Rethinking Youth as Means for Political Stability

A qualitative content analysis of the sociopolitical situation in Lebanon from the perspective of empowerment theory.

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Abstract:

Youth exclusion in a society is a major issue in many parts of the globe, and particularly in the Arab world. It limits the succession of social movements leading to political stability and leaves a relevant part of the society alienated from political processes. For this reason, this thesis aims to introduce and highlight youth as a source for political and social development, using Lebanon as a case study through the theoretical lens of empowerment theory. The work carried out understands empowerment theory as a useful theoretical framework in Political Science, and its contribution to the case under scrutiny will rest upon three interrelated categories: individual empowerment, collective empowerment, and social and political change as a subsequent. The research focuses on the capacity development of young Lebanese people through their participation in a UNDP program. Using content analysis of a UNDP report and semi-structured interviews conducted with youth (20-28) as well as with the youth focal point in UNDP, the thesis systemically examines and evaluates the extent to which Lebanese youth are feeling empowered by the UNDP for creating social change and reducing political instability. The results and findings of the research suggest that if organizations such as the UNDP place more attention on youth, they are likely to have a greater political and social impact on social and political development.

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Keywords: Youth exclusion – Political stability – Development – Empowerment theory – Semi-structured interviews – Qualitative content analysis
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1. Introduction

“The Youth of a Nation are the trustees of posterity.” (Disraeli, 1980:497)

Being the largest proportion in history and holding the power in the future, youth should play an important role in a community, especially in developing nations such as Lebanon, as they seek to overcome the struggles of poverty and break the limiting and destructive cycles which prevent political and social processes (Hope, 2012). This is because if young people are not realized as powerful and are left with no alternative but unemployment and poverty, they are increasingly likely to join a rebellion as an alternative way of generating an income (Urdal, 2006:610). For this reason, it is believed that youth exclusion in Lebanon is a major issue because it distresses the succession of social movements and instability (Nagel and Staeheli, 2015). Hence, empowering Lebanese youth should be at the forefront of the national and international agenda because empowerment is central to the well-being of the nation and the security of its citizen. Thus, the concept of youth is a growing perception which is connected to the societal process, political stability and change of a nation.

As such, any failure to provide appropriate opportunities for this section of the population could have enormous economic, political, cultural, and social consequences in Lebanon. Engaging youth fully in society is therefore no longer a choice but an imperative in the development process. For this reason, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has developed several youth programs with the aim of promoting youth-focused and youth-led developments targeting political and social stability (UNDP, 2016). One of such programs is the Youth Leadership Program (YLP), created with the mission to invest in young women and men in the Arab region with the aim of unleashing their potential to become social innovators, leaders, and a powerful force for change in their communities. This program has been active for three years and its main goal is to help youth develop effective and sustainable solutions to address development challenges. Participants in this program are expected to reflect and express their identity as leaders and articulate a path of action towards social and political development. The YLP’s responsibility is to co-create the future by engaging all youth (UNDP, 2017). The call for action
written and adopted in the YLP 3 regional summit in Cairo underlines and calls upon governments to allow youth participation in decision making and representation in all political processes (YLP declaration, 2017).

1.1 Research Question and Problem Formulation

Young people which could act as a catalyst to human and state development are often left marginalized and without agency. At present, youth exclusion is extensive throughout the Arab world which has led to major influence on the series of social movements and instability (Nagel and Staeheli, 2015 and UNDP, 2016:13). With the aim of developing a Youth Strategy 2014-2017 focusing on the capacity development of young people, the UNDP in Beirut has been taking active steps to accredit youth towards becoming agents of change and reducing sectarian and political divisions.

This thesis addresses the importance of engaging youth in the process of social change in a developing country, Lebanon. It seeks to further explore and investigate the issue of youth acceptance as an asset for social change and political development. This will be done using semi-structured interviews from two respective perspectives; youth who participated in a UNDP program, namely the YLP and the youth focal point and program officer of the program in UNDP Beirut country office. This thesis will also utilize a UNDP report called “Spotlight on Youth” published in 2016 which will give an insight on empirical evidence on the sociopolitical situation of youth in Lebanon. The analysis will be guided by the following research question:

To what extent are Lebanese youth feeling empowered by the UNDP for creating social change and reducing political instability in Lebanon?

To clarify, the research question asks “to what extent” not for the purpose of giving an objective quantitative measurement or numerical data but rather to study the wordings and interpretations of the interviews and report that could relate to the perspectives chosen. Hence, “To what extent” here indicates “is it possible” and “to what degree” youth feel empowered to change a politically corrupt country like Lebanon with the help of the UNDP.

To answer this question this paper will use empowerment theory as it combines political science and psychology and helps clarify what a sense of political resources individuals can be, why it is
important for self-development and democratic institutions (Beaumont, 2011:217). Connecting to the literature review, I will conduct a qualitative content analysis to the collected data from the interviews and the UNDP report to lead a triangulation technique in the findings.

1.2 Purpose and Aim
The purpose of this thesis is to further underline and shed light on a population that seems to be forgotten as resources to aid the security and political stability of a developing country: Lebanon. The importance of shedding light on such an issue is because as will be seen in the literature review, the topic of youth in politics is very infrequently studied although it is acknowledged to be an important factor in promoting political stability. For this reason, the aim of this paper is to introduce and highlight youth as a source for political and social development by focusing on the capacity development of young people. This is important because as mentioned in the introduction, youth are the power and leaders of the future. For this reason, this paper will try to understand and examine the situation of youth from empowerment theory as it draws attention towards the powerless in a community using two important pillars; the individual (youth) and the collective or in our case the organizational/institutional (UNDP). Hence, the aim of the thesis will serve as a coherent way in concluding the assumption: if youth are empowered as actors of social change then political instability will decrease in Lebanon. Thus, if the analysis will show that youth are inspired and benefiting from such programs then the thesis will conclude that youth ought to be considered as resources for political development because theoretically and empirically, it is believed that youth are capable of change.

However, to better understand the relevance of this topic in Political Science, the next section will discuss to what perspectives in the field it relates to.

1.3 Relevance of Topic
This topic draws attention to a group which will hold the power in the decision-making process in the future. It adds knowledge to two perspectives in the field of Political and Social Science which targets global politics and societal change. This is because the topic falls within two categories: political representation, as it discusses the importance of youth in the political stability of the nation and the role they play as agents of change; and security, as it raises the issue of development as means for security in Lebanon. This topic also adds an emphasis on the
work of the UNDP as an international UN institution in promoting change through youth empowerment. Hence, the importance of this study is that it evaluates the impact of youth-led social change initiatives on society and how it can improve political instability by introducing and drawing on empowerment theory.

Moving further, the next section will discuss the outline and structure of this thesis.

1.4. Thesis Outline
The rest of the thesis is structured in the following way; in the “Literature Review and Theoretical Framework” I will first discuss how existing research of relevance have been conducted and what theory exhibits stronger explanatory power in the context of this study. Accordingly, it will be divided into subsections drawing on different categories that will be used in the analysis. This section will also thematically outline the importance of empowerment theory in the field of political science and how it relates to youth in order to further build on during the methodology. After, I will present what methodology and method I will be using in the chapter called “Methodology and Method” in order to conduct this research. This chapter will also underline the delimitations of this study. In the chapter of “Analysis”, the actual research will be conducted by outlining coherent arguments and discussing the findings as well as conclusion in the last chapter referred to as “Final Conclusion”.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework
This section will be divided chronologically based on empowerment theory that will constitute the three categories of the literature review and the analysis. Hence, the section will start by assessing the literature that discuss empowerment theory in relation to youth and political science. From there, the thesis will develop the two interrelated categories that will guide the analysis and methods. The first category is individual empowerment through social integration which will outline literature that discuss the importance of self-worth when examining youth in relation to social and political change. While the second category which is collective empowerment and organizational functioning will look deeper into the role of institutions and organizations in constituting a platform for youth development. All the sections will relate to the
case chosen, Lebanon, as it acts as an empirical example in understanding the importance of youth in an unstable political country.

2.1 Bridging the Understanding of Empowerment Theory and Youth to Political Science

The origins of “empowerment” as a theory in general is traced back to the Brazilian humanitarian and educator Freire (1973), who suggested a plan for liberating the oppressed through education. Empowerment was most commonly linked with alternative approaches to psychological or social development and the apprehension for local, grassroots community-based movements and initiatives (Parpart, Rai, & Staudt, 2003). It was not until the late 1980s that empowerment emerged in its modern form through various initiatives following political context (Wilkinson, 1998:41). From this, the theory of empowerment has become widely used in a variety of disciplines, such as community psychology, management, political theory, social work, education, women studies, and sociology (Lincoln et al., 2002). Empowerment as a construct is linked to individual strengths and competencies to social policy and social change. Hence, empowerment theory, research, and intervention link individual well-being with the larger social and political environment (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995:569). Theoretically, the construct connects rational well-being (individual empowerment) to mutual help (collective empowerment) to the struggle to create a responsible community (Ibid).

