Estimating local administrators' participation in planning: case of "Egypt vision 2030"

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to address to what extent local administration is involved in national planning focusing on drafting and reviewing processes of "Egypt Vision 2030".

Design/methodology/approach – The paper plan to use focus group discussions and descriptive-analytical approach with representatives of local administration in three governorates.

Findings – Importance of local participation is not any more a question; however, participation concept and methodology are what matters. Participatory approach is not complex-free. It is crucial to consider conflicts of interest groups, ideologies, and political trends, communities' high expectations, particularly of those who were marginalized and deprived for long time. Definitions should not be unified on national, regional and local levels. Each community needs to agree on its own definitions, needs, dreams and paths toward development. Accordingly, the role of the planner is to expand choices and opportunities for each citizen. Participation in planning for the future must include the coming generation who are opting to live this tomorrow. That requires institutionalization of youth participation in the decision-making processes.

Research limitations/implications – It was difficult to ensure meeting adequate sample; however, the author does believe that the participated sample represents the case.

Practical implications – The impact of public participation in planning on enhancing the planning processes and strategic planning outcomes and implementation is not a matter of questioning anymore, although governments do not pay due attention.

Social implications – Public participation in planning processes named participative planning is crucial for achieving development, social justice, economic development and public trust in governments.

Originality/value – The paper depends on focus-group discussions that were conducted by the author. Analysis and discussions reflect the author's academic and practical experiences.

Keywords Strategic planning, Egypt vision 2030, Local administration, Participatory planning, Regional planning

Paper type Case study

Theoretical framework

Human civilization is witnessing the "Digital Age". That drafts a new developmental context featured by the fourth industrial revolution (4th IR), reviewing the role, structure and composition of the international organizations, changes in economic conditions, changes in the international economic and political powers, changes in the power of resources as

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information and innovation replaced land, labor and capital, not to forget the geopolitical changes. On the challenges side, the world is facing common challenges such as the climate changes, wars and civil conflicts, terrorism, increasing number of migrants and refugees, poverty rates, epidemic diseases. That in turn, led to dramatic, continues and rapid changes in the concepts and definitions of development and its affiliated aspects (Flor, 2009).

In light of these changes, planning for development must consider calculating the related complexities of input-output systems, particularly within a consumer -demand market, compared to the state-led market, calculating the social accounting matrices relevant to each policy alternative and/or structural reform, as well as the direct adverse impacts of economic welfare of the human well-being. Kornai (1992), Kornai (1997) addressed three types of developmental strategies; "Rushed Growth" where industrialization will result in human development which proved to be inappropriate, "Harmonic Growth" highlighting on the importance of having a balanced investment for economic as well as none-economic aspects, and the presently prevailing strategy that is "Human Development First" that gives priority to investing in social capital overheads, however, the economic impact of these investment depends on three elements that are politics, institutions and culture (Copestake, 1999):

> Comprehensive reform is not fiscal firefighting, but a radical social transformation that must not be conducted at J\bacute\AéNOS KORNAI 289 breakneck speed. Sufficient time must be allowed for programs to be carefully drafted and political support to be mobilized. (Kornai, 1997)

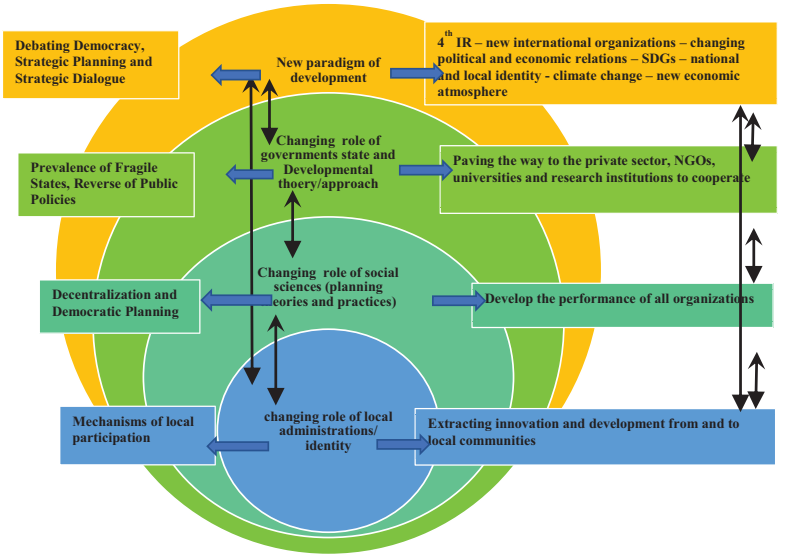
"Leaving No One Behind" is the recent slogan of global developmental philosophy. This approach raises serious questions on how to manage the fickle effects of economic development, whereas the progress in someone's indicators may lead to another one's regress? (Copestake, 1999). How to consider the complex diversities of the local context? What are the main foundations of a sufficient role of the state in setting its long-term strategy? And how to cure the long term effects of implemented destructive policies?:

> [. . .] is the prioritization and fast-tracking of actions for the poorest and most marginalized people – known as progressive universalism. If instead, policy is implemented among better off groups first and worst-off groups later, the existing gap between them is likely to increase (Overseas Development Institute, 2017).

Accordingly, participatory planning could be seen as a key cornerstone as centralization failed in providing long-term sustainable development, compliance to the central plan might work against innovation hindering the strongly proved positive local culture-innovation relationship. Hence, the role of local institutions, mainly local administration, in mobilizing local communities is crucial for achieving development:

> [. . .] the best development strategy is `path dependent' or depends upon its historical endowment (Copestake, 1999).

