonal skills, social and communication skills to assert views and to help resolve conflicts should they arise with partners (YouthPower, 2017). These skills can be horned to perfection by engaging youth leaders in regular capacity building workshops in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, teambuilding and leadership (MercyCorps, 2016, p. 11).

11.2 Intergenerational Partnerships

Effective collaborations for business networking would require intergenerational partnerhips with most experienced professionals (YouthPower, 2017). Engaging experienced professionals in horizontal collaborative schemes could be fundamental to change in rural societies where social norms place a natural barrier between generations. To make intergenerational partnerships effective for rural development, stakeholders must recognize the independence of youth. The programmes of interest must promote common understanding and respect for each generation's unique experiences and differences. Intergenerational partnerships can also utilize the mentorship structures to support the entrepreneurial capacities for business development services. Studies have shown that participation is constrained by intergenerational conflicts between youth and adult stakeholders.

12. Development Leadership: Theories and Styles for Youth Participation

Discussion is often heard about the downward spiral of modern African societies and institutions due to uninspired top-down leadership styles that focus on personal needs rather than solving the challenges of society. Hence it is imperative to focus attention on various leadership theories that have telling effects on youth. Although leadership is explored in various dimensions throughout history, the subject remains one of the most elusive areas to define in modern organisations of development. As the notion of exemplary leadership is advanced in policy work, the challenge is to find dynamic ways of enhancing young talented leaders to become prestigious creative leaders. In an attempt to find the golden path, the researcher undertakes an indepth exploration of leadership styles. Leadership has been defined as a "series of actions and interactions among leaders and followers which lead to attainment of group goals". (Wren, 1995, p. 325)

12.1 Historical Perspectives of Leadership: The Case of the Lions of Dagbon

One of the most important historical perspectives of leadership has been that great leaders were instrumental in development of civilized societies. The Ancient Dagomba kingdom of Ghana traditionally documents the leadership styles of the Abudu and Andani overlords who ascended the throne after Naa Gbewaa, founder of Dagbon.

Traditional folklore reports that Naa Gbewaa, like the biblical Moses, led his people out of the wilderness and dissension. The success of Yaa-Naa Gbewaa over other waring tribes was attributed to the application of effective leadership in crises. As Bass (1990) notes, leadership is a critical factor in military successes since records show that better-led forces repeatedly have been victorious over poorly-led forces.

As historical facts note, Naa Gbewaa's flexibility and quick thinking endeared him to his people as a war time leader who sustained an ethnic kingdom in uncertain times. Wiggam argued that strong leaders survived and produced an aristocratic class that was biologically superior to others. Naa Gbewaa, a moral example of discipline and community service created a modern culture in Dagbon, much like the Chinese leader Confucious who inspired China to lofty goals of industrialization and self-realization. Plato expressed the idea that the leader was the most important servant in society. Aristotle advanced the notion that political leaders lacked meaning and virtue without charisma and service. Machiavelli elaborated the need for leaders to be firm and resolute. The famous Dagbon Overlords of Yendi cited in this section definitely ascribe to the great men theory of leadership.

12.2 Applications of Early Leadership Theories and Styles for Development

Leadership theories and styles for effective management of development projects are related to the diagnosis, training, and motivation of youth to aspire to the highest objectives of new projects. In an attempt to extract, the most crucial theories and models of leadership, the major components of the theory and implications have been reviewed in their context. William James (1880) suggested that great men brought about changes in society. The history of the world according to James, is the history of Great Men; they created what the masses could accomplish. Adherent to the Great men theory, women leaders were virtually ignored. Credencce was seldom bestowed upon women leaders such as Joan of Arc, Yaa Asantewaa, Elizabeth I, and other great female pioneers. However, male leaders like Gamel Abdul-Nasser of Egypt, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Martin Lurther King, Nelson Mandela and military leaders were hailed as esteemed great men. An interesting idea of early theorists advanced the point of view that leadership was directly related to inheritance. Other theorists have argued that leaders should possess qualities that are evident to those around around them. This idea developed the trademark for framing leadership arguments around traits of character and personality of leaders (Kohs & Irle, 1920).

