



Opportunities and Challenges of Youth Engagement: The South African Context

**By
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Declaration

I **Ntuthuko Mhlongo 207520119** declare that this dissertation – “Appraising the Opportunities and Challenges of Youth Engagement” is a product of my own independent research work and has not been previously submitted for publication or any other degree programme or examination at any University.

Signature

Date

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List of Acronyms

AG	Auditor General
ANC	African National Congress
ANCYL	African National Congress Youth League
AU	African Union
AYC	African Youth Charter
BOR	Bill of Rights
BRICS	Brazil Russia India China South Africa
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
FET	Further Education and Training
NGP	National Growth Path
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NYC	National Youth Commission
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
NYP	National Youth Policy
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
UYF	UMsobomvu Youth Fund
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank

WPAY World Programme of Action on Youth

YEDS Youth Enterprise Development Strategy

Abstract

Contemporary democracies are faced with the mounting challenge of non-participation of citizens in the politics of the state. In most cases the reasons for non-participation primarily stem from the state's incapacity to create sufficient platforms to encourage the meaningful participation of the citizens in policy making.

In developing countries this trend has been more conspicuous amongst young people. This is largely due to the fact that the global trend of the 'youth bulge' is more prominent in developing countries. But it should be noted that the need for the participation of young people in the politics of state is even more critical in developing countries; and this is so because if the trend of the youth bulge continues, the youth will in time, constitute the majority of the population in most of these countries. The main argument of this dissertation is that the inclusion of the youth in political decision making is vital in creating a sense of belonging in the state. The most unfortunate consequence of the youth feeling alienated from the state is that the youth is often lured into participating in violent activities against the state. These include, among many, terrorism and violent protest against the state.

In South Africa where youth voter turnout has been declining and where the youth are often involved in violent protest, the successful inclusion of the youth in decision making should be a state priority. Notably, the state has since 1994 passed various legislations which attempt to empower and include the youth. This dissertation is a qualitative study of this legislation. The main aim is to assess whether the legislation has achieved its goal of empowering and including the youth in state affairs. Utilizing Hart's Ladder of Participation as a framework, the study further assesses to what extent has the legislation been able to offer the South African youths genuine opportunities to participate in the politics of the country.

Chapter One

Youth Participation: An Introduction in the South African context

The importance of political participation of citizens has been identified by most scholars of political science as a key feature of a legitimate democratic state. This view dates back to the early writers of Political Philosophy and can be identified in Rousseau's social contract theory. Rousseau's argument was against representatives who take over the decision making process from the citizens; but more importantly (and more germane to this dissertation), Rousseau warned against the 'political non-participation' of citizens. He argued that 'political non-participation' would ultimately lead the state to its collapse (Rousseau 1762).

The most noticeable predicament that large scale 'political non-participation' presents, is that it creates an environment where a few political elites make decisions on the critical state matters. In most cases, the decisions taken serve to benefit only the political and business elites at the expense of the majority of the citizens (Gibson 2011). Moreover the non-participation of citizens decreases associational life and the ability to mobilize society effectively (Putman 1995). In this light, it can be said that non-participation in politics, wanes society's ability to effect policy direction to their advantage. A new emerging trend in developing countries has compounded this problem of non-participation; this trend has been identified by scholars as the 'Global Youth Bulge'.

The theory of Youth Bulge was propounded by Fuller (1990) whose study identified that the high presence of youth between the age of 15-24 in South Korea threatened the political stability of the state. The Youth Bulge simply put, is a demographic trend where the proportion of persons between the ages of 15-24 is comparatively greater than other age groups in the state's population (Taalyard 2008). This trend has meant that the participation of young people becomes of paramount importance in politics as they form a significant proportion of the society. Given that the youth constitutes a large segment of the population, alienation of young people from political decision making is a major risk to the legitimacy of the state. With the goal of finding out the underlying reasons for the youth's political disengagement, political scientists have developed an interest in the 'youth bulge'. The underlying reasons that scholars have found to be the main contributing factors vary from country to country. However, in most cases young people disengage from state politics because there is deficiency either in the legislation or structures that are set up

to facilitate and encourage participation. Where these structures exist, they are mostly tokenistic and do not facilitate meaningful participation of the youth.

In the context of South Africa the trend of the Youth Bulge has been akin to most developing countries, with the youth population constituting a large proportion of the citizens. This has challenged the government to design policies that encourage Youth Participation as well as Youth Development. Since 1994, which is the year that signifies the dawn of democracy in South Africa, there has been numerous legislation, policies and structures created by the democratic government. These include the Umsobumvu Youth Fund, Youth Parliament, the National Youth Development Agency and many more others. However research on voter turnout conducted by the Human Science Research Council (2012) indicates that a majority of 'youth' in South Africa still do not participate in politics using these structures. Surveys, research papers and voter turnout have all indicated that the majority of people who are classified as the youth do not participate in politics in South Africa. This dissertation seeks to find out the underlying causes of the non-participation of the youth in politics considering the apparently abundant opportunities presented for engagement in the context of South Africa. The study seeks to posit remedies that could catalyze the mass political participation of the youth and consequently reduce the risk factor that occurs when a large group of people view the state as an illegitimate authority that makes decisions without due consultation.

1.1 Rationale

The participation of young people in politics provides them with the opportunity to understand both the political decision making processes and the 'political state structures.' For the youth, political participation provides a critical opportunity to help them familiarize themselves with the structures of government and prepares them to be effective future leaders. Understanding the reasons for non-participation of young people can help to posit remedies that will assist in preventing the crisis of a future leadership void. Notably, there exists a rich body of literature on this topic globally, however, because South Africa's democracy is still young, the topic is still relatively new. There is therefore a paucity of academic work that interrogates the reasons for political apathy amongst young people. This study seeks to augment this deficiency in extant literature on the issue of political participation of the youth in South Africa.

1.2 Research Hypothesis

H1. Youth delinquency, violent protest and more recently xenophobia have been led by young people who have a sense of being alienated from the political activities in the country. This dissertation makes the assumption that, the successful inclusion of youth in accessible community decision making structures, accompanied by genuine opportunities to engage in political decision making, can create a sense of inclusion and responsibility among young people that can significantly curb their participation in criminal activities plaguing society.

H2. The involvement of a few young people in decision making and leadership can help encourage more young people to participate in politics therefore reducing the high rate of young voters' non-participation in electoral processes. It is therefore vital for the youth to participate in politics and leadership.

1.3. Research objectives and Broader Issues to be Investigated

The concept of youth participation has been studied extensively in matured and developed democracies worldwide. South Africa with only 22 years of democracy is a relatively young democracy. However 'youth apathy' pertaining to political participation has been a pervasive trend akin to more developed democracies. This dissertation endeavors to study available literature, exploring the topic and to draw parallels or contradictions from other more developed democracies. The researcher also seeks to study and to add to the body of literature on youth participation in the South African context. The objectives of the researcher are as follows:

1. To probe the different meanings of the youth.
2. To interrogate the conceptualization of 'participation'; to explore challenges responsible for discouraging youth participation in South African politics
3. To ascertain the existence of and evaluate opportunities in government policies and structures that (un)encourage the meaningful engagement of youths in decision making.

1.4 Research Problems and Questions

Against the backdrop of the above objectives, the dissertation endeavors to answer the following questions in order to contribute more knowledge and add perspective on the non-participation of young people in politics in the post-apartheid South Africa.

1.5 Research Questions

® Who are the youth?

® What is political participation?

® What are the challenges (if any) responsible for discouraging youth participation in South African politics?

® Are there adequate opportunities in the form of government policies and structures that encourage and facilitate the meaningful engagement of young people in decision making?

1.6 Methodology

In the social sciences there are two predominant research methodologies that are commonly applied by researchers, namely, the quantitative and the qualitative methods. On the one hand the quantitative method can be defined “as an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables in turn can be measured typically on instruments so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures” (Creswell 2014). The qualitative method, on the other hand, can be defined as “an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (2014:5). This dissertation uses the qualitative method to study the policy framework and available structures set up for youth participation in South Africa. The qualitative method allowed the researcher to get an in-depth understanding of the reasons for youth non participation in post-apartheid South Africa’s formal political processes. The researcher firstly focused on the fundamental legislation affecting ‘youth participation’ in South Africa. Secondly the researcher interrogated the main policy framework guiding youth participation in politics in the country. This was done in order to establish the reasons for the apparent non-participation of the youth in the structures provided to facilitate their participation in politics. The qualitative approach made it possible for the researcher to test whether the existing legislation presents enough opportunities for youth engagement. This methodology also helped the researcher to draw out the challenges to youth participation. The

dissertation also examined the 'National Youth Development Agency' which is a structure set up by government to encourage youth participation and skills development.

The researcher used the following primary sources: The South African constitution, the South African's National Youth Policy (NYP) and the African Youth Charter to establish the different conceptualizations of term youth. The researcher also used secondary data that have dealt with the concept of meaningful participation and what it entails. This was done in order assess if there is sufficient meaningful youth participation in South Africa. The desktop method is used in this dissertation, though there is not much scholarly work done on the NYDA, there are however some useful newspaper articles and internet publications documenting some of its activities. The reason why this structure is selected is that a lot of funding from government has gone into the structure; consequently it raises the question whether the high funding is justified. The data will be studied extensively and interpreted in order to arrive at conclusions whether the NYDA has been able to empower the youth to participate in decision making.

1.7 Limitations of Study

The limitations of the study are that the time frame for the study is relatively short, presenting constraints to the possibility for field research. Also, studying of only one of the structures for participation, namely, NYDA may not be sufficient for understanding all the reasons for youth political apathy. This then is considered as limitation in this project. Notably, a study investigating two or more structures such as Youth Parliament and the National Youth Policy would have the advantage of picking up similar trends or different reasons contributing the non-participation of young people in South Africa.

1.8 Structure of dissertation

Chapter One provides a background and introduction to the topic. It introduces the main themes that are germane to the topic. It also outlines the research objectives, the questions that the dissertation seeks to answer and finally the methodology.

Chapter Two presents the literature review which includes the main arguments and different perspectives within the topic. It delineates the different conceptualizations of youth participation and argues that meaningful participation is the solution to including the youth as well as formulating some of the policy solutions to societal issues. It seeks to contextualise the concepts

with the South African post-apartheid environment. It also provides the theory that used unpack the issues in the dissertation which is Roger Hart's Theory of participation.

Chapter Three focuses on the legislation that governs the structures for youth participation in South Africa. The chapter applies Hart's Ladder as the theory to evaluate whether the legislation gives the youth enough opportunities to participate meaningfully in creating the legislation as well as in implementing the legislation.

Chapter Four of the dissertation assesses the adequacy of the NYDA as a platform for youth participation and empowerment. The chapter uses available literature to draw conclusions on suitability of the NYDA as a structure that involves the youth in matters of youth development.

The final chapter of the dissertation, Chapter Five, reflects on the hypothesis and research objectives. The chapter provides a summary of the findings of the previous chapters and a conclusion of the dissertation.

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter deals with contextualizing the significance of ‘youth participation’ in the South African setting. It explores the different perspectives that scholars have contributed on the topic, and defines the pertinent terms that assist in broadening the understanding of ‘youth participation’. The chapter begins with a critical discussion on relevant concepts, namely: youth, meaning participation and youth bulge. The discussion of the concept of youth covers global, regional, and local understanding of this concept. With regard to meaningful participation, this chapter will discuss the five types or mechanisms of meaningful participation that are outlined by Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2006). The chapter then moves to a critical discussion of the literature that deals with youth participation in South Africa. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of Roger Hart’s theory of participation which is the theoretical framework that will be used in this dissertation.

2.1 Conceptualizing Youth

The idea of determining which age group is the correct one for constituting the ‘youth’ is not an easy task. Phaswane (2009) points out that “The term ‘youth’ carries a myriad of meanings in different cultures and societies” (2009). The African Youth Charter “refers to the youth as every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years of age” (African Youth Charter. 2006). For South Africa’s ‘National Youth Policy’ the youth is constituted by individuals between the ages of 14 and 35 years. The NYP recognizes the fact that the age group of 14-35 is far too broad for policy considerations. The youth needs different assistance and different services at different phases of their youth. For an example, a 25 year old might be more interested in the equality of opportunity when it comes to being appointed for jobs, while a 14 year old might be more interested in the quality of schooling they are receiving accompanied by the availability of quality teachers. Thus “the National Youth Policy of 2009-2014 supplements this age range by segmenting the youth population in age cohorts and target groups in recognition of significant differences that exist in these youth groupings in terms of their unique situations and needs”(NYP Policy Document 2009). However, while these definitions are useful, the solitary emphasis on age as the determining factor

of youth, makes the definitions narrow and inadequate of encapsulating the youth in different contexts.

There are other ways of conceptualizing youth that do not exclusively focus on the biological and the chronological age cut method. An example of this is the ‘Social Constructivists’ view. Instead of the biological age cut, this perspective uses a cultural context to define youth. The view draws on the historical cultural meaning of the youth as well as the contemporary cultural connotations that are attached to the meaning of ‘youth’. The ‘Social Constructivist’ view defines the youth as follows:

Youth and ‘adulthood’ are socially constructed, earned, ritualized statuses which are not necessarily determined by age. In many traditional African societies, adulthood was reserved for men with relative wealth and social status, while everybody else retained the status of perpetual minors, no matter how old they were. In contemporary African societies, youth is intrinsically linked with well-defined rites of passage and symbolic steps (Mutisi 2010).