Moving deeper, the main scholars of empowerment theory suggest that youth should participate with others to achieve goals and efforts to gain access to resources as a critical understanding of the sociopolitical environment because it is important for the sustainability of the nation (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995:571). Linked to the concept of empowerment is the idea of power. This is because empowerment is closely related to changing power through gaining, expanding, diminishing, and losing (Page and Czuba, 1999). Traditionally, in politics, power was understood as an isolated entity and zero sum, as it is usually processed at the expense of others (Lips, 1991 and Weber, 1946). Nevertheless, through time, power has been understood as shared because it can strengthen a nation and community while being shared with others (Kreisberg, 1992). Applying this framework to an organizational level of analysis proposes that empowerment contains organizational processes and structures that enhance member participation and improve goal achievement (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995:571). While on the community level,
empowerment refers to the collective action to improve the quality of life through self and collective realization (Ibid).

Looking into the process of empowerment in the field of Political Science, scholars have referred to this theory while examining topics such as; learning, joining, and mobilizing (Weissberg, 1999). Scholars have also referred to empowerment theory while examining the strength of representational links, how to foster positive attitudes, and encourage political participation (Banducci, Donovan & Karp, 2004). As well as, strengthening intellectual capabilities, coping with difficulties and problems, and engaging in politics (de-Shalit, 2004). Such scholars worked on the premise that individual, decision-making, social, or political conflicts exists and are ongoing at the very first step of empowerment. For this reason, empowerment theory in political and social science goes a step further by letting the disadvantaged learn about social inequality, and from this grow their power within their inner systems (Weissberg 1999 and Parpart et al., 2003).

Having once gained a consciousness of their limited power and the potential for change, others will join their movement and mobilize in collective action (Friedmann, 1992; Weissberg, 1999). Hence, power grows through mobilizing such collective action or sharing power with others such as in our case the shared power of the UNDP and youth towards political stability in Lebanon.

Connecting this to youth, the typological approach to studying empowerment has been a useful tool in understanding the oppressed, disadvantaged, the aged, and the young to enable them and use their capabilities and power more effectively in society (Siim, 2004:5). Hence, empowerment theory is argued to merge political science and psychology because it helps clarify what a sense of political practicality individuals can have, and why it is important for self-development and democratic institutions (Beaumont, 2011:217). As such, empowerment theory is believed to be measured using two interrelated components; the individual and the collective. Thus, it directly addresses the interactional components referred to young people’s understanding of their community and sociopolitical issues (Zimmerman, 2000:44).

To sum-up what have been discussed and to better understand the relations of the issue at hand and empowerment theory, table 1 below illustrates the two respective components that will be used in the methods and analysis of this paper. Drawing on the above-mentioned and
empowerment theory in Political Science, the table also illustrates factors leading to individual and collective empowerment in a society that will be the basis of category one and two shaping the literature review. It is important to note that to ensure a good quality of research, academics in the field of Political Science ought to consider all the components relevant to personal and collective empowerment in every individual stage of empowerment (Hur, 2006:535). Hence, to clarify table 1, the components of individual empowerment should be considered when the main concern is with individual empowerment and collective empowerment should be reviewed when addressing shared power. However, both components are inseparable in practice as the goal of individual empowerment should be consistent with that of the collective to avoid empowerment traps (Ibid). This will be further developed in the methodology section next.

Table 1: Typology and Components of Empowerment to Reduce Political Instability. Author’s own classification based on De-Shalit, 2004; Banducci, Donovan & Karp, 2004; Hur, 2006:535.

From this section, it is evident that one assumes two categories connected to the theory. The first category, which is also the next subsection, individual empowerment and social integration while the second category is collective empowerment and organizational functioning. For this
reason, the rest of the literature review will be divided into those two categories that will be the basis for the analysis and methodology sections as well.

2.2 Individual Empowerment Through Social Integration

Scholars have raised concern about political instability and its effect on social development in the literature of political science through the perspective of political socialization process of youth (McDevitt and Chaffee, 2002 and Torney-Purta, 2004). With the implementation of agendas to promote social change such as the MDGs, the SDGs, and Security Council Resolutions 2250 and 2282, a potential important growth along these lines has been the growing body of literature in social and political science surrounding the concept of sustainable community development (Bridger, 1999:377 and Clarke et al, 2015:53). However, there is still a lack of research that discusses and evaluates the impact of youth-led social change initiatives on society and how it can improve political instability. This is because there are little agreements on what actions fall within the definition of community development although international institutions, federal governments and grassroots groups all claim to be agents of community development (Tommey, 2009:182).

Since within empowerment theory there is a clear distinction between individual empowerment and community empowerment, it is first important to understand the community as a natural phenomenon of interaction among all people according to Bridger (1999:382). Consequently, Wilkinson (1970) which has influenced the literature of youth in politics to a large extent, claim that it is important for youth to engage in social relationships with adults on a continuing basis as they derive their social being and identities from social interaction. Referring the case to empirical evidence, it has been argued that youth exclusion has become a popular explanation for current political instability in the Arab world and for recruitment to international terrorist networks (Urdal, 2006:208).

Hence, scholars have argued that the best way to reduce such tensions is through individual empowerment and social integration using self-determination, by acknowledging the decision-making ability, competence promotion, and critical consciousness (Freire, 1973 and Dudgeon et al, 2017). This is because it is considered the sociopolitical educative tool that engages learners
in questioning the nature of their historical and social situation, development cultivation, advocacy and consciousness raising (Ibid). Such words are most frequently reported in the literature and considered as means for understanding individual empowerment. To further address the literature found in the Lebanese context, Salam, a well-known Lebanese diplomat, jurist, and academic argue that social mixing strengthens trends of youth and change which will later be displayed among elite of a society, including the political elite (2004:218).

From this, one can argue that it is important for youth social community involvement to decrease political instability and for youth to be able to recognize their ability as part of the Lebanese society which is at the forefront of this paper.

Drawing on this, the next section will further outline the literature that discuss the relation of collective empowerment and organizational functioning.

2.3 Collective Empowerment and Organizational Functioning

Evans underlines that it is difficult for youth to contribute to social change because they usually have no voice or influence as they are believed to be unequipped and under supported to participate fully and feel like they are making meaningful influence on society (2007:693). On the other hand, Jennings et al. argue that efforts to support youth development and integration into the community have experienced several shifts the past few decades due to youth development and capacity building through active community practice and organizational agendas (2006:32). This has influenced the social, economic, and political context in improving equality and equity of life (Ibid).

Furthermore, some scholars suggest that the drive to integrate with society is a developmental need for youth because it will influence their political views and develop their identity (Flanagan et al., 1998 and Flanagan and Tucker, 1999). For this reason, Sukarieh and Tannock believe that instead of viewing youth as raging hormones, stress, and problem behavior, it is important to look at the “sunny side”, their agency, insights, capabilities and contributors to change. If the community interpret youth as such it is believed that they will be of valuable resources and assets to their own community (2011:676). Referring to the case of Lebanon, it has been argued that different political actors have focused on youth programs with the aim to preserve and eliminate
sectarian differences and thus reduce political instability and increase acceptance (Nagel and Staeheli, 2015:233). Hence, youth have been described as the “strongest advocates for positive change in their societies” (Ibid).

However, to recognize youth as sharing the same power as institutions in the country, some scholars have underlined the importance of collective actions towards empowerment. One of such scholars is Beaumont which also analyzes the importance of leadership programs in developing the social and political knowledge of youth (2011:220). She underlines that such programs promote learning mechanisms involved in engaging in political discourse (Ibid).

Leadership programs also supply youth with knowledge about institutions such as the UNDP, agencies, interest groups, and public opinion on various political and social issues in a given country (Ibid). Hence, it is believed that youth will understand and be motivated about what needs to be targeted to achieve social change and political stability. For this reason, empowerment theory in the literature of political science has mostly been argued as an attitudinal, structural, and cultural process where youth gain the ability, authority and confidence to take stand and implement social change through inclusion (Tommey, 2009). This in the context of Lebanon is explained as; “youth culture” which is at the heart of change as it brings new forms of civic, religious, political, and social involvement that would then come to constitute alternative to the stereotyped activities of adults (Salam, 2004:218).