Coping with the ongoing rapid-complex changes, which is a main feature of the current world, made the concept of "Grand Strategy" questionable, as public policies are most likely to be short- termed and ready to modifications all the time. In addition, the prevailing of "Populism" concept in public policy formation and the appearance of the "Agile Organizations" concept that appeared in response to rapid changes and the tendency toward short-term public policies. Figure 1, illustrates the different levels and contexts of the ongoing changes and its complex implications. Where universal long-stable concepts are getting to be controversial and debatable such as democracy, strategic planning and strategic dialogue. That could be attributed to the components of the new world resulted from the 4th IR and its economic, social and geopolitical implications, the SDGs, climate change, the raising of the concepts such as; national identify, democratic planning, agile



Source: Illustrated by the author

Figure 1.
Illustration of the current international developmental context

organizations changing role of the state and that of the social sciences in changing structure and performance of governmental, private and community organizations, as well as universities and research institutions. Interactions among all these elements should be reflected on the role of the local administrations and local communities in development. All that together reflects a start of the new approach of "Managing Development" characterized by short-term policies, populism, agile organization and wide interventions of citizens and local communities. Hence, the role of local administration should be given adequate theoretical and empirical importance.

Planning for development, considering the recent global changes, requires rethinking many issues particularly planning theories and feasibility, as well as the role of local administration and local communities. In the below section, a reflection on planning theories and its implications on the concept of local administration/community participation, negatives, difficulties and limitation of applying participatory planning, as well as a reflection on participatory planning-good governance relationship.

Debating theories and feasibility of planning

The fourth industrial revolution (4th IR), like its predecessors, provides a deep developmental shift, raising important questions such as; which theory and methodology of planning fits within the 4thIR and its constituents? Do we need a new theory? Does the 4th IR deconstruct the traditional planning approaches?

Recent literature indicates that the "Grand Strategies" concept became debatable in many aspects. In the science of wars, the concept is not applicable any more due to the rapid changes and complex interrelations between political and international relations, economic and social aspects (Simon and Peter, 2017). Literature debates are also increasing on the feasibility of strategic planning for development. Roger L. Martin stated that practitioners

fall in fatal mistakes producing a shallow plan (Martin, 2018). Examples of these mistakes are; planners being taken by producing strategic plan rather than strategic choices, filling in a static format rather than innovative choices, decisions and choices are built on cost and resources rather than on citizens' dreams and extracting opportunities.

Theories of planning have been developed over the years reflecting global changes. Two main schools of planning could be extracted. The first school is the "Comprehensive-Rational Planning School" which resulted due to the industrial revolution (1800-1890). It aimed to transferring industrialization into local communities through central management and top-down planning. Two main planning models were introduced by this school. "Blueprint Planning" model that gave wide space of participation only to the elites losing the identity of the public in favor of that of the elite technicians:

> In an orthodox planning context, development projects that bring in external financial or technological assistance are more likely to be approved even if they might cause environmental or social damage. (Khan and Swapan, 2013)

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, the "Synoptic planning" model introduced the term "public participation" for the first time to be achieved through participating in identifying goals and targets, depend on quantitative analysis and predictions, considering identity, setting alternative policy options, and evaluating means against ends. Lindblom's, 1982 has criticized the comprehensive - rational school – illustrated in his work "Science of Mudding Through" (Alford and Greve, 2017) introducing a new school entitled "Participatory Planning" that accompanied with the rise of the concepts of "urban planning" and "community development". This school were illustrated in many theories such as the "Incrementalism" introduced by Lindblom, 1982) where functional planning requires incremental decision through a less centralized management approach giving strong voices to none planners. However, it focused on reactive public participation not proactive one, as public participation was given minimum limited room to evaluation of already taken decisions. In 1968, Etzioni in his "Mixed Scanning Model", suggested to divide planning processes into two categories that are strategic and tactics. However, it did not help more involvement of local communities as focused on reaching better goals apart from the viewpoints of the local communities. Planning decisions remained centralized and top-down. In 1980, John Forester introduced the theory of "Communicative Planning" in which the role of planners is to keep varied channels of communication with the citizens in order to find solutions based on a democratic sharing of ideas (Andrew *et al.*, 2014). He also debated the "humanist or phenomenological theory of planning" where practitioners assume that they can transform or replicate one best practice from one context to another one regardless of its specifications:

> Participation, in practice, ranges from simply informing people about the plan to ensuring that the plan is made by the people (Arnstein, 1969).

Friedmann (1973) has developed a theory of "Transactive Planning", where citizens provide a daily information and knowledge, while planners provide the know-how of planning procedures (Liqun *et al.*, 2015). The "Radical Planning" theory introduced later aimed to achieving equity and community development based on community participation. Subsequently, "Bargaining Model" and "Communicative Approach", both were introduced highlighting on the importance of managing the positions or attitudes of the different interest groups, hence, participation of each interest group is a core principal of these two theories. "Communicative Approach" added a very important issue that is the importance of

the attitude of planning entities toward local administration/community participation in planning as a cornerstone in designing planning processes (Khan and Swapan, 2013).

The importance of this "Radical Planning" theory is merging the social theory within the planning processes, however, that linkage in many developing countries is still questionable raising the issue of free national planning and free developmental choices that fits each nation's priorities, challenges and specifications, apart from the westernized pattern of development (Abukhater, 2009).