In South Africa the ‘social constructivist’s’ definition is more suited as it is able to incorporate the political, social and economic cleavages into the definition of ‘youth’. It is particularly important to incorporate these three dynamics when defining the youth in South Africa. This argument stems from the fact that in the South Africa there is a high rate of unemployment, which makes it more difficult for young people to move out of the youthful stage in economic context. This is mainly because the youth is not able to find jobs which would allow them to support their families. The ability to provide for one’s family cannot be excluded in considering youth in the South African context as well as African context in general. Thus upward mobility also becomes an important aspect when considering who constitutes the youth in South Africa. The inability to attain upward mobility and provide for their families means that a lot of people are often stuck in the youth phase as they are still dependent on their families for support. In this light Mutisi’s (2010) argument that in African societies adulthood was reserved for men with relative wealth and social status while everyone else remained as minors is extremely relevant in the modern day context of South Africa. The inability of young people to provide for their families has an adverse effect on their confidence and willingness to participate in political matters. They increasingly grow disillusioned and alienated from the state and the government.

An additional consequence is that young people have a violent approach towards the state and its apparatuses. When protests occur the youth are often at the vanguard of such protests, choosing to vent out their frustrations through vandalism. This often works against the objectives that the youth intend to achieve through such protests. Mathoho and Ranchod (2006) argue that “the violent tendencies undermine everything that they are fighting for and makes them seem like an aggressive group with no clear structure and bad leadership; they end up losing their audience”(2006). In the year 2015 students from different universities nationwide embarked on protests against the increase of fees for the year 2016. These protests tagged ‘Fees Must Fall’ were widely viewed as a success. The first major reason why the protests were viewed as a success is that for the first time since democracy young people across racial boundaries mobilized to put pressure on government and universities. Additionally, they attracted international attention and support from the media, international student organizations and the global community at large. A further indication that the protests were successful is that the government agreed to contribute increased funds towards higher education therefore preventing the annual fee increase for the year 2016. However Mathoho and Ranchod’s (2006) argument that violence make the youth appear as having no clear structure and weak leadership is somewhat justified in the Fees Must Fall’ protest. This is because some students abused the protest for narrow and selfish gains. The Business Day Live (2015) reported that various acts of arson took place and several incidents of looting were reported on the Wits as well as the Fort Hare campuses during the protests. The argument is that if the youth had strong leadership structure, those who were involved in the criminal elements such as looting and burning of property would not have been able to do so, or would have been identified by the leadership and made to answer to their crimes.

Holdt (2011) studies the role of the youth in violent protests in eight South African communities affected by violent protests. Holdt argues that in most violent protests which occur in informal settlements, young people are used as tools to perpetrate violence against foreigners. It was reported that ‘youth’ in Azania informal settlements were used by a local business man to carry out attacks on Ethiopian shop owners (Holdt 2011). This example demonstrates how frustrated youth with a lack of purpose can easily be manipulated to pursue either the economic or political ambitions of adults without any significant benefit for the youth.

2.2 Participation

In politics the term ‘participation’ can mean a lot of different things. This means that it can cause confusion amongst stakeholders with regard to the expectations and roles that they have to play in order to achieve meaningful participation. Verba (2006) defines Political participation as “the mechanism by which citizens can communicate information about their interests, preferences, and needs and generate pressure to respond.” Verba’s definition captures important features regarding participation in that it recognizes that the citizens must be able to express to the leadership important matters which are relevant to them and have the opportunity to hold the leaders accountable.

This definition of political participation is not adequate because it is broad and therefore does not capture the essence of ‘meaningful participation’. The main goal of the dissertation is to try and assess the opportunities that the youth has for ‘meaningful participation’. Meaningful participation additionally requires that the parties that are involved should have a chance to influence the decisions made on the policies. This is especially significant in those policies which have a direct impact on their day to day lives. The World Bank provides a definition that captures the essence of ‘meaningful participation’. The World Bank defines meaningful participation as “a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, the decisions and the resources which affect them” (World Bank 1996). Therefore a characteristic that cannot be left out in the definition of ‘meaningful participation’ is that power must be given the people so that they are able to sway decision making on policies affecting them.

There are several types of participation that can help fulfil the requirements for ‘meaningful participation’. This dissertation looks at five types or mechanisms that could be used to achieve or to recognize ‘meaningful participation’. These mechanisms, if applied correctly, ensure that the public views decisions as legitimate and inclusive. The understanding of these mechanisms also assists the general public to be aware of the factors surrounding the decisions affecting them such as financial constraints. These mechanisms also help policy makers to strive to make quality decisions as the mechanisms foster a sense of accountability and transparency. The five mechanisms outlined by Brinkerhoff and Crosby 2006 are discussed below.

2.3 Mechanisms and Types of Meaningful Participation

2.3.1 Information- Sharing: This “mainly consists of one way information flows, information-sharing serves to keep the relevant actors informed, to provide transparency and to build legitimacy” (Brinkerhoff and Crosby 2006). Flowing from the direction of

government to the public, examples are dissemination of written material through official documents, newspaper or magazines, distribution of documents from local government offices; press conferences; radio or television broadcasts or establishment of websites. The examples that flow from the public to the government, include responding to questionnaires and surveys, accessing toll-free telephone ‘hot lines’ and providing various kinds of data, opinion surveys or data analysis (*ibid*).

The main challenge that confronts Information-Sharing is that the process of communicating information can get complex for policy makers because of diverse cultural backgrounds of the targeted audience. Diane (2006) argues that different cultures communicate messages in different ways. The choice of words, physical gestures that are used can be interpreted in different ways by different cultures. This point is particularly relevant in the South African context where there are lots of different cultures and communities divided along religious, racial and class lines. The youth itself in this context does not consist of a group with a homogenous cultural or class background. Thus, the difficult task of sharing information is compounded in South Africa by the sheer diversity of the youth population

2.3.2 Consultation: This involves “two-way information flows and exchange of views. Consultation consists of sharing information and gathering feedback and reaction, beneficiary assessments, participatory poverty assessments, town hall meeting, focus groups, national conferences, round tables, and parliamentary hearings”(Brinkerhoff and Crosby 2006). The critique of consultation as a mechanism of participation is that it can be expensive to accomplish. This is because for participation to be meaningful, people with different cultural orientations, as well as education levels have all to be brought to a level where they understand what is presented in the deliberations. “In order for consultation to be substantive it has to be meaningful to those who are consulted and the content must be presented in a readily understandable format, the techniques used must be culturally appropriate” (Stakeholder Participation 2001). In most cases this means that there has to be capacity building exercises undertaken to help both the community

and the policy makers understand the purpose of consultation. This can make the consultation process expensive as experts have to be hired to educate stakeholders.

However the benefits of consultation make it an essential part of participation process. The costs of leaving it out of the participation process are immense. When consultation of community is absent it could lead to the creation of “a sense of indifference, resentment, or deliberate obstruction on the part of intended beneficiaries” (*ibid*). This means that the community might feel as if they were excluded from the policy process. The facilities’ and resources intended to benefit them can be rejected or vandalized due to the anger resulting from a sense of being ignored and not consulted in a decision making process. Therefore sufficient consultation with the people is a critical step in realizing a meaningful, fair and legitimate participation by the public.

2.3.3. Collaboration: For Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2006) collaboration includes

Joint activities in which the initiator invites other groups to be involved but retains the decision making authority and control. Collaboration moves beyond collecting feedback to involving external actors in problem-solving policy design, monitoring and so forth. Examples include public reviews of draft legislation evaluation of draft legislation, government led working groups, and government convened planning sessions.

The criticism of the Collaborative technique is similar to the criticism leveled against the Consultative technique. The collaborative method is economically inefficient as it requires a lot of resources and time to bring in different stakeholders who might be affected by the policy Appelstrand (2012). However to counter this Appelstrand (2012) argues that “participation may well foster economic efficiency, by promoting rational and shorter processes through (in fact) less obstruction and mutual understanding, and by promoting more environmentally sound decisions gaining sustainable use of natural resources. Participation may also be time-saving as a means ‘to meet the conflict.’” Appelstrand (2012) also suggests that collaborating with the beneficiaries of the policy helps to create a sense of inclusion. Collaboration also helps to prevent policy makers from acquiring services and facilities which do not match the needs of the community.

2.3.4. Joint Decision Making: With regard to joint decision making, Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2006) suggests that it is “collaboration where there is shared control over decisions made. Shared decision making is useful when the external actor’s knowledge, capacity and experience is critical

for achieving policy objectives. Examples are joint committees, public private partnerships, advisory councils and blue ribbon commissions or task force.”

2.3.5 Empowerment: Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2006) defines empowerment as “transfer of control over decision making, resources and activities from the initiator to other stakeholders. Empowerment takes place when external actors acting autonomously and in their own interests, can carry out policy mandates without significant government involvement or oversight. Examples are local natural resources management committees, community empowerment zones, water associations, some forms of partnerships and civil society seed grants.”

The difficulty with this mechanism is that it has an ambiguous meaning. There is confusion on whether ‘Empowerment’ refers to a process or an outcome (Mathieson 2012). The confusion arises as policy makers try to understand whether on one hand ‘Empowerment’ means that people affected by the policy should be educated to be able to affect the decision, which is a process. Or on the other hand, if it means that the decision made should reflect the will of the people, which is an outcome.

2.4. The Emergent Global Youth Bulge

The concern about the non-participation of youth has gathered more attention in recent literature due to the aspect which scholars have labeled ‘global youth bulge’. Ortiz and Cummins (2012) define the youth bulge as “a demographic trend where the proportion of persons aged 15-24 in the population increases significantly compared to other age groups.” This means that the participation of young people becomes even more important in democracies because if the trend of the youth bulge continues, the youth will in time constitute the majority of the population in most countries. In this sense the non-participation of the youth, who constitutes a significant percentage of the population, leaves political processes vulnerable to manipulation by a few political elites. This is because those making decisions for the country are not an accurate demographic representation of the population, and are therefore most likely to not understand and carry out the interests of the population on policy decisions.

Agbor, Tawio and Smith (2012) argue that there is a sense of urgency to include the youth in the decision making process of developing African countries in which the demographic trend of the

youth bulge is comparatively higher than in other countries. The authors note that “this concern is certainly valid in the case of Africa’s youth population (15–24 year olds) which has been increasing faster than in any other part of the world” (2012). Scholars studying the phenomenon of the youth bulge, such as Ortiz and Cummings (2012), have focused on the implications of the youth bulge on the economy and have argued that the global market does not have enough jobs to employ the youth. Urdal’s study reveals that “generally, it has been observed that young males are often the main protagonists of criminal as well as political violence” (2012).

There is a strong suggestion by Urdal (2012) that education is the key to preventing the youth from acting out their frustrations through violence. The position of this dissertation is that education along with factors mentioned by Urdal though significant, are not sufficient in curbing youth delinquency and their likelihood of being used as tools for political violence. The argument is that in addition to being educated, the youth needs to be successfully incorporated into the policy making bodies in order to engender a sense of inclusion. The feeling that the youth are being excluded by the older generation in the state affairs may necessarily result in a situation in which the youth decide to rebel against the state. This study then posits that the inclusion of the youth through meaningful participation can generate a sense of responsibility amongst young people for the wellbeing of the state. In this sense young people have a sense of responsibility where they become the protectors of the state and take a role in activities that are in favor of its advancement.

Scholars studying the trend of the youth bulge in South Africa have recognized that like most developing African countries the trend is more visibly pronounced “South Africa has 48.6 million people with an annual population growth rate of -0.46% . Demographics show the typical population pyramid of a developing state, with 54% of South Africans younger than 24 years of age” (Taljaard 2006:1). Taljaard (2006) seeks to find out if the youth bulge in South Africa presents the country with more opportunities or more risks. The author argues that “with the right investments and continued progress through the demographic transition, in time South Africa’s large youth population can become a large, economically-productive population that can drive economic gains. If SA can educate young people adequately and appropriately and create jobs for them, they can be a boon for development” (2006). Notably, there is paucity of literature focusing on ascertaining the effects of the youth bulge in South Africa. This study is an attempt to add to the body of existing literature on the issues of the youth bulge with specific context of South Africa.

The aim is to extend the understanding and the implications of the youth bulge. The study surmises that with the correct youth participation policies, the youth can be a solution to some of the country's major problems.

Mkandawire (2012) is rightly of the view that the youth in South Africa played a significant role in the struggle against the oppressive apartheid regime. According to the author, "Young people in South Africa have historically been at the epicenter of political and social change. During the mid-1970s and 1980s, they played a catalytic role as foot soldiers in the anti-apartheid struggles; thousands were detained, tortured or were forced into exile" (2012). In the post-apartheid period lots of legislations and institutions for youth participation have been set up to facilitate youth participation. Remarkably the post-apartheid youth have not been active in politics in a similar way that the youth of the 1970's and 1980's were. The youth appears to have shifted from being at the epicenter of political and social change during the 1970's and 1980's towards the periphery of the political stage in South African politics in the post-apartheid period. Notably extant literature focusing on the youth in South Africa has not provided much explanation towards understanding the reasons behind this development. This dissertation attempts to find the underlying causes of apathy and the non-participation of youth in in the current political dispensation in South Africa.

2.5 Youth Participation

Some scholars studying youth participation argue that society's perception of youth involvement in politics is filled with different and often contradicting views. On the one hand, the low participation of the youth has gathered a lot of criticism and has been labeled as a 'crisis to the legitimacy of democracy'. Farthing (2010) points out that youth "are often chastised as the apolitical harbingers of an incipient crisis of democracy." On the other hand, the ability of youth to organize themselves using new forms of media technology has been welcomed as forming new methods of political engagement. The use of social media in the Arab spring illustrates this view. Hoffman and Jamal (2012) argue that "the use of social media allowed the youth in Arab countries to overcome and by pass political repression." Most literature on the topic reveal that society leans towards problematizing the youth rather than viewing the youth as a solution to the states' problems. For Phaswane (2005:4) this negative perspective "emerged as many societies struggled with costs associated with problem behaviors such as juvenile delinquency, early pregnancy, substance abuse and sexual infections among youth."