As such, the aim of this paper is to outline this change and investigate what youth in Lebanon feel about social and political change by examining the individual and collective empowerment process. For this reason, the next section of this thesis will sketch how this will be done in practice.

3. Methodology and Methods
This chapter will discuss the methodological choices, methods used, and how relevant data was gathered. As this thesis will be using a qualitative content analysis, this section will also present the categories of interests and the coding schema that will be used to the identified materials. This thesis aims at addressing youth as an important factor to decreasing political instability in Lebanon presenting and examining the extent to which they feel empowered to do so by a
specific UN institution: the UNDP in relation to empowerment theory. The aim of this thesis is twofold: it will first apply empowerment theory as means of measuring how youth feel in Lebanon and then examine to what extent the UNDP is an important factor in recognizing youth as agents of change through empirical evidence using an already conducted report about the sociopolitical situation of youth in Lebanon.

3.1 Data Collection and Material Chosen: Semi-Structured Interviews and UNDP Report

This section will outline how relevant data was collected and why they serve as an eligible resource in studying the research question; to what extent are Lebanese youth feeling empowered by the UNDP for creating social change and reducing political instability in Lebanon? It will be divided into subsections to better understand each step of the data collection and its relevance. The thesis will first start by outlining semi-structured interviews as a way to collect opinion-oriented information from both youth and the youth focal point and program officer of the project at UNDP. The next subsection will discuss the report chosen to give empirical evidence of the situation at hand and its importance in creating a triangulation.

3.1.1 Semi-structured Interviews

In between the focused and structured methods sits one that utilize techniques from both. This technique is called semi-structured interviews (May, 2011:134). A semi-structured interview represents an opening up of the interview method to an understanding of how interviewees generate and deploy meaning in social life (Ibid). Semi-structured interviews generally involve a small number of interviews in which the interviewer uses a combination of structured questions with the aim of obtaining factual information and unstructured questions in order to examine deeper into people’s experiences (Halperin and Heath, 2012:258). Given the aforementioned, this thesis will conduct semi-structured interviews. The first set of interviews will be conducted with youth who participated in an empowering program organized and funded by UNDP Lebanon to give insight on how to become active agents of social change. The program chosen is the “Youth Leadership Program (YLP)”. This set of interviews is important because it can help understand youth’s perception, feelings, opinions, experience, engagement, personal improvements, and behaviors which will then be related to individual empowerment referred to
the typology of empowerment. Approximately 6 interviews will be conducted with youth who have participated in the YLP within UNDP Beirut.

The next interview will be conducted with the Youth Focal Point and Program Officer at UNDP Lebanon to understand and get better insight on UNDP’s engagement, improvement, and behavior in empowering youth towards social change. This given information will be related to the collective empowerment from the theory at hand. This is important because UNDP recognizes the involvement of young men and women in participatory decision-making and development processes as vital to achieving sustainable human development (UNDP).

Semi-structured interviews are important because the researcher has a list of questions of fairly specific topics to be covered which is referred to as an interview guide, while the interviewee has a great deal of flexibility in how to reply (Bryman, 2012:471). However, to conduct such interviews, it is important to acknowledge the role the researcher plays. For this reason, the next part of this thesis will discuss that.

3.1.2 Role of The Researcher
As this study is strictly qualitative using semi-structured interviews as a data-collection method, the role of the researcher is of extreme importance. This is because this kind of research is interpretative, and the inquirer is usually involved in a sustained and intensive experience with the participants (Creswell, 2014:187). This introduces a variety of strategic, ethical, and personal issues into the qualitative research process (Ibid). For this reason, it is important for the researcher to underline past experiences with the research problem and participants as it will help the reader understand the connection between the researcher and the study (Creswell, 2014:188). The researcher participated in the program intended to study namely; “The Youth Leadership Program” with the UNDP. The researcher has also collaborated with the participants through various events under the UNDP. As such, the researcher is believed to have a close relationship with the participants and with the youth focal point as she was the supervisor during the program completed last year. These experiences shape the interpretations and the questions of the interviews as the experiences may cause the researcher to actively look for evidence based on a better understanding of the participants perceptions, feelings, opinions, experiences, understandings, values, beliefs, attitudes, emotions, behavior, formal and informal roles, and
relationships (Halperin and Heath, 2012:17). For this reason, it is believed that the investigator’s contribution to the research setting can be useful and positive rather than detrimental (Creswell, 2014:207). Hence, the researcher believes that this understanding of the context and role enhances awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity to the participants. Particular attention will be given to certain biases to this study as every effort will be made to ensure objectivity. The researcher commences this study with the perspective that the program has changed over the year. Though expectations are immense, the researcher question how much power UNDP has to initiate change and provide leadership and vision for youth.

Understanding the boundaries of this study and the choices made by the researcher, the next section will discuss its delimitations.

3.1.3 Delimitations
As this study is relatively rare in the field of political science, this thesis does not seek to give an absolute and objective answer to the research question at hand. Instead, it will give an insight on the situation for it to be used in more research later. Unlike previous research, this thesis aims at proving that empowering youth towards social change might be a way to decrease political instability in Lebanon. The thesis focuses on youth as a factor of political stability because they bring new ideas to the table and it provides the reader with a new perspective. Examining youth from the perspective of the UNDP was chosen because as a development program this UN organ aims at empowering all citizens of a country to become resilient and capable of change and hence decreasing political instability. Thus, using Lebanon as a case study, this thesis analyses the extent to which youth are empowered by the UNDP towards social change as the paradigm that reinforces youth in current politics. The intention of this thesis is showing that to reach social change, one should emphasize the importance of shared power and encouragement to protect a politically unstable country. This underlines the importance of all individuals in politics. Hence, the aim and purpose of this thesis is to underline a forgotten part of citizens that could be of benefit to a corrupt country when they are acknowledged of their power.

Unlike the literature found within this topic, this paper looks at the “is it possible” and “to what degree” instead of the “how” youth should be viewed as a source of power for a politically unstable country. Hence, this study compliments previous research and adds new questions to
the table. Further, I choose to focus on youth from the age of the 20-28 because of to the program requirements and rather than the citizens as a whole to make explicit the importance of their capabilities which establishes plausibility and coherence of the argument. Additionally, this thesis does not argue that only youth should be viewed as potential factors to decrease political instability nor that all youth are benefiting from UNDP programs. Rather, this paper agrees with empowerment theory that it is important to work collectively with the marginalized (youth) to build a better community which this thesis will examine during its content analysis of semi-structured interviews and UNDP report 2016.

Further, due to the limited material found on the topic, I have decided to conduct semi-structured interviews as means of method collection to complement the only report found on the sociopolitical situation on youth in the UNDP spotlight on youth report (2016). Also, as mentioned, the recording unit of the content analysis will be based on a single word in which the interviews and document will be studied thematically and in their entirely. Thus, deciding to analyze this data will give the study more depth and a better start for further research which could be based on purely documents and reports. Hence, it is believed that the data collected will give an insight on the experience of youth after undergoing a program by the UNDP to examine to what extent they are now capable of sociopolitical change of the Lebanese community. Hence, the data chosen is believed to aid this study since it will generate more knowledge for further research empirically and theoretically.

To better understand how this study was formed, the next subsection will outline the parameters of this thesis through explaining the process, insight, and ethical considerations deliberated.

3.1.4 Bounding the Study
This section will give insight on how, which process, and ethical consideration were considered to conduct the semi-structured interviews.

1) Setting

The interviews were conducted via phone as it enables the researcher to gather information rapidly. Telephone interviews also allows the researchers wide geographical access due to the distance and travel expenses from Sweden to Lebanon. Such interviews also allow for personal
contact between the interviewer and the respondent as they permit follow-up questions. They also support longer questionnaires though not as well as face-to-face interviewing (Halperin and Heath, 2011:255). It is also believed that asking sensitive questions by telephone is more effective because the interviewer is not physically present (Bryman, 2012:488). However, certain issues about telephone interviewing in qualitative research was borne in mind. First, it is much easier for the interviewee to terminate a telephone interview than one conducted in person. Second, it is not possible to detect body language to see how interviewees respond and make sense physically to the questions asked. Body language is important because the interviewer will be more aware of the discomfort or confusion (Bryman, 2012:488).