Although, development scholars all theorized leadership around the works of Kohs & Irle,(1920), Stodgill (1948) criticized the trait theory and advanced the situational theory. He asserted that situational factors had an important effect on leadership. In the western democracies, many researchers favoured the notion that leaders were born and not made. The leaders recognized that a situation called for a certain type of positive action. In that case, the leaders did not just inject leadership. They were instrumental in finding a lasting solution to crises. Major revolutionary ideas across Africa and the world were purported to have been built around this idea. Whiles Cuban Fidel Castro, Jerry Rawlings and Thomas Sankara's revolutions helped to build nations, most revolutions failed to change attitudes and mindsets of people inspite of bringing untold sacrifices upon the nation.

The political theory espouses the idea that wealthy, military, religious and state should rule and lead the masses. The political leaders must compete for approval from people and recognize the wants and needs of followers. A better emphasis of political theory in political economy discussions of economic growth, emphasise respect for the minorities whiles making decisions based on majority votes. At the institutional and oranisational levels, modern theories such the theories of McGregor, Argyris, Likert, Blake and Mouton, Maslow, and Hersey and Blanchard have been concerned with development of the individual in a cohesive institution.

12.3 Leadership Theories for Youth Development in Organisations

McGregor postulated two types of theories in organisations. Theory X and Theory Y attempt to describe how people relate to organisations. Theory X argues that employees are lazy and will not perform their roles creditably unless coerced or forced to produce. Theory Y is based on the assumption that followers will fulfill the needs of the organisation only when adequately motivated to deliver great results. Argyris (1957), provided a different viewpoint which posited the maturity-immaturity theory. This theory holds that employees should be self-disciplined for organisations to provide the means to make a difference. On the otherhand, Likert (1967), suggested that leadership is a relative process and effective leaders keep the needs of their followers in mind. Blake and Mouton (1965) expressed different beliefs on managerial grid. They argued that employees and leaders had different concerns for the organisation. If leaders were concerned for the individual, then their concern for the organisation had to be lower than the concern for the individual. Leaders who rated the individual and the organisation high would produce followers who are committed to their workload and the organisation would prosper. During the same period, Maslow's Theory of Eupychian Management (1965) emphasized the need for managers to support followers and to reward potential so that different people had the same opportunity to become what they had the capacity to become.

13. GIMPA and the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI)

The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders was initiated by President Hussein Obama in 2013. The fellowship brings 1000 young leaders from Africa to United States for six weeks long training in leadership. (Heath, Hidrobo, & Roy, 2020) These young leaders are hosted in Business and Entreprenuership tracks. Participants are expected to return to their home countries to build skills and implement what they have learned.

The Ghana Insitute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) is one of the leading institutes of Africa on leadership and governance. The Insitute has mentored fellows on business projects that are instrumental to development of new crop of leaders in Africa. Industry and academic leaders have indicated the importance of developing the competences of young leaders in global business professionalism. Researchers have identified three learning outcomes for young business leaders. Warnick's extensive literature review identified three major global competences for young leaders.

These are; (1) Ability to communicate across cultures, (2) Ability to appreciate other cultures (3) Ability to understand cultural differences relating to business and entrepreneurial service delivery. Considering the effects of globalization, it is the combination of these skillsets in young leaders that would drive change in Africa. The main challenge for most universities around the world is to find the most effective pedagogical approaches to integrate these skills. It is in this capacity that GIMPA stands out as a global centre of excellence for business and leadership development in Africa

14. Conclusions

One-size-fits all development paradigms have been rejected for lack of youth-centred approaches. A new approach now being widely considered is grass-root youth participation in economic and social development. These new ideas are not mere abstractions but can actually help development practitioners to move beyond mechanical implementation of top-down project blueprints to youth-centred programmes. The new ideas raised in this paper from a multi-disciplanary perspective provide a nuanced processual approach attentive to the needs of jobless youth of sub-Saharan Africa. Seeking to escape the trap of presentism, development practitioners should optimize the weaving of youth-customised interventions to create unique rhythms in the development trajectories. To underscore the centrality of youth voices, the review paid exclusive attention to grassroot participatory approaches and youth leadership perspectives. Further research may dwell on the 'interfaces' between local youth communities and development workers, for example by considering the mediating role of young leaders along policy/aid chain of development regimes. By digging into the bureaucratic paperwork and internal correspondence as well as concept papers, strategy documents have revealed the uneven playing fields of development with top-down approaches watering down the perspectives of young voices explaining them away.The review believes that there is space for improvement of existing participation mechanisms to reflect the concerns of the youth in eligalitarian African Societies such as Ghana. Through economic and social inclusion, collection of youth opinions around the issues relevant to them could improve intergenerational partnerships for economic growth and development.

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