Other scholars such as Dorfman and Woodruff (1998) have argued that in America the media has contributed in conveying the negative perception of youth. “When researchers examine how youth are depicted in the news media, young people seldom get the chance to speak for themselves, they are rarely depicted in positive circumstances, and few stories include their accomplishments” (Dorfman & Woodruff, 1998; Figueroa, 2000 in Wong). This view is justified considering the fact that, the media plays an important role in determining how a certain group in society is perceived. When the media does not give young people an opportunity to voice their views, it creates a dangerous sense of alienation from the state amongst youth. This consequently sets up a climate where the youth tends to seek for inclusion and responsibility from criminal, rebel, and terrorist groups. These dangerous groups have the art of playing the patrimonial role for young people who are alienated from state affairs. Recruiting young people into these harmful groups becomes easy when young people develop a sense of being politically excluded and not included in the decision making process of the society.

Moreover, Dorfman and Schiriladi (2001) pick up that media perpetuates racial stigmas about the youth, they argue that the media in America has contributed to creating the perception that youth of color or African American’s in particular are more violent than youths of other racial groups. Dorfman and Schiriladi’s study found that crimes committed by African Americans were over reported by the media while crimes that were committed by white youth were under reported. In the South African context the media has contributed to portraying the youth negatively. Malila (2013) argues that the media has focused on four issues pertaining the youth, these are Education, Crime, Unemployment and Health. For Jobson (2012), the main reason why the youth is problematized is due to the high rate of unemployment within the youth. Unemployment leads to many more social ills including crime and violent protest. The involvement of the youth in decision making structures can create a sense of inclusion and can empower them with the ability to pass policies which keep them in a progressive state that benefits the country. For Biedrzyekzki and Lawless (2008) “successful youth participation is not only beneficial to those young people who are participating, but also to other youth who a recipients of improved services, policies, information and advocacy. Furthermore, broader society benefits when the youth voice is heard as the needs of young people are better addressed, and young people are more likely to become active

participants in society”(2008:3). This study will then argue that young people in South Africa are and should be seen as the solution (not just the cause) of some of the problems mentioned above.

Chanza (2006) draws on the extensive legislation passed and structures established to encourage youth participation in the country. In particular she outlines the ‘National Youth Development Policy of 2000’ which is the blueprint for youth development at a national level in the country. At a local municipal level she finds that there are the ‘National Youth Policy Guidelines’ which are meant to simplify what is in the ‘National Youth Policy’ and municipalities were meant to adapt them to their specific local conditions. Chanza’s finding is that participation in local government structures is preserved for only those young people who are affiliated with some political organizations. Additionally, other “studies show that youth participation in local government was limited, confrontational or just token participation” (*ibid*).

Recently there has been a lot of South African literature which has concerned itself with assessing the legislation and particularly the structures which government has set out to address the youth challenges in the country. The failure and the subsequent collapse of the Umsobumvu Youth Fund due to maladministration has sparked an interest amongst scholars to try and find out the impact that such structures have had on the youth. Thus the new structure the ‘National Youth Development Agency’ has been studied by scholars concerned with the youth in politics, from different perspectives. Some scholars studying the NYDA have focused on a specific program undertaken by the structure to empower the youth. Sahar (2014) studies the impact which the NYDA Grant Program has had on the youth in Western Cape. The NYDA Grant program is mostly concerned with creating young entrepreneurs. Thus it is relevant to this study because it an attempt to empower the youth economically. Empowering the youth either politically or economically is an important step towards participation. However this dissertation differs from Sahar (2014) in that it seeks to test whether the NYDA has programs to ensure that the youth is empowered. Morgan (2013) has studied the transition from the Umsobumvu Youth Fund which was the first structure to deal with youth issues, to the current the current NYDA. This she does in an attempt to establish whether the government has made the correct adjustment to youth policies which would benefit the youth. Similarly, Van Der Byl (2013) looks at the various policies from 1994 which are pertinent to the realization of youth empowerment. Utilizing a theoretical method of

analysis, the current study seeks to ascertain whether the newly developed National Youth Development Agency inspires meaningful youth participation or if it is purely a tokenistic gesture like some of structures of the past have been found to have been.

The concept of youth participation is relatively new in political science. Scholars that have done research on the subject have defined youth participation in different ways. For Biedrzyzyeki and Lawless (2008:3) “Youth participation is the process of building partnerships between adults and young people to promote the role of young people in decision making on issues that affect them - within services, programs more broadly.” Definitions such as these encourage a productive relationship between adults and the youth that enhances the youth’s interests in attempting to find remedies to issues facing them. The term ‘participation’ refers to a general process of sharing by which a democracy is built and it is a standard against which democracies should be measured. Notably, participation is a fundamental right of citizenship”(Hart 1992:5). The measurement of youth participation is complex. Roberson (2009:14-15) points out that

Although voter turnout remains the activity most readily associated with the study of political participation, the variety of acts undertaken by citizens to influence politics is actually much more diverse and can include, for example, party activism, signing a petition, attending a demonstration, contacting an official or wearing a campaign badge..

The problem arises in trying to assess which forms of participation should be included in an analyses seeking to determine youth participation and which can be left out considering the vast number of techniques used to measure to political participation.

2.6 Contextualizing Youth Engagement: Contemporary South Africa

Scholars studying participation have focused on how participation can empower a certain group in decision making. Notably, most of these studies have focused on minorities and marginalized groups and there has been emphasis on the power relationship that participation brings for such groups. This section outlines the significance of ‘youth participation’ with reference to the South African context. The main argument is that the successful inclusion of the youth in decision making can be a solution to South Africa’s main challenges. One of the main challenges confronting the South African state is the ‘insufficient economic development’ which has led to an economy that is unable to absorb the majority of citizens into the work force. Arguably, insufficient economic growth has led to high levels of unemployment which has threatened the political stability of the

country; Statistics South Africa report (2014) affirms that South Africa's unemployment rate is amongst the highest in the world. This high unemployment rate is particularly perilous within the youth population. The results of the 'National Census' in 2011 showed that people who are the age group of in 14-34 constitute 72% of the unemployed population (*ibid*).

Mayer (2011) argues that due to the high expenditure on education in the National Budget the level of education among youth is relatively higher than the adults who are in employment. The benefits of having an educated youth population are outlined by Dias and Posel (2006) who argue that "among the prospective self-employed youth, individuals with more schooling may be in a better position to start their own business. The reason this is that they would have greater literacy and numerical skills, and may be more able to overcome credit and other barriers to entry in self-employment." An accumulation in the percentage of youth who are self-employed in South Africa could act as a welcome relief to the economy. The justification for this is that in most cases self-employed people have the ability to generate their own income and also employ others as their business grows.

However the higher levels of education have not resulted in more employment for young people in South Africa. The fundamental explanation for this is that in South Africa there is a gap between the qualifications and skills that young people graduate with, and the jobs available in the domestic labor market (Statistics South Africa 2014). This phenomenon is not unique to South Africa but it is a global phenomenon. Scholars who have studied the youth such as Klosters 2014 have characterized this phenomenon as the 'Skills Miss Match'. The skills miss match is said to "occur when the workers have either fewer or more skills than jobs available on the market require (*ibid*). Lebbrandt (2010) uses this proposition to argue that within the South African context "the fact that better-educated young people remain poor suggests that the labor market has not been playing a successful role in alleviating poverty, and that the education system is not delivering the skills needed in the labor market."

Also, Mayer (2011) argues that the problem of the labor market is fundamentally a structural one. For the author, the causes of the problem of the labor market in South Africa can be traced in the macro-economic policies that the country has implanted in the post-apartheid period (2011). The policies have provided for some economic growth however the type of growth has not been able

to absorb people into the labor force. The New Growth Path (NGP) has been more progressive than other policies in that it puts employment first on its agenda. However the criticism of the NGP is “that it outlines what needs to happen but fails to show how these outcomes are to be achieved” (Mayer 2011). The effects that the skills miss match have on the state are outlined by van der Linden (2011) who makes the point that “Youth unemployment and underemployment impose heavy social and economic costs, which result not only in lost economic growth, but also in erosion of the tax base, increased welfare costs, and unused investment in education and training.” The effects that the ‘skills miss match’ has on young people themselves are that

the difficulties faced by young people in the labor market include not only unemployment, but also underemployment, working long hours under informal, intermittent and insecure work arrangements; working below their potential in low-paid, low-skilled jobs without prospects for career advancement; and frequently working under poor and precarious conditions in the informal economy.

The frustrations of being unemployed result in social instability in the form of greater poverty, crimes, and alcohol abuse (van der linden 2011). These points justify and give reasons to the argument made by Phawsane’s (2005) that society tends to problematize the youth.

2.7. Significance of Meaningful Youth Participation

The dissertation has provided the contextual background of youth participation in South Africa. This section attempts to study the views that other scholars have posited on the importance of including the youth in deliberations and decision making.

Biedrzyzyeki and Lawless (2008) argue that “it is not only the young people who participate directly who benefit but also the broader youth who are recipients of improved services, policies, information and advocacy.” This benefit comes to realization once a few leaders of the youth are incorporated into decision making structures. Biedrzyzyeki and Lawless (2008) argue that “furthermore, broader society benefits when the youth voice is heard as the needs of young people are better addressed, and young people are more likely to become active participants in society”(2008). A major challenge that impedes meaningful youth participation is that often the broader society does not understand the behavior of young people, as a result the youth is viewed as problematic and lazy. Structures of meaningful participation in this sense would afford the youth the opportunity to advise the general public concerning their genuine difficulties as well as their success. If the public are aware of the positive success that the youth is able to achieve some

of the preconceived ideas of the youth that society has which are often negative, can be debunked. The second benefit of including the youth in decision making is pointed out by Verba (2011) when he argues that “by being able to voice out an opinion in the decision making process a certain level of equality is achieved. He further argues that “the ability to express ones political views is constitutive of membership in the polity. It confers a sense of selfhood, of agency, of belonging.”

2.8 Roger Hart’s Theory/ladder of Youth Participation

There is no consensus amongst scholars studying youth participation on one particular theory for analyzing the topic. Notably, there are two models which have been predominantly used in the field of ‘youth participation’ to study the levels of youth involvement in decision making. These theories are namely ‘Roger Hart’s Ladder of Participation’ and ‘Harry Shier’s Pathway to Children’s Participation’. The models are similar however Hart’s Theory has been used more often by scholars and has had more influence because it is analytically more useful than Shier’s Pathway.

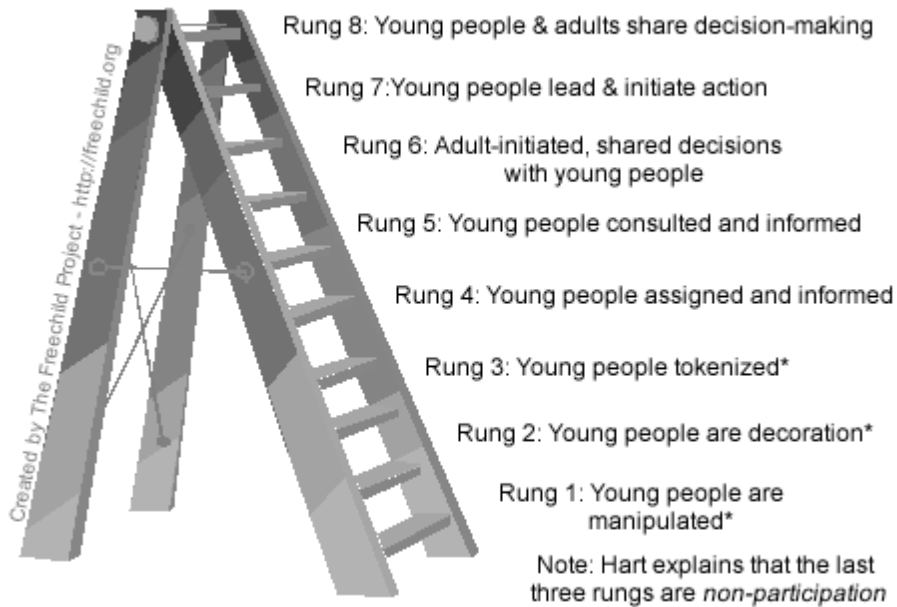
Both theories are similar in that they contain varying degrees in ascending order, of the levels of opportunities for youth engagement in decision making. The increase in each step of the ladder correspondingly results in an increase in the opportunities and level of youth participation (Shier 2001). However Shier (2001) points out that the greatest advantage with Hart’s theory is that it is able to distinguish participation from non-participation. The first three rungs on Hart’s model show that the youth can be misled into believing that they are participating when they are actually not. At the first three levels adults use various techniques such as manipulation and tokenistic gestures to silence the youth. The main purpose for this is so that the adults can maintain monopoly over the decision making powers. Another major justification why Roger Hart’s theory has been widely adopted is grounded on its clarity. Roger Hart’s theory also emphasizes building a quality relationship between young people and adults in order to bring about quality in policy decision making. The theory has been adopted by large international non-governmental-organizations such as the United Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in an attempt to advance the issues of quality youth participation worldwide (www.unicef.org.za).

This dissertation adopts s ‘Roger Hart’s Theory of Youth Participation’ to assess the degrees of participation that the NYDA offers to the youth. Figure 1, below, illustrates various rungs of youth participation in Roger Hart’s theory. The first step, step 1, entails ‘Manipulation’ of the youth. This is the lowest form of engagement and it amounts to non-participation. Step 1 is followed by

step 2 which is 'Decoration' and step 3 which is 'Tokenism' these first three steps of the ladder represent non-participation. The 4th step of the ladder is 'assigned but informed' which represents the first step towards quality participation. The quality of participation continues to increase as one moves further up the ladder. The final step number 8 is 'child-initiated shared decisions with adults' this is the highest form of participation. In this step decisions taken on youth issues are initiated by the youth and adults participate in quality deliberations. In the South African context theories have not been used adequately to explain the reasons for low participation of young people. In using Hart's theory/ladder of participation this dissertation attempts to fill in this major gap in literature and create an enhanced understanding of the topic. The dissertation attempts to assess the structure of the National Youth Development Agency and rate it according to Hart's ladder. The study further assesses NYDA's effectiveness in including young people in decision making. The main argument here is that if the policy is top down and is prescribed for the young people they are not likely to respond well to the structure and therefore will continue to feel alienated. However, if the decisions taken start from level 4 of the theory, which means that young people are included, the youth would respond positively to the structure and use it to advance the interests of other young people.