2) Actors

The informants of this study are 6 youth who participated in the YLP. All youth are between the age of 20-28. Another informant is the youth focal point as she is believed to deliver information from an institutional and professional perspective that will be related to collective empowerment. To better understand the background of the participants, tables 2a and 2b below illustrate their age, educational background, and profession. The researcher decided to focus on these three categories because the study aims to prove that youth in Lebanon that are highly educated should be seen as a benefit for the Lebanese political stability and social change. Educational background is also important in the theory of empowerment as it exhibits a strong focus on the need of eligible education to understand social processes. As such they ought to be empowered, both individually and collectively. For simplicity, youth participants will be referred to as number i.e.: Participants one = P1 and the UNDP Youth Focal Point will be referred to as; YFP.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth Participants</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Educational Background</th>
<th>Profession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>23 years old</td>
<td>BA: Electrical and Computer Engineer</td>
<td>Junior marketing performance specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>25 years old</td>
<td>BA: Advertising and Marketing</td>
<td>Awareness Officer and Rural Development Expert</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BA: Marketing and Communication MA: NGO Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>20 years old</td>
<td>BA: Computer and Communications Engineer (Ongoing)</td>
<td>IT Technical Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>28 years old</td>
<td>MA Degree (Ongoing)</td>
<td>Associate Operations Support Officer with a UN Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>28 years old</td>
<td>BA: Chemical Engineering MA: Economic and Policies of Energy and the Environment</td>
<td>Head of Technical Department Public Procurement Authority (Central Government)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>24 years old</td>
<td>BA: International Affairs and Diplomacy</td>
<td>Project Assistant at a local NGO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2a: Youth participants relevant background information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNDP Participant</th>
<th>Educational Background</th>
<th>Profession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YFP</td>
<td>BA: Banking, Finance and Economics Master’s in Business Administration (MBA) Doctor in Business Administration (DBA)</td>
<td>Youth Focal Point and Program Officer at UNDP Beirut (Since April 2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2b: Representative of UNDP participant relevant background information

3) Focus

The emphasis of this study is the experience and knowledge gained of such programs from two perspectives; the individual and the institutional. The researcher specifically focuses on the perceptions and meaning attached to those experiences as expressed by the informants. This includes the integration of both actors or information and make sense of such integrations and interactions in the context of social change and political development.
4) Processes

Particular attention is paid to the role of the UNDP in initiating change, relationship building, decision making, leadership and vision while addressing the collection boundaries of the data.

5) Ethical Considerations

Since the researcher is based in Sweden, ethical considerations and guidelines is considered based on the Swedish Research Council (Hermerén, 2011). Accordingly, the first ethical code in conducting interviews is informed consent. In this step, the research subjects choose if they wish to participate in the given research study. To attain a consent, it is important to encompass three elements; 1) capacity; the ability to obtain or recollect knowledge, and the authority, or legal qualification, to perform an act. 2) Information; making sure the subjects are informed, and they understand, the purpose of the study and their roles as subjects. 3) Voluntariness; the subjects have the choice and freewill to participate and/or withdraw at any time of the study. No element of force, deception, dishonesty, pressure, concealed information will be used as the subjects will be informed about the study and the decisions taken (Hermerén, 2011:18). Second, it is of extreme importance not to harm the subjects. Psychological stress, personal embarrassment, and humiliation will be avoided at all costs. This is because the dignity of the subjects is of major concern for the researcher as any area of research can cause harm if not carefully planned and supervised. While conducting the interviews, the researcher will pay particular attention to the risk of social and psychological harm due to the effects of socialization processes. This will be done by keeping in mind the question of how much is too much? Third, privacy will be the number one concern. This is because the subjects have the right to be fully anonymous to protect his/her information. As such the information will be used in the study and violations of privacy may result in harm (Hermerén, 2011:32). Fourth, the risk of deception will also be considered as well. The researcher will not mispresent any facts related to the purpose or consequences of the study. If at any time of the study the subjects are misrepresented, then the researcher does not have a full consent and the researcher is morally doing wrong (Hermerén, 2011:90).
Given the important steps of a semi-structured interviews as collecting data, the next section will move deeper into discussing empirical evidence from the UNDP youth report published in 2016 as an important tool for analysis.

3.1.5 Spotlight on Youth – UNDP Report 2016
This report is of essential importance in this study to connect between interviews and empirical evidence that has been done on the case. This report is the recent report found that discuss the importance to view Lebanese youth as a useful source in human development by underlining that youth exclusion is a factor contributing to internal friction and social dysfunction (UNDP, 2015:13). Hence, this report will underline empirical evidence concerning the socio-political situation in Lebanon in relation to youth and how they could be tremendous potential to advance the country. Thus, it is believed that this report will connect the interviews by giving an actual image of the situation at hand as it aims to promote the de-politicization of youth by shifting political energies away from ‘sectarian politics’ and toward pragmatic problem-solving.

Combining interviews and empirical research will also produce a triangulation in qualitative research which will give a more accurate interpretation in the analysis and findings of this paper (Taylor et al., 2015:133). This report will be used as solid evidence of the situation of youth in Lebanon. It will give a direct insight of the severity of the situation in Lebanon when youth are marginalized and excluded. The interviews will provide personal details about how and to what extent UNDP programs are effective in given a push to young individuals to change the social and political situation in Lebanon.

Hence, creating this triangulation technique will be used as a way of checking out insights collected from the different informants. As such, this paper will gain a deeper and clearer understanding of the setting and people studied (Taylor et al, 2015:95). This will be done at the findings of this study. Figure 1 below sketches how this will be done.
3.2 Case Selection: Lebanon

This paper will focus on a single case study: Lebanon. The great advantage of focusing on a single case is that it can be intensively examined. It also tends to supply the thesis with a detailed analysis of political phenomena with rich textual description (Halperin and Heath, 2012:205). For this reason, it does not tend to operate at a high level of theoretical abstraction and hence, there is a good match between theory and evidence (Ibid). On the other hand, a single case study in Political Science is also argued to be subjective, giving too much opportunity for the researcher’s own interpretations (Flyvbjerg, 2006:219). However, little research has been done on the topic at hand and thus a single case study here acts as the preliminary stages of an investigation to generate claims and assumptions (Ibid).

The motive for choosing Lebanon as the main case, although this topic should be realized in many countries specifically in the Arab region, is because youth-oriented initiatives in Lebanon serve to assemble and normalize certain citizenship ideals. Such ideals are of essential importance to achieving democracy, global consciousness, tolerance of diversity, and acceptance of individual responsibility by immersing sectarian-based political differences among Lebanese youth, NGOs, and IGOs to create a unified and stable nation because it is a developing country known for its political instability after the civil war (Nagel and Staeheli, 2015:225). For this reason, Lebanon tend to serve as an eligible example in examining the independent and dependent variables of this study; independent variable, call it “X” is youth empowerment whereas our dependent variable is what we are trying to measure which is political stability by social change, call it “Y”.

![Triangulation Diagram](image-url)
It is also important to note that choosing Lebanon as a country of reference is useful because elections are to take place in May 2018 and the ultimate and sovereign political power exist in the hands of the people of the given country such as youth. However, according to an Oxfam report (2016), after the civil war, a temporary setback has occurred to Lebanese youth but it did not reduce the enthusiasm, initiative and resourcefulness of the young people of Lebanon. Hence, it is believed that Lebanese youth are indeed powerful agents of change and truly hold the future to a very large extent.

However, and in general, youth in Lebanon have not been engaged in elections and political life. This has led the country to be driven by older, corrupted leaders and leading to members of political parties inheriting those political positions (Oxfam, 2016). As such, it has resulted in a negative impact on the Lebanese society in general. For this reason, to encourage youth to make a change in the political instability of Lebanon, several measures must be taken such as encouraging them both individually and collectively to acknowledge their worth in society to build socio-political change.

Given the aforementioned, it is now time to discuss how the data will be analysed. For this reason, the next section will outline the relevant coding schema drawing on the theory and literature review with respect to qualitative content analysis.

3.3 The Method of Qualitative Content Analysis and Relevant Coding Schema
It is important to keep in mind that it is easy to write up individual stories as thick local qualitative descriptions without revealing the webs of power that connect institutional and individual lives to larger social formation because the data of this thesis is based on semi-structured interviews to a very large extent (Galletta, 2013:149). For this reason, the researcher has a responsibility to make visible the strings that attach political and moral conditions with individual lives (Ibid). In order to expose this structure of meaning, motive and purpose embedded within the data chosen, this paper will utilize content analysis to conclude meaning of interests to the researcher (Weber, 1990:72). As such, content analysis is a well-defined activity in which the researcher examines artifacts of social communication (Lamont, 2015:89). To practically conduct content analysis and reveal the web of power, it is important to define categories of interests as they are
the most important tools in content analysis because they define what is to be analyzed. The categories chosen are predefined as they draw on the literature review and theoretical framework of this paper. Presented in table 3 are the three categories of interest; C1: Social Integration, C2: Organizational Functioning, C3: Social and Political Change. Each of these categories present their own specific discourse when measuring individual and collective empowerment, the referent object, and the actions that result. For this reason, each category will have specific code lists. The recoding unit used in this content-analytical study will be single word; the smallest unit that is used in content analysis research and is suitable when studying the use of language (Halperin and Heath, 2012:321). This is because the paper aims at looking for social and political change indicators. Hence, I intend to study the transcriptions of the interviews and the indicated report in their entirety.