In sum, reviewing the appropriateness of the applied planning theories and methodologies is crucial in order to overcome the related difficulties. Planners face difficulties in building a comprehensive and effective plan considering the ever-increasing complexity, uncertainty and rapid change of decision-making inputs. Applying "Participatory Planning" needs exerting efforts to focus on the enhancing rules and mechanisms of local administration and/or community participation in planning, taking into consideration the specifications of the 4th IR and its social, economic and political consequences.

In light of this complex context, improving the national planning requires each nation to discuss and deeply analyze the following issues:

(1) Appropriate methodology/approach of participation: designing local community participation processes is not an easy task as it contains many sophisticated issues such as:

- participation should not only be limited to discussing needs and priorities of development, however, to include budget planning as it helps achieving effective governance of public investment management, building community-based indicators and scenarios that considers the built measures and the perceived consequences;
- participatory approach is not complex-free, as conflicts created among interest groups, ideologies, political trends, high expectations of communities, particularly of groups who were marginalized and deprived for long time; and
- existing conflicts between current and future issues, problems and possible solutions.

(2) Role of local administration: there are enormous approaches and methods of local administration and community participation in national planning. Asia Development Bank (ADB) has introduced a "Participatory Development Framework" where all stakeholders can influence and share control over developmental initiatives, decisions and resources that affect themselves." (ADB, 1996). Such framework, requires sincere efforts in formulating clear agreed- upon definitions of what is Development? Who are the stakeholders (defined by name, category, representation and degree of influence)? Who to participate? Taking into consideration that these definitions should not be unified on the national level, however, each region and/or local community need to agree on its own definitions:

(3) Assessing the quality of participation: quality assurance principals proved to be an effective tool in assessing the efficiency of participation in national planning (Farouk *et al.*, 2011). Farouk *et al.* (2011) introduced an operational definitions regarding national planning processes for the twelve quality assurance principals that are openness, earliness/early involvement, completeness, continuity, reliability, competence, benefits, shared vision, equitable power, communication

channels, adaptability, integrity, patience and perseverance. They concluded that application of that approach on Egypt case provided valid results.

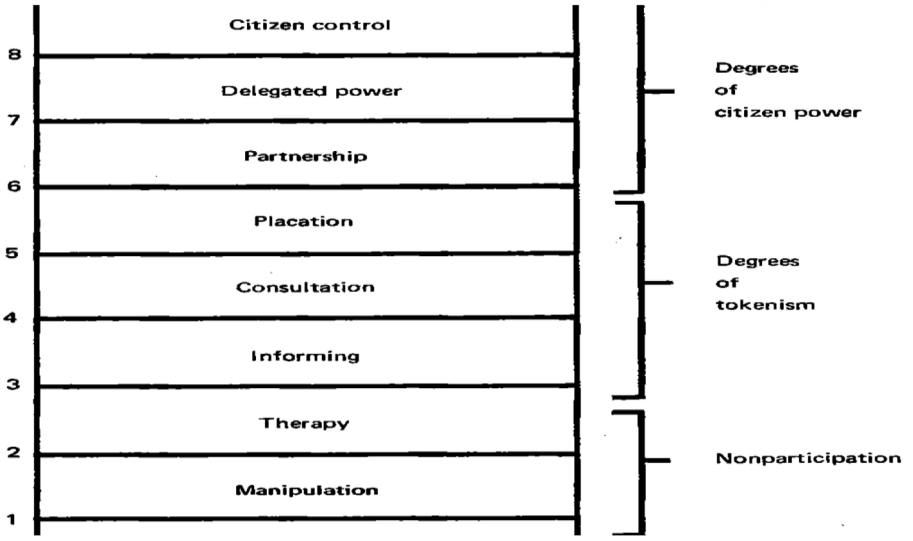
(4) Selection of participants: efficiency of participatory planning depends on the quality and proper representation of the participants. Some empirical studies (Creighton, 2007 and Slavikova and Jilkova, 2011), indicated that in most cases, there are some predetermined group of participants who are consulted through each of the different participative mechanisms (public hearing, public meetings, etc.). Fagence (1977) indicated that invitation to public participation mostly run under a type of perverted democracy where participation is mostly managed by the state authorities rather than local community organizations, resulting in participation of a certain group.

(5) Cohesion: does the participatory planning system ensure representation of all categories, particularly marginalized ones such as youth, elderly people, women and disabled categories. Importance of youth participating in planning, although it is not a focus issue of this particular study, however, it is a growing field of study. Francis and Lorenzo (2002) in their study (2002), indicated that "the field of planning has begun to acknowledge the importance of serving the youngest generation". Checkoway *et al.* (1995) and Adams and Ingham (1998), indicated that despite of all efforts exerted to promote youth participation in planning, over the last three decades, it still very limited compared to that of adults' participation. The issue of *Who plan for tomorrow?* Present generation or coming one who are opt to live this tomorrow? Is also important issue, let alone the problem of the institutionalized marginalization of youth in planning and decision making processes? (Farouk *et al.*, 2011).

(6) Pseudo vs genuine participation: Deshler and Sock (1985) have divided participation in two categories; pseudo participation where citizens are to be informed of an already designed plan, while genuine participation where citizens have the channel to share their information, needs, knowledge [...] etc. Governments are to choose between the two approaches according to its acknowledgment and believe in the importance of citizens' participation (Sanoff, 2000). That depends on the level of applied decentralization and democracy. According to Abraham Lincoln (1864), democracy is defined as "government of people, by the people for the people", accordingly, participatory planning is not but a tool for achieving democracy (Chado and Johar, 2015). In light of this, efficiency of citizens' participation reflects the level of democracy that aims at facilitating citizens' engagement in the planning processes.