Figure 1

Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

Chapter Three

Legislative Framework

Youth participation is critical in a fledgling democracy like South Africa, especially taking into consideration the factor of the present Youth Bulge. This dissertation has argued that in the post-apartheid South African context there have been numerous legislations geared to encourage meaningful youth participation. The South African state has attempted to integrate the positives from global policies which encourage youth development. Additionally, specific legislations and policies tailored to deal with the unique challenges facing the South African youth have been introduced. However these efforts have not resulted in the high levels of meaningful youth participation that are desired by the state.

This chapter will interrogate post-apartheid legislations and policies that are pertinent to the promotion of youth participation in South Africa. As a background, a brief overview of the global policies which have influenced South Africa's legislations on the Youth would be outlined. The global policies analyzed in this chapter are the World Programme of Youth Action and the African Youth Charter. After this brief background, this chapter will then focus on the South African context. In particular, this chapter will interrogate specific clauses in the South African constitution that are related to youth development. This chapter will then engage the Reconstruction and Development Policy, the National Youth Commission Act of 1996, the National Youth Development Policy, the National Youth Development Agency Act, the New Growth Path, the National Skills Accord of 2011, and the Youth Enterprise Development Strategy. The youth empowerment capabilities of these legislations and policies will be evaluated using Hart's Ladder.

3.1 The Global Context of Youth Development

The recent phenomenon of the youth bulge has led states to collectively formulate policies which are targeted at addressing youth development. At the global level, several policies, which are mostly used by states as guidelines for developing their policies on 'youth development', exist. South Africa has used some of these policies formulated at the global level as a basis for drafting its own policies and legislations on youth development. As its starting point, the NYP utilizes the definition of 'youth' presented in the African Youth Charter. This policy document then expands the definition of youth before expanding this definition to adequately deal with the South African

context. Supporting this view, Van de Byl (2016) argues that in the South African context “International conventions and protocols have found expression in policies and programmes spanning from education and skills development, to health, wellbeing, economic participation, civic participation and representation.” Considering Van de Byl (2016) argument, South African policies on youth development have been significantly influenced by the international policies directed at youth development. The reference of South Africa’s NYP policy document to the ‘African Youth Charter’ represents South Africa’s regional commitment towards youth development. South Africa’s commitment to youth development at a global level is mostly influenced by and drawn from the ‘World Programme of Action on Youth’ which is the policy document adopted by the member states of the ‘United Nations’ for solving issues of the youth across the world.

3.1.2 World Programme of Action on Youth

The member states of the United Nations have over the years prioritized youth development. The urgent need to solve youth issues has been approached with the basic comprehension that “the imagination, ideals and energies of young people are vital for the continuing development of the societies in which they live” (World Programme of Action on Youth 2010). The earliest indication of the UN commitment towards youth development, was when the UN endorsed the 1965 ‘Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples’ (*ibid*). There have been several conventions signed by the UN after that, the most noticeable one was held in 1995 where the member states adopted the ‘World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond’ (*ibid*). The WPAY can be described as a document which provides a “policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people” (*ibid*).

The WPAY document presents practical solutions and support for assisting states in their effort to encourage youth participation and development at a National, Regional and Global level. While the WPAY policy lists fifteen priority areas, Van de Byl (2006) argues that emphasis should be put on “on education, skill development and economic participation.” The South African National Youth Commission policy and other policies focusing on youth development in the country have been strongly influenced by the ‘Education’, ‘Skills Development’ and ‘Economic participation’ priority areas. This assertion will become more evident when this study deals with the National

Growth Path. An example which illustrates that South African legislation is closely linked to the international legislation is the NYP (2015) which was informed and guided by the WPAY.

3.1.3 The level of Youth Participation

Mac-Ikemenjima (2008) argues that the inclusion of the youth for the conceptualization, planning and development of policies is a vital aspect which can ensure that youth issues are mainstreamed by decision makers. The WPAY contains lots of positive aspects and even some exemplary features for the development of meaningful youth participation. The approach of the UN towards the issue of youth participation has been one which has been mostly inclusive of the youth. There are several examples which have clearly demonstrated that the UN is committed to its goal of including young people. A common feature of almost all of the United Nations deliberations on youth policy is the inclusion of youth representatives and youth councils from all over the world. This was evident in the planning phase of WPAY policy which took place in 1994. In this process, youth organizations in collaboration with UN member states were called to develop and proffer suggestions for the successful implementation of WPAY (UN General Assembly 1997). The youth in this case are invited to contribute to the discussions on the challenges which they were facing and how the UN could formulate policies that would seek to address these challenges. The submissions made by the youth were duly considered and later constituted the key priority areas which the WPAY Programme would focus on.

Finally there is some evidence that the youth has been included in the monitoring and evaluation of UN policies focusing on the youth. One particular example of this is that the UN World Report's findings were based on recommendations which came from a meeting with youth councils and experts from different fields. This meeting was termed the "Expert Group Meeting on Global Priorities for Youth". The report made recommendations on how youth policy can be improved in the light of new challenges which had affected the youth after the WPAY was passed in 1995. These concerns included, among others, the effects of globalization and HIV/ AIDS on the youth. In these instances it could also be said that the youth were involved in the subsequent development of the original WPAY policy so that the policy could deal better with the new challenges facing the youth.

In light of these examples it is clear that according to Hart's Ladder of Participation, the level of youth participation in the WPAY policy is considerably high. In this case the participation of youth

in the planning phase and their ability to monitor and evaluate the impact of the policy on their lives, suggests that the youth were not just tokens in the process of deliberation. Therefore the level of participation is clearly higher than the first three rungs of Hart's ladder where young people are just being manipulated. The appropriate rung to explain the level of participation of the youth in WPAY is the sixth rung where the decisions are "Adult initiated but are also shared by the youth" (Hart 1992). The participation could be said to be adult initiated because it is the UN general assembly which makes the call for organized youth groups to participate in the deliberation. Additionally, adults are known to facilitate the platforms where youth can come and influence decision making. The participation of the youth falls short of the seventh rung where the decisions are "Youth lead and youth initiated". This is because the youth is not well organized and united at the global level yet to be able to lead and initiate action.

3.2 The African Youth Charter

The African Youth Charter (AYC) is the policy guideline that address youth challenges in the African continent. As a point of departure from the WPAY, the AYC acknowledges that the challenges which face the youth globally are more severe on the African continent due to uniquely African factors such as a sustained period of colonialism, slavery and inequality (African Youth Charter 2006). Efem and Ubi (2007) highlight some of the main factors which have made youth challenges in African continent more acute. They argue that the scourge of HIV/AIDS, persistent civil wars and bad governance have compounded the challenges of the youth in the African continent (2007).

The African Youth Charter was adopted by African States at the 'Seventh Ordinary Session of the Assembly', held in Banjul, Gambia, on 2nd of July 2006. The AYC has 38 signatories thus 38 African countries are legally bound by the 31 Articles contained in the AYC. The AYC contains all the rights of the youth, and is viewed as a substantial document which goes beyond just stating the rights' of the youth but additionally sets out the responsibilities which the youth have towards their respective states. Article 26 of the AYC contains 15 sub sections which set out the duties of the youth. Sub section A for example requires that the youth "become the custodians of their own development" (African Youth Charter 2006).

3.2.1 The level of youth participation

The planning and development phase of the AYC has certainly shown progressive features for youth participation on the African continent. There is clear evidence that the African Union (AU) created opportunities and platforms where the youth could participate effectively in the drafting of the AYC. Paanday (2006) highlights the fact that in 2006 prior to the adoption of the AYC the AU had set out public consultations with the youth at a country level. In addition to this “ the AU convened a Forum and a youth Expert’s meeting with a Ministers of youth meeting as part of the validation process” (Pandaay 2008). Therefore in its construction phase the level of youth participation in AYC is positively high in a similar way to the WPAY policy. This is positive for the youth on the continent as it indicates that the AU understands the importance of youth participation and attempts to maintain the global standard set out by the UN when it comes to youth participation.

The implementation stage of the AYC has several mechanisms which guarantee that the youth have platforms for influencing policy. The AYC policy compels member states to reserve a number of seats in parliament for the youth through the utilization of a quota system. In countries such as Uganda as well as Rwanda this quota system is already in practice (Mac-Ikemenjima 2009). Thus the full implementation of AYC ensures that the youth have spaces where they can influence state matters.

There are however some criticisms of the AYC which stem from challenges arising from the implementation stage of the policy. Efem and Ubi 2007 point out that “article 12, of the Charter focuses on National Youth Policy and it advises national policy makers of Member States to create, and develop comprehensive and coherent national youth policies” (African Youth Charter 2007). They further argue that the problem arises at the national level, and they question the effectiveness of the national policies informed by article 12 of the AYC passed by the African states. Using an example of Nigeria’s Youth Ministry, Efem and Ubi (2007) argue that the ministry focuses on youth and sports rather than more urgent issues facing the youth in the country. Thus Efem and Ubi (2007) question the effectiveness of the implementation of AYC at national level. Efem and Ubi (2007) argument is justified especially when one considers latest development in Nigeria. The Boko Haram crisis is a case in point in which 250-300 school girls were kidnapped in 2014.

Considering this, one would posit that issues of security should be prioritized by Nigeria's Youth ministry.

In light of the fact that youth were thoroughly consulted at a country level during the construction phase of the AYC the appropriate rung on Hart's Ladder in this case is the fourth level. In this level the youth is consulted on policy and are informed on the decisions pertinent to the policy. The implementation phase however is the reason why AYC policy does not grant the youth in Africa a higher degree of participation. The parliament quota system which forces the countries which are signatories to the AYC to have the youth in parliament has not been implemented by all the states. In addition to this some states have not reacted to the AYC with the urgency needed to uplift the youth in African states. The example highlighted by Efem and Ubi (2007) of Nigeria's Youth Ministry not prioritizing more urgent youth issues such as the security demonstrates this point.

3.3 Youth Legislation in the South African Context.

Pre-1994 South Africa had no policies designed to specifically address the youth issues. Therefore youth participation and youth development was an area that had been largely neglected. On ascension to power, the democratic government chose not to have a specific ministry to deal with 'youth issues'. The key rationale for this was that, considering the decades of neglect 'youth participation' and 'youth development would be too cumbersome a task for only one department to address. Consequently all the departments of the state have to work collectively to attempt to address youth issues. This policy approach is known as the method of cross-cutting (Van de Byl 2015). The following section looks at the most significant pieces of legislation passed by the Democratic Regime since 1994 which have had a significant influence on youth development and youth participation.

3.3.1 The Constitution

The South African constitution is the foundational document that guides all legislations that deal with Youth Participation. The motive for this is that South Africa is a constitutional democracy and therefore the constitution is the supreme law. This also means that any other law passed by the state must be consistent with the constitution. The laws passed must also uphold and promote the underlying values of the constitution.

In South Africa young people are protected from any form of exclusion or discrimination by the Bill of Rights which is in Chapter Two of the Constitution. The ‘Equality Clause’, Section 9(3) of the BOR, prohibits any form of discrimination based on ‘Race’, or ‘Gender’ grounds. But particularly relevant to this dissertation, Section 9(3) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of ‘Age’. The main argument that the dissertation makes in regard to the constitution is that, meaningful political participation and involvement in ‘decision making’ is central for the political, social and economic advancement of citizens. Taking into consideration the point made by Verba (2011) that “participation brings equality”, it is logical to deduce that decision making in the political, economic and social spheres must include the youth so that they become equals with the adult population.

The exclusion the youth amounts to a violation of section 9(3) of the BOR in the constitution. In other words the equality clause is violated on each occasion where young people cannot participate meaningfully in decision making because of their age. In this light it can be argued that the state is compelled by constitution to include young people in deliberation. The advantage that participation brings ‘equality’ and confers “a sense of selfhood, of agency, of belonging to the polity” is also lost.

In addition to this, 2.2.2.1 of governments’ Youth Enterprise Development Strategy (YEDS) states that “Chapter 13 Section 217 of the constitution calls for redress of economic imbalances of the marginalized members of the South African population, which is inclusive of the youth”(2013).The National Youth Enterprise Development Strategy (2013) also identifies that the constitution “contains the Bill of Rights, which enshrines the rights of people (including the youth) and affirms the values of human dignity, equality and freedom” (Youth Development Strategy 2013-2023). The YEDS (2013) argues that political rights are only the beginning of solving youth issues, in addition the youth must also have economic freedom which would ensure their dignity.

3.3.1.2 Level of Youth Participation.

The final constitution of South Africa was adopted in 1996 and notably the constitution emanates from “a historical culmination of a focused process of constitution-writing which commenced in December 1991 with the Convention for a Democratic South Africa also known as CODESA” (Venter 2010). After several negotiation breakdowns, the process eventually led to the adoption of

the Interim Constitution in 1994 – a document which provided the rule of law during the period that marked the transitional from minority rule to democracy. During the drafting of the Interim constitution the youth was not heavily involved in forming of the legislation. The negotiations for the Interim Constitution consisted mostly of adult groups' who had their own political, economic and social interests at stake. Dugard (1997) argues that the negotiations constituted of “twenty six unelected political groups which were a reflection of the political reality of that time” (1997). Dugard (1997) further argues that the Interim Constitution reflected a result of a political agreement between the National Party which was the government before 1994 and the African National Congress which had the backing of the black majority to take power.