To do so, it is of major importance that the paper follows a relevant coding schema. Coding in Political Science contains identifications of applicable text and applying labels to them with the aim of representing examples of thematic ideas. This allows the researcher to collect all relevant text associated with some thematic idea for it to be examined together (Halperin and Heath, 2012:323). To start, the line to coding in this research will be “closed coding” which is based on previous research or theory and the research question that this paper is addressing (Halperin and Heath, 2012:323). Hence, the coding process will follow “this indicates this”. For example; if in the interview the participants answered; “they are capable of competence promotion through active participation in social change and integration”, it will be coded as “competence promotion” and placed under C1: Social Integration. Hence, competence promotion represents social integration according to the theoretical framework and literature review of this paper.

The process of coding will be done manually for transparency reasons. I will first record and take notes of the phone interviews and then transcribe them. During that time the report will be read to manually write down concept occurrences from the reports and interviews. Using different coloured highlighters, I will mark the text to indicate different meanings. Later, I will spot the boundaries of the recording unit and write the code in the margins of the given document, using different coloured pens for C1, C2, and C3 (table 3 indicates which colours will be used to respective categories). Next, the text fragments that are coded the same way will be placed into
one of the three categories designated. Lastly, I will use the triangulation technique (figure 1) to examine to what extent are Lebanese youth feeling empowered by the UNDP for creating social change and reducing political instability in Lebanon?

Hence, the analysis will be based on presenting the paragraphs and words that indicate categories of interest. From there, the analysis will be cut down and each group of interviews and the UNDP report will be compared and explained in relation to the three categories indicated in the coding scheme. Table 3 (on the next page) shows each category and words that represent them based on the literature review and theory of this paper.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C1: Social Integration  (Individual Empowerment)</th>
<th>C2: Organizational Functioning  (Collective Empowerment)</th>
<th>C3: Social/Political Change  (Actions – What has been done?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-determination:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Social Cohesion:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Strengthening representation skills:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Group cohesiveness</td>
<td>Acknowledge social inequalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reliance</td>
<td>Shared well-being</td>
<td>Encouraging political participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Engaging in sociopolitical change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualification</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision-making ability:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Community engagement:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Collective activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing</td>
<td>Permanent relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Collective vision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership ability</td>
<td>Collective decision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shared power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competence Promotion:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Leadership Competence:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capability</td>
<td>Community Influence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise</td>
<td>Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>Action takers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Consciousness:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Political Control:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociopolitical education</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social situation</td>
<td>Sociopolitical issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Community Belonging:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement</td>
<td>Connection to other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement</td>
<td>Attachment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>Valued</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advocacy:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Intellectual understanding of power and social change:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaigning</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Assistance</td>
<td>Network society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>Social knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Support:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Potential of change</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Priori codes based on Literature Review and Theory.
Table 3 shows the codes of interest and their respective themes. The questions of the interviews will be targeted towards such themes to make it easier for the researcher to code and form a conclusion. For this reason, this table will function as a guide for the analysis and findings of this thesis by continual reference. This is because the main reason for building this table was to merge between empowerment theory and the literature review. As such, the next part of this thesis will be the analysis of the above-mentioned materials by means of table 3.

4. Analysis
This chapter analyses the material chosen. The aim of this analysis is to show that the three categories deduced from the literature review and theory could be seen between the lines of the report and interviews conducted. The relation of the theory in the analysis is believed to be through the realization of the two categories: individual empowerment and collective empowerment which also act as the typology as seen in table 1. I will be using the triangulation technique to frequently check out insights collected from the different informants in relation to the report chosen. To do so, this chapter will be divided into three main sections based on the materials. The first section will discuss and analyze the report; spotlight on youth published 2016. The next section will further investigate the interviews collected from youth. Here, it is important to note that the researcher was able to collect six interviews due to time frame, transcriptions, and coding. The last section will examine and analyze the interview collected from the professional perspective of the UNDP youth focal point and program officer at UNDP Beirut country office. As mentioned before and for simplicity, the participants will be referred to as numbers; i.e.: P1 = Participant one and the youth focal point as YFP. The analysis will be related to the literature review and the theoretical framework to a large extent to emphasize the argument of this thesis. At the end of each section, I will provide a brief conclusion to later provide a detailed finding of the extent to which youth feel that they could be seen as agents for social and political change in Lebanon in relation to the report and interviews.

4.1 UNDP Report: Spotlight on Youth in Lebanon
This section will look deeper at the empirical sociopolitical situation of youth in Lebanon from a UN institutional point of view, namely the United Nations Development Program. It will examine to what extent the three categories could be represented in this document. This is because the
aim of this paper is to show that more empowerment results in social change and political stability.

Before starting the analysis, it is important to mention that the report considers two outlooks; the outlook of professionals as an analysis of the socioeconomic standing of youth (19-29) in Lebanon and the outlook of youth as a method of interviews to approximate the perspective of youth on the issues of social and political instabilities (UNDP, 2016:40). The importance of this document is that it provides the reader with information about community engagement and political participation of youth as it is evident already in the table of content. This is of major importance to this paper as it strongly focuses on such arguments and insights. Moving deeper, this section will be divided into sub-sections based on the three categories deduced from the literature review and theory in order to examine their relation to the interviews conducted. The section will end with a brief conclusion of the report.

4.1.1 Category one: Social Integration and Individual Empowerment
Starting with the document at hand it was very noticeable that the report’s main focus is on empowering youth as source for national security. The first outlook of this report specifically outlined and focused on this aspect in the beginning. This was done by words and phrases such as “[...] whose empowerment is central to the well-being of the nation as a whole”, “[...] youth must be properly supported”, “[...] develop their skills”, “[...] make strategic life choices” (UNDP, 2016: 1-13). Such phrases clearly underline and falls in C1 and specifically competence promotion, development, decision-making ability, and self-determination. The report specifically underlines the importance of youth social integration and individual empowerment by repetitive language. It states several times that Lebanon is experiencing the highest percentage of youth in its history and that youth should be integrated into society by careful policy making (UNDP, 2016:15). Another aspect that this report discusses to a very large extent is education as means for individual empowerment. It specifically mentions that across OECD states, Lebanese are primarily employed in high skilled occupations as professionals and technicians (UNDP, 2016:17). This clearly represent that youth have the ability to use their education as means for social and political stability in Lebanon through self-determination and competence promotion.
Moving to the end of the report, category one was referred to at a minimal extent. This is because the second outlook of this report was taken directly from youth. They mostly focused on “opportunity”, “decision-making”, “active participation”. As such, youth felt that they ought to be heard and the community ought to assist them as they are capable of positive social change. However, this is not possible according to youth as they feel frustrated with the lack of agency in Lebanon (UNDP, 2016:17-46).

Looking deeper into the report, the next subsection will discuss and analyze category two.

4.1.2 Category Two: Organizational Functioning and Collective Empowerment
As this section focuses on the role of organizations, the government, and UN institutions in promoting a collective empowerment towards social and political change in Lebanon, this category was mostly seen and represented in the report from both outlooks. One interesting aspect of political instability that the report focuses on in this category is migration. It discusses migration and brain drain to a very large extent as a main factor contributing to social and political instability in Lebanon with words and phrases such as;

“[…] emigrants are frequently highly educated” (UNDP, 2016:17).

The report also demonstrates an entire section called pull and push factors which states that the major push factor of Lebanese youth being attracted to emigration is political instability (Ibid). As such, it is of major importance to use collective empowerment as means of social cohesion, leadership competence, and group support as a way to attract educated youth to stay in Lebanon and build their community both socially and politically. If this does not happen, the report underlines that:

“[…] socially excluded youth serve as a catalyzing factor to national instability” (UNDP, 2016:15).

Relating to category two, specifically political control and leadership competence, the report specifically reads;

“[…] their perspectives can supply innovative approaches to old problems and push political and social systems to adapt and evolve” (UNDP, 2016:11).
Thus, once again, the report emphasizes the importance of political control as means of participation, community engagement, and shared power.