(7) Ladder of participation: Arnstein (1969) introduced the "Ladder of Participation" as a main tools used in assessing citizens and/or local community participation in planning (Figure 2). She divided citizens' participation into eight rungs according to their level of influence in forming, implementing and evaluating public policies. These rungs escalating from none participation level to the highest level where citizens have full control reflecting on the role of both the state as well as citizens themselves.

(8) Liqun *et al.* (2015) in their study of participation in planning in China, proved that despite the fact that by law – The Urban and Rural Planning Act enacted in 2007 – set clear procedures, duration and type of public participation in each stage of planning including all compilation, decision, implementation and revision stages, practically speaking. They resulted in pervasive formalism and ineffective



Source: Arnstein, 1969

Figure 2.
Sherry Arnstein's eight rungs on a ladder of citizen's

public participation; however, the public are mostly informed and rarely consulted only after drafting and/or making the decisions. Manipulation, which is the lower stage at Aenstien's ladder, is likely to be prevailing particularly when public notice and public hearings are compulsory and forced by law (Liqun *et al.*, 2015). In Nigeria, Chado and Johar (2015), in their study of public participation, indicated that despite all legislative enforcement of public participation in planning that took both traditional and voluntary formats where lots of efforts are exerted in this regard, it did not achieve ant degree of citizens' power; citizens' control, delegated power and partnership (Chado and Johar, 2015). Both concluded that enforcement of participation by law was not an effective way to ensure participatory planning.

(9) Considering the voices of local communities: participation and consultation methods are numerous. Examples include citizens' juries, citizens' panels, focus groups, consensus building exercises, surveys, public hearings, open houses, citizens advisory committee, community planning, planning cells, consensus conference, visioning, notification, distribution and solicitation of comments, referenda, structured value referenda (Abelson *et al.*, 2001). National planning mechanism must employ a well-designed package of these tools that allows effective community participation. The role of local administrators is to decide most effective approaches of participation that fits their local communities and communicate their voices to planners. That depends on governments attitude toward considering the viewpoints of local communities and reflecting that into the plans. Planning practitioners need to consider the theoretical and empirical literature that proved the following:

- high quality of outputs, accordingly outcomes, long term participation strategy compared to that of workshop approach;

- the long-term impact of flexible and dynamic planning compared to fixed and static planning;
- the cost of participation is very low compared to both tangible and nontangible gains; and
- the importance of time of participation compared to delay in development due to male/lack of participation (Farouk *et al.*, 2011).

(10) How results of participation are reflected on the plan? To what extent planners seriously reflects the comments, discussions, feedbacks and viewpoints of the local communities into plans? Most likely, there are neither detailed procedural requirements nor stipulations to guarantee the quality of participation. That raises a question regarding the efficacy of participation (Liqun *et al.*, 2015).

Negatives and difficulties of participatory planning

Participatory planning constitutes a big dilemma. Despite of the consensus regarding the importance citizens' participation in planning, it is important to consider the relevant challenges (Day, 1997). Schumpeter (1943) reflected an important issue that citizens mostly think of short- term issues rather than strategic ones. MacNair *et al.* (1983) addressed problems such as; government's expectations of citizens' participation are mostly much higher than the actual ones, local administrators use citizens' participation only when feels week and need to get more support, on a contrary scenario, local administrators may not be willing to give the public such power. Etzioni-Halevy (1983) highlighted on challenge of wide citizens' participation and decentralization might transfer the power of the state, public policies and decisions, to the most powerful interest groups within each community, leading to corruption and exploitation. Henig (1982) raised the issue of citizens' participation mostly results in deconstructive rather than constructive comments either because state's opposing political parties exploit this window to weaken the running government, or because it is easier for the citizens to give negative comments rather than provide solutions. Grant (2002) raised issues as; citizens' participation in policy-making procedures requires dedicating resources that citizens do not have or might not be willing to give, the quality of the knowledge and qualifications of the regular citizens and its impact on the quality of participation's outputs. Almond and Verba (1989) raised the issue of pubic tendency to address themselves, as subjects not citizens, hence, are not willing to participate in the first place. Stivers (1990) believes that due to the current sizes and complexities of states and its cities, face-to-face participation is impossible. Barber (1981) indicated that citizens' participation might create conflicts more than reach consensus which harms the social stability.

In conclusion, most of these ideas worth considering, particularly in developing countries, which puts more responsibility on planning practitioners to find out the most suitable methodology to reach effective participatory planning reflecting more on the role of local administrators in so doing.

Participatory planning and good governance

The concept of "Good Governance" provides a great opportunity to reforming planning and overcoming the pitfalls of both comprehensive-rational and participative planning theories (Khan and Swapan, 2013). Participatory planning also helps achieving good governance through; balancing interest groups and competing powers, achieve social

equity as it provides room for all to share knowledge and needs, shared responsibilities of planning and policy choices between government and the local community (Liqun *et al.*, 2015). It could also be seen as a tool for mobilizing local community participation (Maged *et al.*, 2016).

> [. . .] sound governance is pre-requisite to bringing about efficiency and effectiveness, and to encourage effective participation in planning, management and public service delivery. In addition to functionality, good governance also covers aspects related to democracy. Participatory development, democratization and human rights are thus seen as in-built elements of good governance (Sarker, 2008).