One logical explanation for the unintended exclusion of the youth in this process could have been because of the political crises facing the country at that time; a settlement had to be arrived at urgently because of the political violence which was spreading across the country. This meant that there was not enough time to consult the different groups, including the youth, which could have participated in the making of the Interim Constitution. However due to the urgency at that time South Africa missed out an important aspect of creating a political culture which is inclusive of the youth. In his study of post-conflict West Africa Mac-Ikenjima (2008) finds that the inclusion of the youth in post-conflict negotiations is important in creating a sense of citizenship for the youth.

The level of youth participation therefore in the drafting of the Interim Constitution rates poorly on Hart's Ladder. The dominance of the two political parties in the negotiations in which the youth was excluded reveals that the youth was used as a decoration. Cooper (1994) argues that the youth was heavily involved on both sides of apartheid conflict. On one side, most African youth visibly protested and risked their lives in the struggle against apartheid. On the other side, some of white youth supported apartheid. Thus the fact that the youth was not well represented in the negotiations and that negotiations were done on their behalf shows the youth were used by political parties as a decoration, that is, the youth's participation was restricted to the third rung on Hart's Ladder.

The final constitution which was adopted in 1996 assures a range of rights which are intended to benefit the youth. For an example section 29 of the BOR promises the right to a basic education. The state has done well to introduce no fees schools which seek to achieve this goal. However due to the advancement of the global economy most people have to study further than the elementary

level in order to live above the poverty line. Perhaps, it is in this regard that the constitution fails the youth. Section 29 (b) lays down the condition that “everyone has the right to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible” (1996). Remarkably, ‘reasonable measures’ seems to exonerate the state from making higher education available to all those who academically deserve it. The granting of education to those who academically deserve it would play a significant role in uplifting the youth. However, the failure to provide accessible higher education for the youth have resulted in annual protests by youth

Additionally, in the period following the Interim Constitution the youth voice has been somewhat muted. Cooper (1994) argues that the strong voices of the youth during apartheid had to be silenced in order for reconciliation and reconstruction program to take its course in country. However, in excluding the youth in the first interim constitution, a bad precedent was set for negotiating the second constitution where political parties dominated deliberations without sufficiently including their youth structures. Despite the shortcomings of the constitution the youth in South Africa display positive attitudes toward the constitution. A study conducted by the Nelson Mandela Foundation in 2016 shows that while some young people have grown disillusioned by the promises made in the constitution the majority of the youth understand its intension and view it as an important document in the democracy. The government has also undertaken a project to educate its citizens on the constitution. Thus the youth in the country understand the importance of the constitution in preserving democracy; the youth is thus on the fourth rung of Hart’s Ladder, that is, assigned and informed.

3.3.2 The Reconstruction and Development Program (1994)

Scholars studying youth participation such as Sahar (2014) and Van be Byl (2015) widely view the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) as the first policy in democratic South Africa to have initiated the process of addressing the youth challenges in the country. The RDP did not focus on the youth in isolation but it endeavored to include all those groups which had previously been excluded in development by apartheid legislations. The decades of neglect of the youth meant that the youth would consequently be one of the groups in society which the RDP policy intended to affect.

In support of the above statement Van de Byl (2015) argues that the RDP's substantial emphasis on education, social development and skills training was one of the ways of addressing youth challenges. The argument is justified because Section 3.3 of the RDP focused exclusively on education. Its emphasis was on laying the foundation for South Africa to break away from apartheid's approach. Section 3.3.11.1 of the RDP promotes compulsory education and makes the provision that "the democratic government must enable all children to go to school for at least 10 years" (RDP 1994). More relevant to the youth age cohort of 18-35, which is the voting population, the RDP emphasizes the development of 'Further Education and Training' and the development of the 'Higher Education' system. The argument here is that, these measures were particularly significant to youth participation, in that there is nexus between quality of youth participation and education. In order for the youth to be equipped to participate effectively in decision making, the youth has to have the knowledge and information on how to influence policies to their advantage. Therefore youth education is pivotal and can be translated to being the equivalent of youth empowerment.

In summary the RDP was a broad document for addressing the social ills inherited from apartheid, it contained several sections which endeavored to address 'youth challenges'. However the RDP was far too broad to address all the challenges of the youth. The nature of challenges of the youth caused by the decades of neglect, meant that the country needed more youth specific legislation and programs to effectively empower the youth. The National Youth Commission Act (NYC) of 1996 was therefore government's first legislative solution to this problem. Saha (2014) argues that the NYC represented an "evolution from rhetorical acknowledgement of the importance of youth to the design and implementation of youth programmes under the auspices of a single implementing agency."

3.3.3 The National Youth Commission Act No 19 of 1996

The National Youth Commission (NYC) represents the first piece of legislation that was specifically passed to address the issues of the youth on the broad national spectrum. Its main purpose was "to provide for the establishment, constitution, objects and functions of a National Youth Commission; and to provide for matters connected therewith"(National Youth Commission Act 1996)

The most important feature of the NYC act was its effort to mainstream youth development into all the different governmental departments through cross-cutting (Van De Byl 2014). Van de Byl also argues that the model of 'cross cutting' across the state department for addressing youth challenges has been a more successful model, as opposed to having only one ministry dedicated to solving all the youth issues. "Most of the international protocols, including those of the United Nations (UN), encourage countries to emphasize the mainstreaming of gender, disability, children and youth issues in all departments because, by their very nature, they are cross-cutting"(2014). Thus the author argues that bodies such as the UN who have conducted studies across different countries, have found that the model of having only one ministry dedicated to youth challenges, is not as effective as 'cross cutting' across the different departments. The method of cross-cutting is also supported by Mac-Ikemenjima (2009) for the implementation of the African Youth Charter in different countries. The author argues that when the method of cross-cutting is used, states do not have to endure any additional budgetary costs as the legislation promoting the youth is simply added to existing legislation across all the departments (2009).

The task of the NYC act was set as follows:

- Coordinate and develop an integrated national youth policy.
- Develop an integrated national youth development plan that utilizes available resources and expertise for the development of the youth and which shall be integrated with the RDP.
- Develop principles and guidelines and make recommendations to the government regarding such principles and guidelines, for the implementation of an integrated national youth policy.
- Coordinate, direct and monitor the implementation of such principles and guidelines as a matter of priority.
- Promote uniformity of approach by all organs of state, including provincial governments, to matters relating to or involving the youth.
- Develop recommendations relating to any other matters that may affect the youth (National Youth Commission 1996)

Considering the above, it could be said that the NYC was the first youth statutory body which sought to guide all the different state department in the approach of addressing youth development and participation in the country. The NYC also facilitated the establishment of Umsobomvu Youth Fund (UYF). "UYF was established in January 2001 as a development funding institution to serve as a platform for job creation and skills development for South Africa's young people" (Morgan 2013)

However being the country's first policy and legislation to deal with youth issues the NYC and UYF failed to fully address the issues of the youth in the country. In September 2006 an ad hoc parliamentary committee set up by the National Assembly to investigate and review the role of statutory bodies. The main emphasis of the report was to review the effectiveness of the chapter 9 institutions as well as associated institutions, and to evaluate their effectiveness in fulfilling their constitutional mandates. Headed by Professor Kader Asmal, and subsequently named after him, the ad hoc committee constituted of ten members representing 5 different political parties.

Below are some of the ad hoc Committee's findings related to the National Youth Commission:

NYC Interpretation and understanding of mandate

In regards to the interpretation of its mandate the committee established that this duty had not been sufficiently met by the NYC the committee's findings were as follows.

The Committee found that the Commission was not addressing its mandate adequately, and has not reported on government's compliance with its international obligations regarding youth development. The Committee also found that absence of an integrated youth policy also created difficulty to measure youth development since youth development initiatives were implemented by various government departments in an uncoordinated way. It was also found that the legislation of the Commission does not provide it with adequate enforcement powers where there is neglect of youth development (Parliament 2007).

In the general conclusions the report found that the NYC had failed to execute its mandate of empowering the youth. Thus the NYC and Umsobumvu were amalgamated into the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) by Parliament's ACT 54 of 2008.

3.3.3.1 Level of Youth Participation

The selection criteria set out by the NYC act stipulating who were to constitute the NYC reveals that there was an attempt to facilitate for meaningful youth participation in the structure. But these attempts fell short of fulfilling the requirements on Hart's Ladder for meaningful youth participation. For example section 4(2) of the NYC Act provides that "The Commissioners shall, when viewed collectively, represent a broad cross-section of the youth of the Republic and show a balance between the attributes of youthfulness and experience" (National Youth Commission

Act 1996). However the NYC dismal failures outlined by the Asmal committee (2006) exposes the fact that the NYC did not make enough effort to make the youth aware of its function. Making information on the NYC available to the youth was an important aspect for meaningful public participation. The Asmal committee found NYC failed to make the youth aware of its function and since the youth was unaware of NYC, it cannot be said that the NYC was fully inclusive of the youth. Therefore the youth in this policy was mentioned yet they were not fully brought on board and therefore did not have the power to shape the policy to benefit the majority of the youth population. On Hart's ladder, NYC represents the decoration rung since the youth does not have enough power to influence the policy. The level of participation therefore falls below the fourth rung as the youth were not thoroughly informed. The UYF which was created by the NYC to fund young entrepreneurs also failed to execute its mandate. Thus the NYC and Umsobumvu were amalgamated into the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) by Parliament's ACT 54 of 2008.

3.3.4 Parliament Act 54 of 2008 National Youth Development Agency Act

This act of parliament repealed the 'National Youth Commission act of 1996' (NYC). The reason why there had to be new legislation was to rectify the functioning of the structure addressing 'youth issues' in the country. This was after a review which established that the NYC, the 'Umsobomvu Youth Fund', had failed dismally to empower the youth. Hence, parliament decided that it was necessary to pass new legislations geared to address the issues facing the youth. In 2008 parliament passed Act 54 which is the 'National Youth Agency Act'. This led to the establishment of the NYDA as the official structure to deal with youth empowerment. The NYP defines its main purpose as providing an agency that will promote youth development and regulate its functions. The act could also be viewed as an attempt to bridge the gaps between the limitations identified by the NYC as well as the UYF (National Youth Policy 2009). Parliaments' Act 54 of 2008 broadly defines its role on the document as

To provide for the establishment of the National Youth Development Agency aimed at creating and promoting coordination in youth development matters; to provide for the objects and functions of the Agency; to provide for the manner in which it is to be managed and governed; to provide for the regulation of its staff matters and financial affairs; to provide for the administration of the fund referred to in the Demutualization Levy Act, 1998 by the Agency under a new name; to

repeal the National Youth Commission Act, 1996; and to provide for matters connected therewith (Parliament Act 54 2008).

3.3.5 National Youth Policy Document 2015-2020

The NYP policy document lays credence to the claim that there has been a lot of policies targeting youth development in South Africa. The NYP can be described as the blueprint for addressing youth issues in the country. It came into operation in 2009 and has been updated to tackle youth issues till 2020.

Its objectives are:

- Consolidate and integrate youth development into the mainstream of government policies, programmes and the national budget.
- Strengthen the capacity of key youth development institutions and ensure integration and coordination in the delivery of youth services.
- Build the capacity of young people to enable them to take charge of their own well-being by building their assets and realizing their potential.
- Strengthen a culture of patriotic citizenship among young people and to help them become responsible adults who care for their families and communities.
- Foster a sense of national cohesion, while acknowledging the country's diversity, and inculcate a spirit of patriotism by encouraging visible and active participation in different youth initiatives, projects and nation-building activities

(National Youth policy, 2009)

Critiquing the NYP, Jobson (2011) suggests that the NYP “outlines critical factors for the development of young people, however when it comes to its implementation, there are few tangible mechanisms to ensure the proper implementation of policy recommendations.” This means that, theoretically, the NYP is able to identify the youth issues and outline them, however, it falls short when it comes to practically solving the issues. Thus the lack of any tangible mechanisms to enforce the goals of the NYP means that the policy manipulates the youth which agrees with the first rung on Hart's Ladder.

3.3.6 Education

Van de Byl (2014) and Mayer (2013) have argued that the amounts of money that the ‘Democratic Government’ has spent on educating the youth must be viewed as a positive intervention pertinent

to the topic of youth empowerment. The position of this dissertation is that this argument is justified. Taking into consideration the fact that the youth are in most cases the intended recipients of the benefits of the investment in education, they are the ones who stand to gain the most from the high government spending on Education. In 2013/14, South Africa spent R227 billion, 19.7 per cent of total government expenditure on education, equivalent to 6.5 per cent of the total GDP (Provincial Budgets and Expenditure Review 2010). The following section looks at the key interventions that the government has made, which are particularly relevant to the 18-35 youth age cohort.

3.3.6.1 Secondary Education

One of the most commendable aspects of Secondary Education is the increase in the amount of enrolment figures of students. “Public school enrolments have been steadily rising over the past five years. In 2013 there were 11 975 844 learners enrolled in 24 136 public ordinary schools” (Provincial Budgets and Expenditure Review 2010). However Secondary Education is faced with a number of challenges. Mayer (2013) argues that South African high schools struggle to retain learners up to grade 9 and that this trend increases even more sharply from grades 8 -12.

In addition to this, the education system is plagued by several other challenges. One of the most noticeable of these challenges being the high ratio of learners per educator. Modisaotsile (2012) highlights that in public schools where the majority of the youth receive their education, the average ratio of educator to the learner is 1:32. Therefore in most instances classrooms are overcrowded and conducive learning does not often occur in this environment. Mayer (2013) also argues that the lack of Secondary Schools in the local rural areas contributes to the high levels of drop outs. Mayer’s point is that while the government has done well to make sure that primary schools are available in rural areas, the government has not made Secondary Schools available in the same way. Therefore Secondary Schools are often far away from most students living in rural areas. Notably, most of these students are poor and are not able to afford the high costs of transportation fare. Consequently they end up dropping out of school (2013).