Moving further to outlook two which is focused on the perspective of youth, it is important to highlight section 6b which discusses community engagement as a form of community and identity belonging (UNDP, 2016:45). Again, the report states that highly educated youth were more likely to engage in community and social engagement. Relating to group support from table two, it also examines youth community engagement through volunteering by specifically mentioning that youth who follow the news are more likely to be involved in volunteering (UNDP, 2016:46). Government initiatives in Lebanon are also encouraging greater youth participation (ibid). Hence, by collective empowerment and social cohesion, it is believed that youth will strengthen the country.

However, to be able to touch upon political instabilities in the country, youth ought to participate in the sociopolitical issues. What was evident in this report, is that youth strongly believe in democracy, but they do not fully participate in the electoral process as they feel that their voice is excluded from these political decisions (UNDP, 2016:48). Though, it is important for youth to take responsibility in pushing their social knowledge politically because as the report mentions;

[…]
youth nonvoters have the potential to benefit the country, because they are on average more supportive of gender equality, secular politics, and national unity” (UNDP, 2016:48).

However,

“Youth do not believe that they can make a difference regarding the most important challenges at the national and communal level” (UNDP, 2016:11).

This strongly relates to category two of the literature review and theory as it believes that youth ought to be action takers, but they need encouragement and power.

Furthermore, this report also supplies the reader with political and social change in Lebanon, which is the basis of analysis for category three. For this reason, the next subsection will present this analysis.
4.1.3 Category Three: Social and Political Change - what has been done? From an Empirical Stance

As most of the information concerning category three is obtained from the interviews, this report did not mention much about this category. However, something evident was noticed at the beginning of the report. It stated clearly category three, as it underlines in the first sentence that during severe regional and national pressure youth are confronted by many of these challenges but has shown an unexpected degree of resilience (UNDP, 2016:9). This relates to category three because it shows that with all difficulties, youth can foster a positive attitude by coping with social and political problems. However, the report also shows that youth feel disenfranchised from the political system which is widely acknowledged to be corrupt (UNDP, 2016:11). This clearly explains the lack of encouragement of political control and change among youth.

Reading further, the report mentions category three and specifically strengthening representation skills as such;

“[...] the skills and experience they acquire as youth will come to have a direct impact in younger generations” (UNDP, 2016:13).

Hence, youth acknowledge social inequalities as their roles are important in developing countries like Lebanon.

This report also gives policy recommendations. It specifically highlights the importance of supporting youth entrepreneurship and strategic sector growth as they will be effective leaders in joining and mobilizing a positive attitude and strengthening their intellectual capabilities as potential of change related to category three. However, what lacked in this report was the deficiency of recommendation on youth political participation and processes keeping in mind the extent to which this report discusses political instability and how youth should be seen as factors to decrease it.

4.1.4 Concluding the UNDP Spotlight on Youth Report

The analysis of this report concluded that C1 was represented to a large extent in outlook one. The focus on this category was mostly on competence promotion, development, self-determination, and decision-making ability which are the basis of empowerment theory, specifically individual empowerment (mentioned in table 1). This category also showed
importance due to the repetitive language used in emphasizing social integration of youth. However, when examining outlook two, C1 was represented to a minimal extent by youth although only “decision-making” was mentioned several times. Hence, both outlooks believe that youth are strong decision-makers and from this can play a big part in managing political instability.

Moving further to C2, the report represented this category to a large extent in both outlooks one and two. It specifically placed focus on political control and community engagement and belonging. One important perspective that this report raised is emigration of educated youth. This clearly shows that collective empowerment as social cohesion, leadership, and support is important to attract youth to stay and build the future of political stability Lebanon. For this reason, it is believed that youth ought to feel that they belong to their community.

Finally, this report strongly underlines political participation and the importance of empowering youth to be action takers because they are the generation that believe in national unity, gender equality, and secular politics.

Lastly, C3 was represented to a minimal extent. What was evident in this category is that the report highlights in the policy recommendation the importance of youth entrepreneurship and strategic growth so that they can become leaders and mobilizers but fail to mention a recommendation about youth in political participation and process. This is the case although this section showed that youth are fostering a positive attitude by coping with social and political instabilities.

4.2 Interviews with Youth (20-28)

Now that the paper has analyzed the empirical data, it is time to look closer at the opinion collected data from youth participants in the YLP. A total of six interviews were conducted. The interviews will be related to the report already analyzed to be able to form a better understanding and a triangulation at the findings of this study. The section will also be divided based on the three categories constituted from the theory, found in table 3 above. Before starting with the analysis of each category, it is important to highlight a similarity found among all interviews: words such as “awareness”, “advocacy”, “networking”, “capacity building”, and
“sustainability” were very repetitive. Mostly all participants used such words to explain the program and the work of the UNDP. Moving deeper, the thesis will continue by looking at each category. Another important aspect found with two interviews (P5 and P4) is the relation youth used to describe their situation as “valuable” by relating themselves and their voices to the refugees present in Lebanon. This is related to the report which mentioned that the main cause of political instability is the need to brain drain. Hence, if youth are somehow feeling that they are like refugees it might mean that they feel the urge to migrate because of the political instability. However, before assuming this negative perspective as the main cause of political instability it is time to outline what was found relating to the three categories found in table 3 deduced from the literature review and theory.

4.2.1 Category one: Social Integration and Individual Empowerment

Within category one, the majority referred to self-determination when discussing question three using words such as “much stronger”, “no longer useless”, “depend on ourselves”, “independent”, “confident”, “given me a boost”. This indicates that most of the participants are now aware of their ability and qualification of social and political change. Specifically, P4 answered determined;

“I am more confident, and I hold more capacity for social change.” (P4)

In this category, the participants also referred to decision making and advocacy in two perspectives. The first perspective was negative, P1 referred to decision making as;

“[...] the lack of control given to youth” (P1)

Highlighting this, P3 underlined that this lack of control depends on the fact that Lebanese political leaders are “old” and what is required is “new blood” for political change and stability to occur through decision-making. While this is the case, other participants believed that decision making is something every youth should start with individually through simple steps. P4 emphasized;

“I am capable of being in control and take decisions to make change in my community as change can start by a simple action such as raising awareness” (P4)
Here the participant linked decision making with advocacy to achieve individual empowerment and social integration. Moving further, competence promotion, critical consciousness, and development were discovered in the language of the participants as well specifically with P5 and P6 as they feel that they are strongly capable of social and political change through several perspectives.

Another important notion discovered when conducting the analysis is that all participants including the YFP linked social change achieved from the program to political stability indirectly. This was done by P5, P2, P1 as;

“Oh on a political level, I feel that the change becomes an indirect one” (P5)

“Just by being active citizens of change we are contributing to political change” (P2)

“Just by creating ideas and projects targeting social change we are contributing to a better political well-being” (P1)

Hence, referring to individual empowerment of the theory at hand, it is evident that all components found within this construct of the typology of empowerment were seen in the interviews. For this reason, C1 could be seen to a large extent when looking at the themes found in the interviews.

To understand this better, the next section will move deeper to look at the answers related to C2.

4.2.2 Category Two: Collective Empowerment and Organizational Functioning

It was evident that the majority of youth believed that the role institutions and organizations play in empowering them is crucial. For this reason, this category was indicated to a large extent in the language of the responses. Starting with social cohesion (table 3), most youth believed that the program provided them with group cohesiveness and a shared well-being by uniting different religions and opinions. Participants five, three, and six explained this as;

“We are meant to be different, it makes us unique. But that does not mean we are not unified.” (P5)
“When we do not differentiate between each other, we can form unity.” (P3).

“I used to think that each religious background in Lebanon has their own problems but when I met youth like me from different sects I realized that we are all united under one umbrella sharing the same problem; we do not have a voice in political change.” (P6)

For this reason, one could argue that with the help of the UNDP, youth were able to realize the importance of unity and strength they can bring to the political agenda if sectarianism is no longer a choice.

Other youth believed that the UNDP gave them the ability to become active in their own community by collective activities. For example, P2 argued that despite the political instability, it is important for youth to realize the need for change and capacity building.

“I am now able to benefit my community both directly and indirectly by creating job opportunities through the implementation of my project” (P2).

This is related to Urdal (2006) who argued that if young people are left with no alternative but unemployment and poverty, they are increasingly likely to join a rebellion as an alternative way of generating an income. Thus, the YLP and UNDP are shedding light on this perspective by giving youth the resources and ability to create jobs and a better well-being to other less fortunate youth and citizens.