Accordingly, participatory planning depends on the level governance within each community. Participation mechanisms in developing countries and among different communities within the same country, must follow variant participatory approaches than that applied in development countries considering the historical, present and revolutionary specifications as well as the developmental status of each community and how it reflects on the translation of the national plans into roles and responsibilities on the different administrative levels through a coherent political- economic- administrative framework (Loughlin, 2012). Currently, due to raising-up of public awareness, particularly among the youth, existence of new players, interest groups, community organizations and networks, it's impossible to neglect their opinions, attitudes, thoughts and norms, technologies, dreams and priorities. In other words, the different meanings and understanding of what development is, for each category and/or community, should never be neglected if planning for development is really targeted. Central governments cannot anymore remain the sole player. That requires rethinking the philosophy behind national planning, not only the processes (Nassar *et al.*, 2012).

To conclude, local administrators' participation is crucial for successful planning (Allam, 2005). However, to play this role, each administrative level up-to citizens' level needs elaboration of the plan and what is his/her expected roles and responsibilities (de Souza and Arica, 2002). This concept of modern participatory planning depends on sufficient feedbacks from implementations, knowledge and attitudes of local administration and municipalities, that must be reflected on local/regional strategies and tactics but not the national strategies and goals (Amdam, 1994). Considering the current era and its specifications, mainly the high level of complexity, connectivity, multi/inter-disciplinarily, interdependency and the new role of governments, it is important to understand that local strategic initiatives cannot be designed apart from the global and national developmental paths, tendencies and activities (Ruano, 2015; Nassar *et al.*, 2012).

Geographical Coverage	City	District	Markaz	Village	Total Adm. Units
Egypt (total)	225	91	837	4,727	5,880
Monofia Governorate	9	2	9	316	336
Menia Governorate	9	–	17	361	387
Ismailia Governorate	7	3	7	39	56
total sample	25	5	33	716	779
Sample as % of Egypt	11%	5%	4%	15%	13%

Source: CAPMAS, Egypt. www.capmas.gov.eg

Table I.
Sample as % of total Egypt's administrative system

Egypt's path toward development

Efficiency of national planning is very crucial in achieving development, particularly for countries in transition such as Egypt that is drafting a new social contract featured in Egypt's 2014 constitution after two revolutions in three years (Jan 25, 2011 revolution and June 30, 2013 revolution). One of the main forces of change impeded in such constitution is "decentralization" as "article 176" indicates that the government is to support the application of financial, administrative and economic decentralization. That complements with "Egypt Vision 2030" launched in 2015 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that Egypt committed to at same year. Legislative actions reforming planning mechanisms are taking place in Egypt, as relevant laws are drafted and under discussions mainly unified planning laws, decentralization and local administration laws. In light of the aforementioned reform, the role of local administration in planning is significantly changing.

The ongoing political, economic and social dramatic changes happing in Egypt are changing roles, levels of involvement and types of participants in the planning processes, made the national plan sort of new social contract/framework for partners of development.

Adopting Egypt' sustainable development strategy

In 2015, Egypt has launched its sustainable development strategy entitled "Egypt Vision 2030"[1] aligned with the global sustainable development goals (SDGs) that Egypt committed to at same year. Important to mention that "Egypt Vision 2030" had provoked a debate among scholars and practitioners regarding the methodology, ideology and the philosophy behind it. Same debate tackled the conveniency of the SDGs to the priorities, challenges and the national development path.

In 2018, the Egyptian government declared a review of "Egypt Vision 2030" in order to ensure coherence and appropriateness. That is considered a positive step, although results of this review is not crystalized yet.

Analyzing "Egypt Vision 2030" drafting processes, as declared by the government (Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform, 2016), including list of participants, participation methodology, number of meetings, working groups and community dialogue meetings, conclude that national planning in Egypt requires revision of philosophy, concepts, definitions, methodologies and processes as well as revising the regional and local developmental current foundations and conceptual framework.

The declared methodology indicated deploying the "workshop" approach where participants included experts, academic, representative of the private sector, NGOs, ministries, international developmental and financial organizations. YES, social dialogue with women organizations, youth groups, political parties, parliament, academics, experts' groups, NGOs have been conducted to discuss the strategy's first draft, HOWEVER, local administration and local community were significantly neglected in both drafting and social dialogue stages. In addition, the reflection of the social dialogue's feedbacks on drafting the "final version of the "Egypt Vision 2030" is also a questionable issue.

Scope and method

This paper aims to addressing and discussing the level of involvement and knowledge of local administration regarding "Egypt Vision 2030". What information do they know about it? Have they ever been involved during either the drafting or the reviewing processes? Does it fit with the needs and priorities of local communities? Do they feel any progress toward "Egypt Vision 2030"?

The paper depended on two main methodologies that are; focus-group discussions (FGD), and descriptive-analytical approach to discuss the findings of the FGDs.

Four focus-group discussions were conducted covering local administrators in three governorates that are Monifia, Minia and Ismailia[2]. The three governorates were selected, as each of them is part of Egypt's ongoing national mega comprehensive developmental projects where huge focus and investments are allocated to these governorates. In addition, they represent around 12 per cent of Egypt's total population in (CAPMAS, 2017)[3], and around 13 per cent of total administrative units in Egypt.

FGDs were conducted during March-July 2018[4] covering chiefs of Markaz, city and villages and/or deputies, representatives of local offices of different ministries, and a group of lower managerial level of governorate principal office (Table II). Two groups were conducted in Monifia governorate. The 1st FGD consisted of 20 persons who are heads of cities, districts and Markaz, can be called as "strategic people" who are responsible of making the strategic plans and decisions, in addition to 10 of the lower management. The 2nd FGD consisted of 30 deputies and/or assistances of the heads of cities, districts and Markaz who can be named the "operational people" as they are responsible for implementing plans and decisions. In the other two governorates (Minia and Ismailia), only one group in each governorate were conducted each consisted of 20 people who represent both strategic and operational local administration.