3.3.6.2 Universities

The post- apartheid Government recognized the key role which universities play in society as early as 1994. This premise is supported by the government’s policy RDP 3.3.13.1 which reads as

follows “The higher education system represents a major resource for national development and contributes to the worldwide advance of knowledge”(1994). Since 1994 the government has taken a lot of measures to invest and has attempted to expand the amount of university graduates in the country.

Many students leaving the Secondary Education level are not able to afford the high price of university fees. In addition to this, most universities are based in urban areas far away from most students homes, thus they have to pay for residences located on campus or residences in close proximity. The high prices of these residences combined with tuition, transport and food makes university education inaccessible for most students. The major form of government intervention towards combating this issue has been through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). According to de Villiers (2012) this was an attempt by government to create equal opportunities for all. The main functions of the NSFAS act are as set out in section 4 and are listed as follows:

- (a) To allocate funds for loans and bursaries to eligible students;
- (b) To develop criteria and conditions for the granting of loans and bursaries to eligible students in consultation with the Minister;
- (c) To raise funds as contemplated in section 14(1);
- (d) To recover loans;
- (e) To maintain and analyze a database and undertake research for the better utilization of financial resources;
- (f) To advise the minister on matters relating to student financial aid; and
- (g) To perform other functions assigned to it by this Act or by the Minister (National Students Financial Aid Scheme 1999)

The NFSAS act has over the years had several successes. One of the most noticeable of these successes is that “over the 25 years since its inception NSFAS has provided funding to 1,5m students, up to and including the 2015 academic year” (Research and Policy Working paper 1 2016). In addition to this, another success has been NFSAS’s ability to motivate for a higher budget from its different funders in order to fund more students. “NSFAS has grown from R22m in 1991 to R6, 6 billion in 2014 for the university sector alone, supplemented by funding from other state departments and private sector funders” (Research and Policy Working paper 1 2016) Despite these gains there are still many aspects in which NSFAS has failed. This has consequently brought a lot of criticisms for the financial aid scheme. The way in which NSFAS functions is that it gives loans to students who have been proven by a ‘means test’ to be previously disadvantaged.

In addition to this, the student must have performed well academically in Secondary School. This loan is to be paid back once the student is employed in a job where they are able to afford to pay back the loan. De Villiers (2012) identifies that NSFAS struggles to get the loans paid back to the scheme by the students who have graduated. He argues that tracking down the debtors from the time they graduate to their first place of employment is a complex and strenuous task. This issue is compounded by the fact that the NSFAS financial aid scheme frequently loses contact with all the students who drop out of the system (2012). These issues make it difficult to sustain the NSFAS scheme because when the majority of students it funded do not pay back the loans, the financial aid scheme runs at a loss. This stretches its resources which are already limited.

Another criticism of NSFAS brought forward by Kassier and Veldman (2013) posits that the funds which the financial aid scheme makes available for each learner are not enough. Kassier and Veldman (2013) therefore argue that students on NSFAS often suffer from food insecurity while studying as the prices of food are substantially higher compared to their disposal income. This is because the monthly income grant students received has to be spent on other things such as clothing and transport. Letseka and Maile (2008) argue that students who qualify for the NSFAS grant because their parents earn less than R1600 per month, additionally depend on their guardians or parents to supplement the NSFAS grant for their living expenses and in some cases need the support to pay even the tuition. Letseka and Maile (2008) argue that this adds to the already highly stressful university studying and contributes the high numbers of drop outs.

3.3.6.3 Further Education and Training

Finally an important intervention which the post-apartheid government has made to empower its citizens and particularly the youth, has been to expand the further education and training colleges in order to supplement higher education. The inability of universities to accommodate the high numbers of matriculated learners, coupled by the practical type of skilled labor required by South Africa's developing economy, has encouraged the post-apartheid government to invest more money and resources towards Further Education and Training Colleges. The functioning of the 'further education and training' college education system is governed by the Further Education and Training Colleges Act of 2006. The main purpose of the act is to "provide for the establishment, governance and funding of public further education and training colleges and to

provide for the registration of private further education and training colleges” (The Further Education and Training Colleges Act of 2006).

There are a few successes which the FET education system has enjoyed due to government’s increased attention. The main one is an increase in the number of enrolments of students into FET colleges. The increase in the number of enrolments is positive for the youth because the short term nature of most programs offered by FET’s, puts FET colleges in a position where they can adjust programs to fit the type of skills which the economy needs most. Therefore the youth stand a good chance of being employed after they graduate as the FET programs are more flexible for catering graduates for the needs of the job market. Powel and Hall’s (2004) research’ finds that “in 2002 there were 406,144 students enrolled in the 50 public FET colleges. This represented a growth of more than one-third since 1998” (Powel and Hall 2004 in Sakooje and McGrath 2007).

However, akin to the university system, the FET college system has also had its numerous challenges. The most noticeable of these challenges are highlighted by Mayer (2011) who argues that “the college system is not easily accessible from both a geographical and financial point of view.” Mayer’s (2011) point is justified as most FET colleges are based in towns or in close proximity to the towns while most students live far away from the towns and this makes studying at FET colleges expensive. In addition to this Mayer (2011) points out that it is easier to obtain funding for studying at university than it is to get funding to study at a FET college. Most of the funding schemes such as NSFAS and tertiary education sponsors are highly intended to fund the high number of university students. Therefore students who want to study at FET colleges are often the last to be considered when it comes to funding. Secondly Mayer argues that FET colleges do not articulate the study programs they have available to the youth still studying at high school well enough. The consequence is that high school leavers do not know what they can study at FET colleges, they are also unaware of the types of jobs that they can get once completing such a qualification. Lastly the high number of students who want to further their studies has led to the rise of many fraudulent and non-accredited/bogus colleges. Non-accredited colleges are those not registered with the Department of Higher Education and do not comply with further Education and Training act of 2006. This means that they are not allowed to offer higher education and training to students. However a number of non-accredited institutions have fraudulently claimed to be

registered in order to receive money from students who register and pay tuition fees to these colleges.

The students who register at such colleges are negatively affected because, when they graduate their qualifications are not recognized by the employers. The students are therefore not able to find employment despite having spent large sums of money to finance their education. The problem is so severe that the Department of Higher Education shuts down 40 non-accredited colleges in 2014 and continues to investigate more bogus colleges (Daily News 2014). However the problem has persisted with colleges increasing their levels of deceptive fraud. In 2014 the spokesperson for Higher education Khaye Nkwanyane stated that it was becoming harder to spot these fraudulent activities as some colleges would register with department for a certain course but would then go on to offer students additional courses which they are not registered to teach (Daily News 2014).

3.3.7 The New Growth Path 2010

The NGP is government's policy response to the high rate of unemployment facing the country. Natrass (2011) defines the NGP as

a plan which aims to create 5 million jobs by 2020 and bring about a new more inclusive, labor-absorbing and an efficient economy. The proposal is to achieve this through a mix of direct government job creation, social-democratic consensus building and macroeconomic, labor and industrial policies. It is a vision rather than a plan or a projection.

One of the main features which make the NGP particularly relevant to the youth is that it seeks to create jobs prioritizing the youth, and seeks to create youth brigades in which a million young adults are to be provided with training and work experience (NGP 2010). The NGP identifies that the policies for creating employment are particularly relevant to the youth because the youth is suffering more severely from the high unemployment crisis. In this sense solving the issues of youth unemployment would contribute significantly to decreasing the rate of unemployment in the broader sense. The NGP locates the primary causes of high unemployment in the country in both the local economy as well as in the international spheres of the global economy. At the Global level the NGP argues that the global recession, coupled with the subsequent slow growth rate of the Northern economies have affected South Africa negatively. This is due to the country's traditional trade links with the Northern Economies, particularly those in European Union. As a

remedy to this crisis the NGP proposes that South Africa should seek to exploit its membership in the 5 emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICKS); to strengthen trade which will achieve sustainable growth as these economies are growing faster and creating jobs for their citizens domestically (New Growth Plan 2011).

At the local level, insufficient economic growth rate in the domestic economy is found to be responsible for the high unemployment rate. The NGP argues that this becomes worse for the youth because there is a high number of youth leaving the school system and entering an economy which is unable to absorb inexperienced labor. In previous years (between 1994 and 2008) where there has been some noticeable positive growth in the economy, the NGP argues that this growth has not provided 'decent sustainable jobs'. Thus a key feature of the NGP is its attempt to create decent jobs.

In order to reach the targets set out in the NGP it lists five key job drivers which are:

1. Substantial public investment in infrastructure both to create employment directly, in construction, operation and maintenance as well as the production of inputs, and indirectly by improving efficiency across the economy.
2. Targeting more labor-absorbing activities across the main economic sectors – the agricultural and mining value chains, manufacturing and services.
3. Taking advantage of new opportunities in the knowledge and green economies.
4. Leveraging social capital in the social economy and the public services.
5. Fostering rural development and regional integration.

(National Growth Path 2010)

The NGP policy document has however had several criticisms. For example, Archer (2011) observes that the South African state does not have the capacity nor the skills to implement the ambitious goals set out in the NGP. For Archer (2011) economies which are not intensely centrally planned, such as the Soviet Union was and Cuba is, currently fail to drive growth without having to respond to the market signals.

Moreover, the NGP policy document has several other legislative frameworks in the form of Accords which specifically addresses the question of youth development. The most noticeable of these accords are namely the National Skills Accord (2011) and the Youth Employment Accord (2013). These accords are also recognized in the latest NYP policy document.

3.3.8 National Skills Accord 2011

The most noticeable feature of the Accord is its attempt to bring together different social partners namely Organized Labor, Business, Government and Community Constituencies together in bringing economic development and youth development. The National Skills Accord prioritizes the youth in eight focus areas these are set out as follows:

- Expand the level of training using existing facilities more fully
- Make internship and placement opportunities available within workplaces.
- Set guidelines of ratios of trainees: artisans as well as across the technical vocations, in order to improve the level of training
- improve the funding of training and the use of funds available for training and incentives on companies to train
- set annual targets for training in state-owned enterprises
- improve SETA governance and financial management as well as stakeholder involvement
- align training to the New Growth Path and improve Sector Skills Plans
- improve the role and performance of FET Colleges. The parties recognize that these commitments, together with the other actions taken by government, can significantly increase the number of South Africans who can access training and it can result in a large increase in the skills-base for the economy
(National Skills Accord 2016)

3.3.9 Youth Employment Accord 2013

The Youth Employment Accord is similar to the Skills Accord in that it was also signed by different social partners and is recognized by the NYP as an important catalyst for providing youth employment. The Youth Employment Accord focuses on six commitment areas:

- Commitment 1: Education and training
Improve education and training opportunities for the gap grouping between school-leaving and first employment.
- Commitment 2: Work exposure
Connect young people with employment opportunities, through amongst others support for job placement schemes and work readiness promotion programmes for young school leavers and provide young people with work experience
- Commitment 3: Public sector measures
Increase the number of young people employed in the public sector, through coordinating and scaling up existing programmes under a ‘youth brigade’ programme coordinated with the National Youth Service Programme.
- Commitment 4: Youth target set-asides
Youth target set-asides need to be considered in particular industries, particularly new industries where young people can be drawn in large numbers and should be progressively realized.

- Commitment 5: Youth entrepreneurship and youth cooperatives Youth cooperatives and youth entrepreneurship should be promoted (Youth Employment Accord 2013)

3.3.10 Youth Enterprise Development Strategy 2013 -2016

The ‘Youth Enterprise Development Strategy’ (YEDS) is South African government’s intervention which seeks address the poor participation of the youth in the economy of the country. YEDS (2013) can be described as the policy instrument set out by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to deal with the issue of exclusion of the youth as participants in the formal economy. The YED is governments’ policy response to the NGP which calls for “the state to provide bold, imaginative and effective strategies to create millions of new jobs that would also address youth unemployment and limited participation of young people in the economy” (Youth Enterprise Development Strategy 2013). YEDS recognized an important point which is that without economic liberation of the youth the participation of the youth in politics would also be compromised. A 2013 research by the YEDS found that there is a high rate of unemployment affecting the youth; “youth unemployment constitutes 73% of the total unemployment in the country. Therefore the ratio of youth-to-adult unemployment is about 1:3” (Youth Enterprise Development Strategy 2013). This high rate of unemployed youth necessitated government intervention and the government established policies which attempt to include the youth in the economy. The YEDS (2013) sets out its mission as follows:

1. To mainstream the YEDS within the DTI and its agencies and all strategies and programmes geared for enterprise development at national, provincial and municipal levels.
2. To strengthen and unleash the potential of the participation of youth in the economy by raising the value and the profile of youth-owned and managed enterprises and designing support programmes suitable for this end
3. To foster human capital development with a special focus on youth entrepreneurship, business management and technical skills
4. To foster a culture of partnership and collaboration among youth beneficiaries and other stakeholders through awareness-raising programmes; research; and business intelligence and assist with the evaluation and monitoring of the performance of youth enterprise development and entrepreneurship (Youth Enterprise Strategy 2013)

In conclusion this chapter began with a discussion of international policies that deal with youth issues. This chapter then presented the global policies which informed and influenced South Africa's post-1994 policies and legislations on the youth. The chapter critically discussed some of the policies in the country which include NYC, UYF and the parliament's Act 54 of 2008 that made the National Youth Development Agency the main structure responsible for youth development. The following chapter will assess the opportunities and challenges for participation which the National Youth Development Agency presents for the youth.