With that said, it is important to mention that through the creation of jobs, unity, and social cohesion, all youth felt that they shared intellectual understanding of power and social change with the UNDP. P5 explained this shared power as “transitive” while P1, P6, P4, and P5 underlined that the power sharing is evident through “UNDP’s open doors and the help received by the coordinator and YFP of the project”. From this, the majority of youth interviewed believe that they are capable of influencing the political situation in Lebanon through various ways. P4 now believe that;

“It is very important for the Lebanese youth and citizens to remove their sect from their identity” (P4).
P5 also mention;

“I do believe that we are in control of political choices. There is no denial that external factors play a major role, but our personal role should not be undermined.” (P5)

While P1 had another perspective;

“I do not think that anyone in Lebanon can contribute to social change and hence affect the political instability because we need to change, mentally, and start looking at a clearer path and solution by removing hate.” (P1)

From this and related to the theory of this thesis, collective empowerment and political representation is highlighted by a shared communication and responsibility to the community that is created through strengthening the capabilities of all citizens.

Not only did the answers highlight category one and two, but youth also explained what has been done which is the highlight of category three.

4.2.3 Category Three: Social and Political change – What has been done? From a Youth Stance

This category also related to the responses of the participants to a fair extent. The most witnessed themes were fostering a positive attitude and strengthening intellectual capabilities which is very strange keeping in mind the major political issues in Lebanon. Particularly, P2, P4 and P5 related to positive attitudes through coping with difficulties of social problem by mentioning;

“The political situation is hard, however, we as youth should see the positive side of it by making sure that we use the situation to our benefit.” (P2)

“Being optimistic should always be accompanied by the power to influence others in order to foster a more positive attitude and work on training more leaders.” (P4)

“Bringing together youth of different political, social, geographical, religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds helps in breaking the major barriers that are constructed by traditional society which in turn feed into the political instability.” (P5)
Hence, the YLP and UNDP as an institution not only worked on the importance of empowering the individual but also on how to see the positive aspect of Lebanon as a country capable of social and political change through uniting youth.

After completing this program, participant 4 learned that;

“Social change is my mission, profession, and lifestyle.” (P4)

As such not only did the UNDP acknowledge the need of empowerment as mentioned in its theoretical framework, but also give them the resources to make it a way of life. Hence, it is believed that youth are realized to benefit the security of the nation by providing them with agency.

4.2.4 Concluding the Interviews with Youth
The interviews showed a perspective that was better than anticipated by the researcher. It was very clear that category one and two were mentioned to a large extent as it was seen in the all the interviews except for P1 that contributed to a somehow negative perspective believing that the political system should be addressed more and thoroughly. Concluding this section, the interviews showed very determined wordings and language by youth such as; “control”, “capacity building”, and “awareness”.

This section showed that category one and two were mentioned to a large extent while category three to a fair extent.

The next section will move deeper and examine the opinion and answers from the youth focal point at UNDP to get a better insight of the situation from a professional and institutional perspective which is also related to outlook one of the report analyzed above.

4.3 Interview with Youth Focal Point at UNDP Beirut
This section of the analysis focuses on category two to a large extent as the aim of this interview was to study the relation UNDP has with youth through the YLP and how/if it is using collective empowerment as means to realize the importance of youth in social and political change. The questions of this interview were focused on the work of the UNDP and the Youth Leadership Program. This is because the paper claims that if youth are empowered as actors of change,
political stability will increase. This interview is of essential importance because it investigates the institutional perspective of the UNDP through the youth focal point which is present at every step of the program. This interview relates to the interviews conducted with the youth because it further emphasizes the notion of collective empowerment which completes individual empowerment according to the theory of this paper.

For simplicity, this section will be divided into two sub-sections, related to C2 and C3 which will discuss and look deeper into the answers of the youth focal point. As this is the case, the next sub-section will analyze the language and content of the interview conducted.

4.3.1 Category two: Collective Empowerment and The Role of UNDP

Before starting, it is important to note that the interviewee emphasized several times the importance of youth as “change makers”. This was done through almost every part and every question of the interview. By emphasizing “change makers”, the participant is trying to underline that this group of the population is of essential importance in the stability of the country by realizing their potential. Another aspect found within the answers is that the participant relates not only to category two; collective empowerment but also to category three as she speaks about actions made by youth and how they have affected the stability of their community. As such, the UNDP looks deeper into the process of their participants and studies their actions and how they have contributed to change.

Moving to the in-depth analysis of this interview, C2 was seen to a large extent in the third question where the YFP gives a very thorough answer. She specifically underlines collective empowerment as means of stability through mentioning words such as “local community influence”, “potential to become effective leaders”. The YFP at UNDP also underlines;

“The youth leadership program also focused on four thematic pillars; social cohesion, good governance, gender equality, and economic empowerment”.

Hence, not only does the program discuss the social and political situation in Lebanon in general but it also underlines the importance of shared well-being and political control through good governance which are clearly placed under C2. Question four was also very much related to C2 specifically group support. The interviewee answered very determined;
“yes, sure!”

This indicates that the UNDP is concerned about further cooperation and shared strategies of implementation. The determination continues further to question five. Something interesting found here is that participant four, one, and six (P4, P1, and P6) and the youth focal point used the same language to express the support given by the UNDP as;

“UNDP’s doors are always open”.

Hence, group support and networking play a major role in empowering youth to seek social and political change in their community according to both youth and UNDP. Another intertwining answer with participant 2 (P2) was the explanation of the program as a “win-win situation” where not only the participants are capable of becoming effective leaders and change makers but the UNDP also “feel proud” about the participants achievements. The importance of group support and intellectual understanding of power and social change as means of collective empowerment was the highlight of this interview as the YFP mentioned words such as “networking”, “communication” and “collaboration” through the full extent of the interview. Further, when asked about political participation specifically question seven, the YFP believed that;

“Youth are not 100% capable of participating politically to change societal issues they face” however, they are capable of identifying and deal with the problem in different and better ways”.

When asked about the “different way”, she mentioned;

“Through working on improving their community, youth are engaging politically without knowing as social change leads to political change as well”.

This underlines the claim of this paper; if social change then political stability. It also agrees with the opinion of youth who were interviewed.

The interviewee also related to C3 to a large extent in her answers. For this reason, the next sub-section will analyze what was said.
4.3.2 Category three: Social and Political Change – What Has Been Done? From YFP Stance

Already through question three, the YFP started talking about what has been done after the program and how youth have strengthened representation skills and become active agents of change. She specifically underlines;

“The YLP has built well-informed young men and women which have learned concepts of tolerance, co-existence, respect, teamwork, and analytical thinking”.

Those concepts all relate to social and political change to a large extent because political stability increases when there is acceptance, tolerance, and respect according to the literature review.

Another aspect mentioned from C3 is fostering positive attitudes. This theme was also very much mentioned by youth as they explained the political situation as something they try to use positively in creating change and sustainable impact in their communities. Hence, it is true that Lebanon suffers from political instability which affects youth however, the UNDP and youth try to solve it through fostering positive attitudes.

Moving further, question six also highlighted C3 because the YFP stated the importance of strengthening intellectual capabilities through making sure that youth acknowledge their inner power by national and international activities and hence, realizing their potential of change. This is also related to P4 as the participant along with the YFP mention how much benefit the ECOSOC experience gave in presenting the sociopolitical problems of Lebanon on an international level. Not only did this experience help shape individual empowerment but also self-determination and capacity building.

To sum-up this interview, the next section will provide a brief conclusion that will aid the paper in its findings.

4.3.3 Concluding the Interview with The Youth Focal Point

As mentioned in the literature review and theory of this thesis, collective empowerment is focused on shared power which build a better community. For this reason, this interview was focused on C2 which was present at a large extent in the answers. This was done through very determined and straight forward answers which emphasize “change makers” and a focus on good governance and social cohesion. The noticeable part of this interview was also that the YFP and
participants exhibited same wordings and language such as “UNDP open doors” and a “win-win” situation. This indicates that youth are receiving collective empowerment according to empowerment theory as the interviewee focused on words such as “cooperation” and “networking” as well.

When further asked about political participation and change through social activities, the YFP underlined that she does not see youth 100% capable of political change directly. However, through the program, youth are now able to identify and deal with political instability in various other ways which means that they have gained a better understanding of the sociopolitical situation in Lebanon.

Surprisingly, C3 was also present to a large extent in this paper as the interviewee mentioned actions taken with relation to social and political change. The highlight of this category was that youth and YFP both agreed that the political instability should not be seen as an obstacle but as a positive attitude to start taking actions of social change. Another important aspect is that the international level was mentioned through the ECOSOC experience in New York where youth were able to make their sociopolitical problems heard on an international level which is the basis of capacity building and self-empowerment of youth.

