



منتدى البديل العربي للدراسات

Political Participation of the Youth post-Revolution

Omar Samir Khalaf

Researcher at Arab Forum for Alternatives

Arab Forum for Alternatives (A.F.A)

Al-Mesaha St., Fourth Floor, App. 4, Dokki, Giza, Egypt :Address

Website: www.afaegypt.org

Mail: info@afaegypt.org

Telefax: +202-37629937

Twitter: AFAalternatives

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/AFAalternatives>



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This paper is a result of a closed round table discussion; it expresses the personal opinion of its writers and does not necessarily express the opinion of the Arab Forum for Alternatives or Global Partners Governance

The youth of Egypt played a vital role in the January 25th revolution and were on the initial driving forces behind the movement. After the revolution, many of them decided to remain politicized and active. This paper attempts to track the activities of the youth in the political sphere following the uprising.

It is important to note that January 25th was not the first time, in recent times at least, the youth took to the streets to have their voices heard. Significant participation of the youth was noted during the Palestinian Intifada in Egypt of 2000, the Kefaya Movement of 2004 and the 6th of April Movement in 2008.

For its second chapter, the document focuses on presenting a detailed report of the numerous types of youth association and movements. It first discusses the youth associations, citing the Youth Revolution Coalition as one of the most influential associations on the scene. However, the political power of these associations have declined over time due to various factors, such as the ever-expanding number of new coalitions, participants' departure to political parties and ideological differences. Other types of associations include the Revolution Youth Union, which attempts to bring together the independent youth of the Tahrir Square, the Alliance of Revolutionary Forces, created after the Mohamed Mahmoud events, brought together people from across different ideologies as well as agenda-specific movements that aim at raising awareness of a particular cause or set of demands. Some youth associations were centered on specific ideologies such as the Islamic Association or the Union of Egyptian Socialist Youth. Some of the youth decide to engage in politics through previously untraditional means, such as Facebook and Twitter, which they used as a platform to raise awareness for their respective causes and turned into a tangible political force. Lastly, the youth decided to join the actual decision-making process rather than sticking to lobbying for a cause by running for parliamentary elections, actively participating in the elections or joining presidential campaigns.

Finally, the paper moves on to discuss the most common features of the involvement of the youth in the political sphere, which include avoiding the parliamentary system and working outside the official sphere of politics, structural and organizational differences with the older generations, inner fragmentation and the utilization of street protests and civil disobedience as tactics.

The author recommends a change in the mentality of the older generation that would allow the inclusion of other segments of society such as the youth movements, women and Copts into the decision-making process. He also calls upon the leaderships of the political parties to support and sponsor the youth by including them in the internal decision-making process and facilitating their rise to the higher ranks within the party. It is also suggested that the youth movements themselves reach out to each other to strengthen their base, cooperate on projects and support one another.