In each FGD, participants were divided into groups, each of them was given one of the ten pillars of "Egypt Vision 2030"[5] and its affiliated programs, and were asked to do the following:

- tell about their involvement in drafting processes of "Egypt Vision 2030" conducted in 2015 and/or the review processes that took place during 2017-2018, if any;
- explain their general knowledge of "Egypt Vision 2030";
- present and discuss the pillar they were given and its affiliated programs, indicating their viewpoints in light of the needs of their local community of this pillar;
- select three programs to be of the top priorities of their local communities; and
- address important issues that are not included by this particular pillar.

After the presentation of each group, the facilitator (the author) opens a discussion with the rest of the groups to reach a consensus on needs and priorities of their local communities.

Limitation of the study

- The paper does not plan to indicate the comments reflected on each pillar, however, it depends on analyzing the content of the FDGs as well as the observations of the facilitator from a strategic thinking perspective. Table AI contains a summary of comments on each pillar.

Sample (FGD)	Monifia	Minia	Ismailia	Total
Chief of City/Markaz/Village	30	8	5	43
Representatives of technical departments (planning, health, tourism, investment..etc)	10	6	8	22
lower management (employees at governorate office)	10	3	5	18
Total of participants	50	15	18	83
No. of workshops	2	1	1	4

Table II.
Participants of FGD

- The sample covered by the study is limited to three governorates out of twenty-seven ones; however, it provides a considerable analysis of the issue under investigation.

Remarks on the focus-group discussions

- Both strategic and operational people were very keen to learn and participate in the discussions and reflect on their local communities' specifications, needs and priorities.
- Both groups have no knowledge regarding "Egypt Vision 2030" and/or the main developmental actions that took place on the central level such as new laws for investment, organization of industrial lands, industrial map [...] etc. which, deprived local communities from extracting the already existing opportunities, hence accelerating local development.
- Although both groups are responsible of "local development", both proved to have clear knowledge of what national development is, however, the terminology of "local development" was vague and not familiar for them in terms of meaning, aspects and dimensions.

Main findings of the focus-group discussions

(1) Strategic people have a more in-depth and long-term vision and understanding of national and local development rather than that in operational people. They have more comprehensive vision toward development. However, most of them are about to be retired within few years.

(2) Local administrators have important knowledge and experiences of their local communities and are keen to be involved in developing their communities, however are truly neglected and deprived from both training and participation.

(3) As for "Egypt Vision 2030", discussions indicated the following:
   - None of the surveyed local administrators – in the three governorate – had ever participated in drafting and/or reviewing the "Egypt Vision 2030".
   - The majority of them have never been exposed to it. Only two of them read it for their own knowledge, and another one read it to prepare before our meeting.
   - All agreed that "Egypt Vision 2030" is not reflected or linked to their routine work in anyway.
   - Few of them indicated that they had heard about "Egypt Vision 2030" TV implemented campaign, although it does not give them understood information.

(4) Actions taken in the capital do not reach the local communities. Only one person indicated that he knows about the new law of "industrial licenses procedures", although it was issue almost a year before.

(5) The relationship between decision takers, local administrator and researches need to be revised. They reflected on its importance, however, few personal initiatives – rather than institutional – were mentioned.

(6) Strong criticism was given to CULTURE Pillar. Comments indicated that affiliated programs focused on historical assets rather than heritages, identity and positive standards and believes.

(7) Local administrators are working on solving daily problems rather than assessing community needs and/or planning. They do not have a clear agreed-upon work plan; however, they follow a day-by-day approach as they just manage not to have critical situations.

(8) Local administrators do have strong experiences and knowledge of their local communities that must be used efficiently in regional planning activities.

(9) There was a consensus that culture and citizens' behaviors and attitudes are the key for many developmental issues, however, not given proper concern.

(10) Although they reflected a negative and pessimistic attitude at the beginning of the discussions, when they were asked to list a number of developmental actions that happened during the last two years and they feel it will bring prosperity to their local community or to Egypt at large, they provided a long list of projects and actions accompanied with comments that reflect a sincere and positive attitude toward the future of Egypt.

(11) One of the main claims used in postponing or slowing down the way toward decentralization in Egypt, is the lack of capabilities of local administration. Discussions reflected that the knowledge and experiences of both strategic and operational people, what is really missing is the proper and effective administrative system and empowerment.

(12) Lack of involvement and/or wider participation, hence information among local administration puts them in un-trustful situation in front of local communities as they don't have adequate information to provide. That makes them unable to communicate with local communities although they understand how much important and useful it is. Many stories were told in this respect.

(13) Applying Quality Assurance tool on drafting and reviewing "Egypt Vision 2030", results of FGDs indicates that none of the twelve principals have been applied by any means

Conclusive remarks

(1) Principally speaking, planning framework in Egypt requires a comprehensive analysis of the impeded philosophies and ideologies, laws and regulations, as well as institutional framework.

(2) Despite the fact that the methodology of preparing "Egypt Vision 2030" declared adopting a participatory approach, the paper proved that in practice, national planning in Egypt still follows a centralized up-bottom static approach. To face this issue, planning practitioners in Egypt need to consider that centralization failed in providing long-term sustainable development, hinders the local culture-innovation relationship.