Chapter Four

Adequacy of NYDA as a platform for Youth Engagement

The NYDA has been one of government's main responses to addressing the issues facing the youth since the collapse of the UYF. The main assumption of the current study is that including the youth through meaningful participation in decision making increases the likelihood of an economically and politically productive youth in the country. The result of the successful incorporation of the youth in decision making is a potential remedy that could decrease the criminal behaviors such as vandalism and crime, which have recently come to characterize the youth in the country. These behaviors are often associated with youth populations that are frustrated by exclusion in decision making by the formal political structures created to facilitate youth involvement. While the role of the NYDA cannot be solely restricted to youth participation, it is however the main structure tasked with mainstreaming youth development across all government departments and across all relevant stakeholders. The NYDA also receives considerable funds from treasury to ensure that the youth is included in the state's economic and political functions. Thus appraising whether the NYDA has actively involved the youth in its endeavor to achieve its mandate is important to help identify whether its eight years of existence has been successful or if it is yet another failed youth project like the Umsobumvu Youth Fund.

This chapter firstly sets out the legal context under which the NYDA was established and also presents the main purposes of the NYDA. Secondly the chapter will assess the major challenges which limit the NYDA's capacity to achieve youth empowerment. Thirdly the chapter will highlight the genuine opportunities for youth engagement which the NYDA presents. Chapter two of the dissertation adopted five mechanisms set out by Brinkerhoff and Crosby. The five mechanisms provided five key elements which are required for a meaningful participation to take place. These mechanisms also serve to assist in identifying when meaningful participation has been fulfilled or when it has not been comprehensively met. In this case the mechanisms would therefore assist to practically evaluate the main services offered by the NYDA to ascertain whether

(or not) they present genuine opportunities for the youth to be equipped to engage in decision making.

4.1 The National Youth Development Agency

The National Youth Commission Act of 1996 facilitated the establishment of the Umobumvu Youth Fund. The UYF was intended to be one of the main structures to address youth issues in the country. Youth issues in South Africa needed to be addressed with a sense of urgency because it had been a policy area which had been neglected for decades. However an assessment by a committee set up by parliament (the Asmal report) to investigate the functioning of state institutions in 2007 found that UYF was failing dismally to achieve its goals of empowering the youth. The mismanagement of funds meant that the UYF had to be dissolved and had to be amalgamated into a new structure tasked to deal with youth issues more effectively. Thus in 2008 ‘Parliament Act 54 of 2008’ was passed which allowed for the establishment of the NYDA, this Act of parliament also governs the functioning of the NYDA.

The NYDA can be described as “a single unitary structure established to address youth developmental issues at a National Provincial and Local Government level” (NYDA Performance Plan 2013). The NYDA can also be viewed as the main structure tasked with ensuring that the relevant stakeholders such as the Private Sector, Government and Non-Governmental Organizations prioritize youth development in their policies. Thus, this dissertation argues that for the NYDA to achieve its goals effectively the structure must be inclusive of the youth on a broad scale. Additionally, this structure must be strong enough to create opportunities for the youth to be empowered when engaging with relevant stakeholders. The activities of the NYDA can be summarized as follows:

- Lobbying and advocating for integration and mainstreaming of youth development in all spheres of government, the private sector and civil society;
- Initiating, implementing, facilitating and coordinating youth development programmes;
- Monitoring and evaluating youth development intervention across the board and mobilizing youth for active participation in civil society engagements (NYDA 2013).

The third main activity of the NYDA is particularly relevant to the current study because it shows that the NYDA has in theory committed itself to empowering the youth to effectively participate

in decision making. In addition to this “the NYDA has a number of key programme areas. These are economic participation, education and skills development, health and well-being, research and policy and governance” (NYDA 2014). All three of these program areas are key towards attaining quality participation for the youth; however, the current study adopts “economic participation and research and policy governance” for the purposes of its evaluations.

Additionally, the NYDA lists five key performance areas which are as follows:

1. Economic Participation – to assist and facilitate youth participation in the economy leading to improvement of their livelihoods through NYDA grants as financial support and non-financial support interventions.
2. Education and Skills Development – to promote access to quality education and skills, to both in and out-of-school youth through targeted interventions. The NYDA will place 22,830 learners in education opportunities over a period of 5 years, these will include young people who want to re-write their matric (21, 978) and those who need bursaries to continue with their higher education studies (852).
3. Health and Wellbeing – to increase awareness on healthy lifestyles that promote good health practices amongst the youth of South Africa, including the dangers of substance abuse, unprotected sex, nutrition, sexually transmitted diseases and the impact of HIV Infection and Aids among young people in South Africa.
4. Policy and Research – to create and produce youth development information and knowledge that informs the public sector, private sector, and civil society in developing policy, planning, implementation and review of all [100%] of their programmes related to government priorities.
5. Governance and Administration – to provide effective IT systems, business processes, human resources capacity development and improve operations of the NYDA. To ensure that all NYDA systems and processes support NYDA products and services for effective service delivery
(NYDA 2013)

4.2 Major Challenges facing NYDA

The NYDA has had several challenges which have hampered its abilities to effectively execute its main mandate of mainstreaming youth development across all the different state departments, and across all the relevant stakeholders. The NYDA 2020 Policy Report reflects that there is a genuine feeling amongst the youth that structures intended to advance the youth have failed them. The NYDA Policy Report argues that “this perception is formed against the backdrop of continued high rates of youth unemployment and unimpressive graduate employability, the continued HIV/AIDS infection rates among young people, the continued high rates of drop-outs at schools and higher-learning institutions” (NYDA Policy Report 2015)

The first main challenge facing the NYDA is namely the pervasive ‘political permeation’ of the ruling African National Congress into the structure NYDA. The NYDA structure in essence ought to be a politically non-partisan structure. The reasoning behind this is to ensure that it is able to effectively serve the broader South African youth population, and not to just serve the narrow interests of the youth who are in the ruling party or politically connected to the ANCYL. The second major challenge facing the NYDA has been the need to change the negative attitudes that the media, opposition parties and even some parts of the youth population have had on the NYDA. The negative attitudes towards the structure stemmed mainly from the consideration of the fact that the NYDA is a restructured version of a failed structure – the Umsobumvu Youth Fund.

4.2.1 The Pervasive Political Permeation

The dominance of the ANC in elections gives the party the capacity to finance its youth wing, the ANC Youth League. In South African politics, youth engagement with organized decision making bodies has predominantly happened through the political youth formations. Jobson (2011) argues that the size and the dominance of the ANC youth league has relatively drowned the voices of youth who are not part of the ANC youth league or youth who are not aligned to it through associated bodies such the Young Communist League. In her argument Jobson takes the position that “much of the lack of publically visible participation of young people can perhaps be attributed to the dominance of party-political youth wings, and the ANC Youth League in particular”(2011). Thus strong party youth formations can be seen as a challenge for the youth who do not identify themselves within the somewhat limited choices of the political parties available for selection. A key aspect of having an effective voice in decision making is that a group must be well organized in order to communicate their concerns effectively. The continued victory of the ANC at elections gives it an advantage which other parties do not have, in that it is able to acquire resources which are in turn used to finance the organizing of youth branches in almost every local district in the country.

The strong influence of party formations is also a pervasive feature confronting youth engagement at local municipal level politics in the South African context. In her study of youth participation at local Msunduzi government, Chanza (2006) found that the consequence of the dominance of political parties was that that “youth participation in local government was limited, confrontational

or just token participation.” In most cases the youth which have public platforms come from political parties and use the platforms to defend their parties’ position on policy rather than advancing the issues of the youth in general. A more corrosive characteristic of the dominance of the ANC Youth League over the NYDA structure has been the amount of funds which have been used to appease the members of the ANCYL through what can be viewed as networks of patronage. The Mail and Guardian (2011) reports that one year after Julius Malema succeeded Fikile Mbalula as the youth league’s president

Almost all the agency’s provincial chairs and their deputies were Malema allies, with his youth league deputy, Andile Lungisa, chairing the agency nationally. Another youth league leader, Steven Ngubeni, was the chief executive officer and the league’s national spokesperson, Magdalene Moonsamy, was chief operations officer at the agency.

This therefore proves that there is a strong sense of preferential treatment when it comes to selection of leaders of the NYDA with special opportunities given to those belonging to the ANCYL.

Furthermore, there is strong evidence that in most cases the funds of NYDA have been misused and that the positions of leadership have been used as a mechanism for keeping the ANCYL leaders happy. The Mail and Guardian (2011) also revealed that the agency spent R11million on salaries for its board and that the Chairperson at the time Andile Lungisa pocketed R800 000 a year and Chief Executive Steven Ngubeni earned a cool R1.8-million a year – more than what a provincial MEC currently earns.

4.2.2 Negative Media and Public Opinion

The second major challenge which the NYDA has had to contend with has been to try to change the negative perception which the public and the media have formed concerning youth structures over the years. The fact that the NYDA was a restructured creation of the UYF, which failed due to financial mismanagement and maladministration, made it difficult for the NYDA to have a positive public image amongst people, media and policy observers. This subsequently meant that the structure did not have the support of the public and the media to begin with. This in turn negatively affected the moral of the NYDA staff in achieving their goals. However it is important to note that the UYF is not solely to blame for the negative attitudes of the media, the NYDA has also contributed to the negative perceptions which the public and the media hold on youth

structures. The negative perceptions on the NYDA reached their heights in 2010 when the NYDA organized a Youth Festival at a very high cost, the public and media did not see any positive outcomes or any resolutions from the festival that were going to benefit the youth. Jobson argues that “the performance of the NYDA has been marred by controversy, most prolifically through the R100-million spent on the World Youth Festival at the end of 2010, in what has been lambasted as a poorly organized event with massive resource wastages” (Jobson 2012). Thus the frustration that the public had was that a lot of money was spent without there being any visible results for youth empowerment from the festival.

4.2.3 Accessibility

The last main challenge constraining the NYDA which this dissertation highlights is the lack of accessibility of the NYDA’s services to the broader South African youth population. The main argument made here is that in order for the NYDA to effectively empower the youth, it has to be accessible to all youth including those in rural areas. The NYDA website shows that there are fifteen full service NYDA branches across the country. Notably, these full service branches are all located in metropolitan areas. In addition to this the National Youth Policy reports that “many of the NYDA offices were not fully operative in August 2014, only 44 percent of the offices were functioning at capacity (The National Youth Policy Report 2015).

As a solution to this challenge the national chairman of the NYDA Yershen Pillay proposes partnership with local municipalities to help deliver the NYDA services to the youth in rural areas. However the challenge to this proposed partnership is that some municipalities have not committed to it, this is due to the fact that these municipalities are not in good financial standing and may be merged with other municipalities (Malefane 2016). Thus the problem of accessibility for the youth in rural areas persists and continues to limit the effectiveness of the NYDA in empowering youth in rural areas. As a result, the effectiveness of the NYDA as a mechanism which includes the rural youth population in public participation is dismal. Remarkably, youth in rural areas need attention and empowerment services more than their counterparts in urban areas due to the fact that they are more disadvantaged in terms of access to information, education, financial and many more other aspects. Thus the inability of the NYDA to be accessible to youth population is a major failure which needs to be addressed effectively.

4.3 The Opportunities for Engagement

Despite the many challenges facing the NYDA in successfully achieving its goal of mainstreaming youth development in the country, there are several positives for the structure which can be viewed as a beacon of hope for the youth. The continued investment in these positives, coupled with resolving the challenges facing the NYDA, has the great potential to see the NYDA structure break away from the legacy of poor performance inherited from its predecessor the UYF.

One major constructive aspect for the NYDA has been its strong sense of financially supporting youth who want to become entrepreneurs. This is important to participation because, in order for the youth to participate effectively in decision making they have to be empowered to be able to do so both economically and politically. Supporting the youth to be entrepreneurs is an important step for youth empowerment, because it gives the youth financial or economic independence. Subsequently through economic independence the youth could have the power to organize themselves to oppose policies which disadvantage the youth, or alternatively to support those policies which advance youth development. The economic freedom which the NYDA attempts to grant the youth through the backing of entrepreneurs could help be the solution to the crisis raised in chapter two, which highlights that South African youth are extremely dependent on their families for financial assistance. The creation of many young entrepreneurs has the potential to increase the level of political participation in the country because including the youth in the economy, would address the problems which arise from an alienated youth population which does not have the power to influence the state on policy issues.

Jobson (2011) argues that both UYF and NYDA have a strong track record of supporting youth initiated business. As an example, “between 2009 and 2010 the NYDA disbursed 7,500 microloans (valued at R23-million), R3-million in loans for small to medium enterprises, and R33-million in business consultancy vouchers to 4,244 young people.” The NYDA’s annual report of 2009 indicates that one of its program objectives was to link the youth entrepreneurs to emerging business opportunities. Thus, the NYDA was able to secure “R101, 26 million worth of business opportunities for 238 entrepreneurs” in year 2009 (NYDA Annual Performance 2009). The NYDA annual report of 2009 further reports that 1065 young entrepreneurs accessed business development and technical assistance, which indicates that the supporting of youth entrepreneurs

by the NYDA is not just limited to the granting of startup capital, but that it is multifaceted and includes an effort to develop the technical business skills of the youth.

Notably, the support of the youth to participate in the economy as entrepreneurs is not only limited to the NYDA structure; various legislation such as the National Skills Accord and the Youth Enterprise Strategy, passed under the New Growth Plan also assists in this regard. For example, the fourth objective of the Youth Enterprise Strategy seeks “to foster a culture of partnership and collaboration among youth beneficiaries and other stakeholders through awareness-raising programmes; research; and business intelligence” (Youth Enterprise Strategy 2013). Therefore it can be concluded that there is a lot of support from the NYDA as well as from other state legislation, which seeks to facilitate youth economic participation.

A more recent positive for the NYDA has been its ability to receive a clean audit from the Auditor General. A clean audit resembles a significant break away from the history of maladministration which characterized UYF. A clean audit is defined by the Auditor General to mean that “The financial statements are free from material misstatements and there are no material findings on reporting on performance objectives or non-compliance with legislation” (Auditor General 2004). In other words this means that all of the financial statements which have been submitted to the Auditor General, can be accounted for, and that the statements are consistent with the rules for spending public funds set out in the constitution and the public audit act of 2004. The auditing of public sector institutions such as NYDA is important to ensure that funds set out to remedy the public’s issues are not misused. The specific legislation governing this is the Public Audit Act of 2004 which has the main task of guiding and “providing for the auditing of institutions in the public sector” (Public Audit Act of 2004).