5. Final Conclusion
This chapter will discuss the final conclusion deduced from the analysis of the report on youth and the interviews conducted by mapping out the findings of the thesis by leading a triangulation practice as described in the methodology section. The aim of a triangulation is to increase the credibility and validity of the results (Amoretti and Gerhard, 2011). After discussing the findings, the thesis will evaluate the strength and softness of this thesis by outlining further research.

5.1 Findings
This section will look at the findings of the report and interviews in relation to the independent and dependent variables of this research.

This thesis asks to what degree and is it possible that youth feel empowered by the UNDP for creating social change and reducing political instability in Lebanon. It focuses on the importance of empowerment theory as traceable in the report: spotlight on youth and the interviews
conducted from the two perspectives of youth and the youth focal point to conclude to what extent youth could be seen as means for political stability. For this reason, this section will start by outlining the findings of this research based on the theoretical categories used in the analysis of this paper and found in table 3.

5.1.1 Individual Empowerment and Social Integration

The focus of category one was made in the report and interviews conducted by youth. This category was also witnessed within the answers of the youth focal point but not as profound because the aim of the YFP interview was to get an institutional perspective focusing on collective empowerment. For this reason, the questions were directed towards answering category two: collective empowerment and organizational functioning. Hence, this section will only address the findings of the report and interviews with youth as relevant.

The report used in this thesis: Spotlight on Youth indicated empirical knowledge of what is required to address sociopolitical change in Lebanon through the perspective of professionals (outlook 1) and youth (outlook 2). This was mainly done by supplying the readers with evidence of the situation at hand and by addressing some problems youth face in the Lebanese community. Through the lens of empowerment theory, the findings of this report show that individual empowerment and social integration (C1) was represented to a large extent in outlook 1 but to a minimal extent in outlook 2. This is because professionals highlighted the need of individual empowerment of youth through realizing their potential as means for social and political change through repetitive language while youth themselves felt like they do not have the “opportunity” and “active participation” to change.

The interviews by youth on the other hand, showed that the UNDP and specifically the Youth Leadership Program gave them that opportunity. The interviews found that 90% of all youth questioned felt that they are “more confident”, “independent”, and “self-determined” to affect the social and political situation in Lebanon as they are now more aware of what must be done. As such, it was evident that all the components of individual empowerment (C1) were found in the interviews.
Concluding the finding of category one in relation to the report and interviews by youth, it is argued that it was found to a large extent.

5.1.2 Collective Empowerment and Organizational Functioning

Starting with the report, it was evident that this category was seen to a large extent as it discusses collective empowerment as means for attracting educated youth to stay in Lebanon and build their community both socially and politically. Focusing on political control, the report also suggests that youth have innovative ways to solve political instability and should be empowered by the Lebanese government to adapt, evolve and vote for change.

As such, the interviews conducted by youth and the youth focal point support this notion as collective empowerment and political representation is highlighted by a shared communication and responsibility to the community by implementing new projects and uniting youth towards political and social change. 100% of answers collected from youth suggested that they feel “more united” and that the UNDP has given them the realization to implement their ideas towards sociopolitical change through “group support”. It was also apparent that many answers from the YFP intertwined with the answers of youth such as “UNDP’s open doors and support”. Hence, all the interviews conducted relates to the report and suggest that through agency, youth will be attracted to their country.

5.1.3 Social and Political Change

The report exhibited characteristics of social and political change as actions taken by youth to a minimal extent as the report mostly focuses on the situation and not what actions has been taken. However, it strongly acknowledges the regional and national pressure youth are confronted by to tackle social change and political instability. Drawing from this, the interviews also supported this notion by giving direct insight of the difficulties youth are confronted by to implement their projects. However, even if it is true that Lebanon suffers from political instability, the UNDP and youth try to solve it through fostering positive attitudes as shown from the interviews conducted by youth and the youth focal point. For this reason, this category is believed to be witnessed to a fair extent because it needs further research. This will be additionally discussed later throughout the evaluation section. However, before moving further, the next section will outline the result in relation to the research question.
5.1.4 Results
Reiterating, this thesis does not aim to give a full objective answer to the research question at hand. However, with the help of the language and the expressions utilized by the interviewees and the report, the research question: to what extent are Lebanese youth feeling empowered by the UNDP for creating social change and reducing political instability in Lebanon? Was answered by showing that youth feel empowered by the UNDP to a large extent as they now feel more “independent” due to the boost given on an individual level (individual empowerment) and the support achieved by the UNDP (collective empowerment). However, the process resulting from this empowerment which is social and political change needs to be more examined as it indicated that most of them started implementing new projects, ideas, and advocacy in their community, but the results are still to be seen. For simplicity, the text below displays each category in relation to the research question deduced from the language of the data.

- Category 1: Individual Empowerment and Social Integration ➔ To a large extent
- Category 2: Collective Empowerment and Organizational Functioning ➔ To a Large extent
- Category 3: Actions – Social and Political Change ➔ To a fair extent

5.2 Evaluation and Further Research
The uniqueness of this thesis is that it studies and gives insight to a topic that ought to be more highlighted in Political Science. The strength of this thesis is in its theoretical framework as it was capable of linking psychology to political science to understand the need to realize youth as active agents of change in a developing state.

Thus, the research was capable of providing a thick description of the security issue and political representation at hand which is the lack of viewing youth a beneficial resource for social and political change. Unlike previous research, this thesis was able to identify a new theoretical perspective to study a given sociopolitical issue as it mapped out and studied the two components of empowerment theory in relation to a UNDP program targeting youth through content analysis of a UNDP report and direct insights from interviews. This provided an understanding to the situation at hand emphasizing a topic that seems to be forgotten in the field of Political Science: the need to realize youth as capable of sociopolitical change in Lebanon.
Given the timeframe of the thesis, this research would have benefited more from an in-depth analysis of more interviews from a larger scale of youth. As well as a more from an in-depth analysis of the situation of youth and political stability through conducting a rich analysis of the post-election situation and examining what youth thought about their capabilities and voices being heard or not. This is believed to aid and give a more detailed information about the social and political change (C3).

Thus, as this thesis addressed the bigger question of political representation and its effects on security, it is important to restate that youth empowerment is central to the well-being of the nation. However, to achieve this well-being, one ought to realize the aspects of empowerment as shown in the analysis, both the individual and the collective. According to our theoretical framework, when this potential of empowerment is realized, social and political change will be the basis for stability and security of Lebanon. Hence, youth as seen from the analysis are capable of decision-making through political participation only when organizations and agencies realize and implement processes and programs to give power to such youth. Hence, the thesis showed that when combining the two aspects of the typology of empowerment theory, individual (C1) and collective empowerment (C2), social change will increase, and political instability will decrease leading to a safer nation state.
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Appendix I

Interview Questions for youth

1. What is your age, position and educational background?
2. How did you come in contact with the YLP?
3. Do you feel that you now hold more capacity and ability to social change? Why and What has changed?
4. As youth, do you think you are capable of being in control and take decisions to make a change in your community? And in your opinion how does that affect political stability? Explain.
5. How have the YLP promoted your competence? Through expertise, social development? What did you learn? And how are you applying it in your community both socially and politically?
6. Do you think that you now have a better understanding of the sociopolitical situation in Lebanon? And how are you raising awareness?
7. Have you made any progress in social and political change? How?
8. Do you see yourself as an advocate for social change? Why?
9. To what extent do you believe that your participation in YLP has shaped a better future for Lebanon? Both politically and socially? Explain.
10. Do you feel that you share power with the UNDP? If yes, in what way?
11. How have you acknowledged social inequalities and how do you engage in sociopolitical change?
12. Are you capable of fostering positive attitudes by being able to acknowledge your self-worth and coping with the difficulties of the social and political problems in Lebanon? How?
13. Do you think you have the potential to conduct social change? And do you think that this will affect the political instability in Lebanon? Explain your thoughts.
Appendix II

Interview Questions for Youth Focal Point – UNDP Beirut

1. What is your educational background?
2. For how long have you been the youth focal point in UNDP Beirut?
3. What is the aim and need of the YLP?
4. Do you share group cohesiveness and well-being with Lebanese youth? How do you cooperate?
5. How do the UNDP and youth engage with the community? Do you have a permanent relationship with the participants? Why and how important is it?
6. How do you think the YLP participants have gained leadership and action skills? Through what UNDP initiative?
7. Do you think that after completing the YLP youth are capable of participating politically to change the societal issues they face? How?
8. Do you think that youth feel more belonging and valued in their community? Why?
9. How have youth gained intellectual understanding of power and social change? And what opportunities do they have?
10. Does the UNDP share strategies and guide youth after the program? How?