(3) Planning practitioners need also to consider the theoretical and empirical literature that proved the following:

- the high quality of outputs, accordingly outcomes, of long-term participation strategy compared to that of workshop approach;
- the Long-term impact of flexible and dynamic planning compared to fixed and static planning;

- the cost of participation is very low when compared to, both tangible and nontangible gains; and
- the importance of time of participation compared to delay in development due to male or lack of participation.

(4) The role of local institutions, mainly local administration, in mobilizing local communities is crucial for achieving development.

(5) Testing some of the participatory planning schools/approaches on Egypt's case resulted in the following:

- Arsinties' Ladder of participation: surveyed local administrators did not exceed the nonparticipation level that consists of manipulation and therapy rungs where they had no intervention or any level of control in drafting, revising and evaluating the plan.
- Deshler and Sock division of participation in planning: surveyed local administrators were not involved or even informed of the strategies, goals and objectives and tactics of the plan, meaning that they did not even reach the pseudo level.
- The quality assurance principals, introduced by Ghada Farouk and her colleagues, are totally not applied on the surveyed local administrators while drafting and strategy.

(6) Drafting "Egypt Vision 2030" depended mainly on workshop approach which proved to be ineffective particularly when used solely. Other participation and consultation techniques such as citizens' juries, citizens' panels, focus groups, consensus building exercises, surveys, public hearings, open houses, citizens advisory committee, community planning, planning cells, consensus conference, visioning, notification, distribution and solicitation of comments, referenda, structured value referenda, where not neither considered by the government nor enforced by the law. It is crucial to use a well- designed package of these tools that allows effective local administration/community participation.

(7) Efficacy of citizens' participation depends on; the quality and proper representation of the participants, ensuring cohesion through proper representation of all categories, particularly marginalized ones such as youth, elderly people, women and disabled categories, and ensuring youth participating in planning, is one of growing concerns. Further research should focus on Who plan for tomorrow? Present generation or coming one who are opt to live this tomorrow?

(8) The terminology "local development" proved to be vague and not familiar for surveyed local administrators although they are the ones responsible for it.

(9) Although the government of Egypt conducted a number of social dialogue meetings, however, there was no clear methodology to ensure how the results of participation are reflected on the plan. How seriously the government considered the comments, discussions, feedbacks and viewpoints of the public.

(10) Discussions and dialogues during the FGDs, reflects that culture and social issues are given less attention compared to economic developments. People at localities were very aware of the distractive impacts of that on each developmental activity.

To conclude, analysis of the FGDs outputs indicates the importance of introducing a new paradigm for national planning that depends on the following principals: (Nassar *et al.*, 2012):

- simulation and building scenarios that depends on participative planning and feedback of local communities, building dynamic systems that consider the complexity of developmental activities, as well as the globalization and its systems;
- reviewing definitions of all developmental aspects through organized experts-public open dialogues;
- linking with international data-bases and other information systems;
- giving real attention to qualitative data not only quantitate ones; and
- new functions of monitoring activities and its generated data and reports. As monitoring feedbacks must reform the holistic system and its affiliated sub-systems, the planning and decision-making inputs and processes.

Local/regional participation in national planning in Egypt proved to be very limited, if any. Dramatic changes in national planning processes are crucially needed, including concepts and methodologies of local administration/community participation. Participatory approach is not a complex-free. Conflicts of interest groups, ideologies, political trends, communities' high expectations, particularly of those who were marginalized and deprived for long time. Accordingly, the role of the planning practitioners is to manage such conflicts in favor of development and to ensure that definitions of each aspect of development is not unified on national,regional and local levels, ensure that each community agree on its own definitions, needs, dreams, and paths toward development, and expand choices and opportunities for each citizen.

Further research

Analyzing the characteristics of planning in Egypt, in light of the theoretical framework and Egypt's current developmental path, results of this study, the following issues need to be in-depth study:

- Which theory and methodology of national planning fits within the 4th IR and its constituents? Do we need a new theory?
- Does the 4th IR deconstruct the traditional planning approaches?
- What is the best planning theory/approach that currently fits with Egypt's development path?
- How to estimate the efficacy of participation in planning?
- What is the government's actual attitude toward participatory planning and the role of local administration and communities? And how that is reflected in planning framework?
- The impact of digitalization on participatory planning? Does it provide new effective tools? What are the limitations?
- Considering the current era and its specifications, mainly the 4th IR, high level of complexity, connectivity, multi/inter-disciplinarily, interdependency, what should be the new role of the central government and local administration?
- How to ensure that local strategic initiatives are designed within the global and national developmental paths, tendencies and activities?
- How to institutionalize the youth in the decision-making processes? Extract their understanding, definition and viewpoints of development and its different aspects?
- How to estimate and manage the fickle effects of economic development whereas the progress in someone's indicators may lead to another one's regress?

- How to consider the complex diversities of the local context?
- What are the main foundations of a sufficient role of the state in setting its long-term strategy?
- How to cure the long-term effects of implemented destructive policies?
- How national policies manage the fickle effects of economic development whereas the progress in someone's indicators may lead to another one's regress?
- How national planning can consider the complex diversities of the local context?
- What are the main foundations of the sufficient role of the state in setting its long-term strategy?
- How national planning can cure the long-term effects of implemented destructive policies?