The Sowetan newspaper reports that in 2013 the NYDA had up to R133-million in irregular expenditure (Sowetan 2016). However commendably the NYDA was able to turn this around in the coming years (2014 and in 2015) and the structure was able to receive its first clean audit. While a clean audit on its own does not necessarily mean that the public institution in question is achieving all its goals, it is nonetheless an important first step for a public institution, to be able to account for how their money was spent during the financial year. It is also important that public institutions are able to comply with the basic legislation set out by the Public Audit Act on spending public funds. The NYDA has been able to at least meet these two basic conditions set

out by the Auditor General meaning that they have a clean audit for the last financial year. Thus the cessation of large scale irregular spending, which previously characterized UYF and the NYDA in its formative stages, is a positive step. It could also be viewed as tiny spark of hope for the youth of South Africa, in the sense that those funds which were mostly misused by the UYF could now be channeled towards achieving the main goal of NYDA which is to empower the youth through mainstreaming youth development across all relevant stakeholders.

4.4 Application of Brinkerhoff and Crosby's 5 Mechanisms to the NYDA Model.

The third main activity of the NYDA is to ensure that it mobilizes the youth so that they can effectively participate in civil society (NYDA 2014). Incorporating the youth in South Africa into structured civil society bodies which have the potential to influence policy is a critical intervention that could assist in avoiding a situation where the youth feels isolated and excluded from the state. However it should be noted that the successful incorporation of the youth into civil society alone is not a sufficient condition for effective participation. Understandably, in order for the youth to have power to influence important policy deliberations which affect them, they need to be well represented in civil society, government and finally represented in business. The next section evaluates whether (or not) the NYDA provides sufficient opportunities for the youth to effectively participate in decision-making. It seeks to evaluate whether the NYDA as a structure is able to meet the requirements for sufficient participation laid out by Brinkerhoff and Crosby.

4.4.1 Information Sharing

According to Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2006) one of the main purposes of Information Sharing is that, it “serves to keep the relevant actors informed, to provide transparency and to build legitimacy.” In terms of achieving the requirement for meaningful participation the most visible technique used by the NYDA to communicate publicly with the youth and relevant stakeholders has been through the internet.

The NYDA has its own website and it contains valuable information on the NYDA, its history, its major objectives and the main programs that it offers. The contact numbers that young people can use in order to access the services rendered by the NYDA are available on the website. This could be viewed as a positive in terms of Information Sharing and has an effect of increasing the levels of transparency, and consequently the legitimacy of the NYDA among youth and relevant

stakeholders. This is especially so for the youth which have access to the internet and who use the internet on a frequent bases. A study conducted by Morgan's (2013) which questioned young people's knowledge of the NYDA, found that most young people were knowledgeable about youth empowerment as well as the NYDA and its purpose.

However a clearly identifiable major criticism of the NYDA in regards to 'Information Sharing', is that NYDA relies too heavily on one form of media to keep young people and the public aware of its activities. While there are adverts informing people about the NYDA on radio and on television, these are not sufficient as they only serve to introduce the NYDA to the public. The NYDA does not sufficiently utilize television and radio which are easily accessible forms of media to share information about its ongoing activities, its success and its failures. This is rather unfortunate considering that a significant proportion of young people make use of the internet, radio and television. Malila (2013) affirms that most young people generally use both radio and television for accessing news and information. Radio was found to be the most highly used form of media with 70.8% of youth using it, and television was the second highest with 67,3 % (2013). Additionally, internet was only the third highest used form of media amongst the youth with 62.8% of the youth using the internet as a news source or a mechanism for gathering information (Malila 2013). The failure to utilize radio and television could be regarded as a lost opportunity to meet the requirement of Information Sharing.

Notably, unemployed youths -are the primary target audience whose challenges NYDA seeks to address. Malila (2013) research' points out that 82% of unemployed youth use television and radio to access information (2013). Most of unemployed youth do not have access to internet and have to use internet cafes to go on the internet. Hence, a major disadvantage of not using radio and television to regularly update youth on the NYDA is that a large number of unemployed youth who use these forms of media are not reached.

4.4.2 Consultation

Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2006) note that "for Consultation to take place there has to be two-way information flows and exchange of views, consultation also involves the sharing of information as well as gathering feedback and reaction from beneficiaries". The NYDA has a platform on its Website that allows those who have benefited from the services and programs of the NYDA to express how they were assisted by the NYDA. This creates an opportunity for others to have

knowledge of such activities and to be aware of how they may access these services. Hence, it could be said that in terms of consultation the NYDA does partially fulfil the requirements laid out by Crosby and Brinkerhoff (2006).

However the objectivity in assessing the reaction of the beneficiaries is questionable. An observation of the reactions on the website reveals that the Website is bombarded with the views of only those who express their gratitude for the services of the NYDA. The beneficiaries do not raise the difficulties that they have encountered while attempting to access the services of the NYDA. Remarkably, the frustrations that most young people encounter when seeking assistance from NYDA is conveniently omitted on the website. In this sense the information appears to be filtered to preferentially highlight only the positive comments. This could have a dangerous consequence, because raising the hopes of youth without the NYDA being in a suitable position to substantially address these expectations may result in violent backlash from the youth.

In this light the NYDA could benefit from publicly sharing the critical assessments of its activities, from those members of the youth who have tried to access the services and have been unsatisfied with the assistance. By publicly communicating the failures they would gain trust, and an understanding from the youth that the activities of the NYDA are a genuine attempt to solve those challenges which the youth encounters. Portraying its services as perfect builds false hopes which might result in the youth retaliating through violence once they engage with the structure and the high expectations that have been created cannot be met.

The NYDA also does not have any clear mechanisms that seek to incorporate the desires and objectives of young people through constant consultation and meetings. In order to make sure that the NYDA is constantly relevant to young people, it must have mechanisms that enable it to receive the concerns of youth as these concerns and issues change during the course of time. In some instances the concerns of the youth may differ from community to community. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2006) caution that “it is important that public agencies employing consultation convey the message that they are sincerely interested in stakeholder’s views, not simply looking for a rubber stamp approval of decisions already made.” In order to create a sense of ownership among the youth, the NYDA needs to regularly interact with the youth from different backgrounds.

4.4.3 Collaboration

Gray (1989) argues that this method of participation is mostly utilized by an agency when “it is not able to achieve its goals without bringing in the capacity and knowledge of external partners.” Additionally collaboration is defined as “a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible (Gray 1989). The NYDA could be said to meet to the requirement of this this kind of collaboration. For an example, the NYDA does take the initiative to bring in corporations, as well as individuals from the workplace who would assist the youth with career guidance. The NYDA 2014-2015 financial year report states that a total of 937 949 young people were supported through individual and group career guidance. Collaborations of this nature are healthy for the relationship between youth and corporations. This is because when the youth find employment through such collaborations they are able to participate in the economy of the country; while corporations have a chance to train and recruit youth to execute they business or research objectives.

In addition to this the NYDA website recognizes and supports the Youth Employment Accord 6 which was signed on the 18th of April 2003. This Accord brings different partners from Organized Labor, Business, Community structures, youth organizations and Government together to try and achieve the goals set out in the New Growth Path which attempts to create 20 million new jobs by the year 2020.

4.4.4 Shared Decision Making

Brown and Ashman (1996) define Shared Decision Making as a process which “entails collaboration where control over decisions is not held unilaterally by public officials but it is shared. This type of participation begins to address the power differentials among collaborative parties, which is an important aspect of making it work effectively.” The opportunity to have the ability to participate in decision making in policy matters that affect the lives of the youth directly, is the essence of meaningful participation. Unfortunately the NYDA does not have any sufficient mechanisms for ensuring that the youth are included in decision making.

The NYDA recognizes Employment Accord 6 which encourages both Collaboration and Shared Decision Making through bringing different stakeholders to work together on a regular basis. It is

not well represented in terms of involving the youth in general. In the duration of the signing of the Accord the NYDA was represented by its chairperson Yershen Pillay. However there are no coherent articulations or plans on how the NYDA attempts to influence such meetings in the future.

4.4.5 Empowerment

According to Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) Empowerment, means that the “public officials enable external stake holders to achieve their own objectives by providing space for independent initiation and pursuit of actions, increasing capacity and delegating decision making authority.” In light of this definition, in order for the NYDA to be able to achieve this mechanism for effective participation, it has to create an environment where young people are able to make important decisions with stakeholders while the NYDA plays the role of the facilitator. There are currently insufficient amount of programs through which the NYDA can pass over decision making powers to the youth and stakeholders in communities in which NYDA offices are located.

This chapter has outlined the NYDA structure as well as its main functions. The chapter has critically assessed the NYDA, highlighting the major strengths and weaknesses of the structure. The challenges which the NYDA faces are a threat which could lead to dissolution of the structure in the same way the UYF structure before it was dissolved. The continued failure of the state structures established to advance the youth is not desirable for youth empowerment and youth participation. It is therefore vital that plausible remedies which would assist in strengthening the NYDA are posited. The next chapter consists of a brief summary of the dissertation. The chapter concludes by offering plausible remedies which would assist the NYDA to overcome its challenges.

Chapter Five

Summary Conclusion and Recommendations

This dissertation's main aim has been to assess the level of youth participation in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. The study underscored the main challenges which have impeded meaningful youth participation in post-apartheid South Africa. The different opportunities which the youth have in order to engage with the state were also highlighted in this study.

The first chapter of the dissertation provided a background of the main reasons why youth participation is critical particularly in a developing country like South Africa. It laid out the main assumption of the dissertation being that youth delinquency, xenophobia and violent protest mostly led by youth could be curtailed if the youth had genuine opportunities to participate in decision making. The first chapter also set out the research questions and the research methodology adopted in this study.

Chapter 2 dealt with answering the first two questions of the dissertation. The chapter also presented the conceptual perspectives on the "youth" and delineated the concept of the youth adopted for this study which is based on the South African context. The chapter underscored the fact that in South Africa an appropriate definition of youth would be one which encompasses political, social and economic factors. The reason for this was that specific programmes intended to benefit youth needed to accommodate those who had suffered because of apartheid. Furthermore the high rate of youth unemployment had to be considered hence the higher chronological cut of age 35, which differs in comparison to other global definitions of youth. The second question was answered by emphasizing the suitability of the World Bank's definition of participation above other definitions. Chapter 2 also discussed the theoretical framework of this dissertation which is Hart's Ladder of Participation. Hart's Ladder of Participation was used in this dissertation to assess whether (or not) South Africa's youth specific legislations and policies presented the youth with meaningful opportunities to participate in decision making. Finally the chapter set out Brinkerhoff and Crosby's 5 mechanisms for meaningful participation. These mechanisms were used in this dissertation to assess whether the NYDA is meeting the requirements for meaningful participation.

The third chapter of the dissertation outlined various legislation targeting youth empowerment and youth participation. It answered the fourth research question posed by the dissertation which

questioned the extent the youth had been presented with sufficient opportunities to participate in decision making. Hart's ladder of participation was used to assess if the legislation provided the youth genuine opportunities or not. Based on the various legislations and policies which deal with the advancement of the youth, this chapter concluded that none of the legislations and policies reached the highest rung on the Hart's ladder.

The fourth chapter assessed whether the NYDA presented enough opportunities for the youth engagement. This chapter also assessed the extent of partisanship within the NYDA. It was argued that the preferential treatment of ANCYL members disadvantaged South Africa's youth. In evaluating NYDA's programs, this chapter argued that NYDA's support for youth entrepreneurs and a clean audit from the Auditor General, are signs that NYDA is building its capacity to empower the youth.

5.1 Recommendations

5.1.2 Depoliticize the NYDA

One of the noted challenge with the youth structure is financial mismanagement which has previously overwhelmed the UYF and poses an issue for NYDA. Notably, the problem stems from the fact that the funds intended to address youth issues in the country were used by the leaders of the ANCYL as a mechanism for self-enrichment. This has had a negative consequence of distancing the general youth population who perceive the NYDA as corrupt institution incapable of uplifting their lives. Therefore in order to increase the legitimacy of and the confidence in the NYDA, a radical depoliticizing of the NYDA needs to take place so that it is perceived to be accessible to all the youth in the country. Burnham (2001) describes the depoliticizing as a governing strategy and process which "removes the political character of decision-making." Therefore all the automatic deployment of ANCYL members into the leadership positions of the NYDA has to be discontinued. A new process of recruitment and incorporation of all the youth in the country into the NYDA needs to be established. This will help depoliticize the NYDA and present it as a non-partisan youth structure.

5.1.3 Expand the number of NYDA offices across the country

In order for the NYDA to be able to achieve its task of mainstreaming youth development effectively it needs to be well embedded in the communities in which the youth are found. This is

to ensure that the concerns of the youth in each community are taken into consideration. Therefore having offices based only in the metros is not sufficient. The NYDA needs to have more offices so that it is able to address the specific challenges the youth encounters in different communities.

5.1.4 Increased Communication through different forms of media

A major constraint affecting the NYDA has been its failure to communicate with the youth. The main reason for this is that the NYDA has relied too heavily on the internet as the tool for communicating with the youth. The study conducted by Malila (2013) shows that the internet is not the most frequently used form of media amongst the youth. Therefore in order for the NYDA to be able to achieve its task more effectively, it has to be able to reach the youth using the most popular forms of media which the youth uses more often. The use of the radio and television needs to be increased so that the youth are reached more effectively. In addition to this, both these forms of media need to be used by NYDA on regular basis in order to keep the youth informed about NYDA's Programs.

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