Notes

1. Egypt Vision 2030 is produced by the Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform (MoPMAR). Available at: www.mopmar.gov.eg
2. Egypt consists of 27 governorates, 22 of them divided into 837 Markaz, while the five other governorates – mostly urban – are divided into districts (Hai).
3. CAPMAS: Central Agency for Public Mobility and Statistics – Egypt. Available at: www.capmas.gov.eg
4. FGDs were part of an EU project entitled "Support of Public Administration Reform and Local development in Egypt".
5. "Egypt Vision 2030" consists of 13 pillars. Three of them are considered cross-cutting pillars that are; foreign policy, national security and national policy. The other 10 pillars were divided into three dimensions; 1) Economic Dimension that includes four pillars: economic development, energy, knowledge and innovation and scientific research, transparency and efficiency of government institutions. 2) Social Dimension that includes four pillars: (social justice, health, education and training, culture. 3) environmental Dimension that includes two pillars: environment and urban development.

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Appendix

Table AI.
Reflection of the FGDs on the ten pillars of "Egypt vision 2030"

Pillars	Comments/priorities of local communities	Lost opportunities	Successful local initiatives
Pillar 1: Economic Development	"Social housing" projects are not enough and are located in the industrial parks serving internal migrants rather than local community. Let alone the prices that are unaffordable for most of the youth. Concluding that the" social housing" strategy as such dose not solve the housing problem	In Monifia: ii. Re-opening of closed factories such as cotton factories	In Monifia, Toshiba El Araby (a private business plant) provides an example of linking education to employment as the factory opened a vocational school that train the local community on skills needed in the factory. Hence, provide job opportunities for the community surrounding the factory. On the contrary, "Cristal Asfour" Factor y in Minia import all labor from other governorates
	Small and medium enterprises, although the funds are available at banks, procedures are still complicated. Public campaign on "financial inclusion" is vague and not suitable for the citizens in local communities	ii. Maximizing usage of Tala Incubators Park	In Minia, Dir Abo Hens Village is an unemployment free village. Young girls work in textile at home and once get married they open their own production unit at her new home. A textile school is crucially required for this indu stry to develop and grow
	Agriculture is very important. Discussions tackled the following issues; i. Importance of agro-industry is for both industry and agriculture	ix. Encouraging agricultural activities in Sadat City	Investment departments in Ismailia launched a special link on the governorate's official website to present youth innovations and business ideas, and provide support for some

(*continued*)

Pillars	Comments/priorities of local communities	Lost opportunities	Successful local initiatives
	ii. Agricultural land abuse is a serious issue that threats local communities	In Minia: x. No food-processing factories are planned	
	iii. Maintaining and developing irrigation systems	xi. Late development of public plants makes it unable to compete with private ones. (i.e. Hone factory still using solar while other private factories use gas that is much cheaper lead to huge continues losses)	
	iv. Developing agricultural drainage system v. Establishing advanced storehouses vi. Establishing agricultural research center that help increasing productivity What is the link between Quesna Industrial Park and Robiki industrial Park? What is the plan for Quesna Industrial Park?		
Pillar 2: Energy	Why subsidizing industry while their products are sold in international prices?	Solar energy projects failed in some governorates due to high levels of dust. Researches indicated this facts, however, decision makers did not consider the findings of these research wasting public finds	in Minia, a biogas project is implemented with the ILO
	Designing incentive packages that encourage innovation in solar energy production	Renewable energy projects (wind) is located only in Hurghada, while Minia for example has long deserts and speed wind. Some lands were allocated for such pro jects, however, financial and technical support is needed for youth to be able to use them Launching energy factories that use solid and liquid wastes in generating energy	Local NGOs in Ismailia had a joint initiative to discuss tools and mechanisms for energy use rationalization

(*continued*)

Table AI.

Table AI.

Pillars	Comments/priorities of local communities	Lost opportunities	Successful local initiatives
Pillar 3: Knowledge, Innovation and Scientific Research	Need for establishing local entity for patents	Employing education in encouraging innovation and scientific research	The governorate of Monifia coordinated with the Monifia University in creating a local communication system among heads of cities and districts. This local system proved to be very effective in accelerating the routine work
	Need for enhancing finance allocated for scientific research Need for establishing local research centers that focus on local community issues and its specifications. It was noted that research centers are located in Cairo far from local community Encouraging innovation among local community schools Designing effective local mechanisms for discovering and supporting innovators	Stopping the Schools-TV program entitled "Young Innovator"	
Pillar 4: Transparency and Efficiency of Governmental Institutions	Enhancing basic infrastructure and informative bases of local administration	Local administration dedicated only for the five competences that are very limited	Not mentioned
	Enhancing human resource system	Lack of documentation and lesson learned on both local and national level. There should be an entity specialized in extracting lesson learned, push and pull local factors for each project and/or activity	

(*continued*)

Table AI.

Pillars	Comments/priorities of local communities	Lost opportunities	Successful local initiatives
	Empowering local administrators	Centralized procurement is degrading the performance of the local administration	
	Making public services facilities profitable. Managed in a way that make it	Lack of database on local-level projects make coordination among localities impossible	
	Enhancing the processes of public budget preparation and the role of localities in selecting needed projects		
	Information dissemination and Automation as means of combating corruption and mobilizing community participation	Conducting effective communication with the local citizens due to lack of accurate information regarding projects and services planed or already under construction	
	Enhancing selection mechanism of local leaderships	Male application of the "Code of Conducts". And in case of used with, employees submit complains to MoPMAR that issued it	
	Changing work environment to be more productive and less corrupted	The huge discrepancies in the wages and work environment in local administration departments and that of public economic agencies performing at same place	
Pillar 5: Social Justice	Having equal services and opportunities for local cities as urban cities, and for districts and villages as cities	Crises support is limited to beneficiaries of "Takaful and Karam" Programs. Other might bene fit, however, requires long and complicated procedures	Not mentioned

(*continued*)

Table AI.

Pillars	Comments/priorities of local communities	Lost opportunities	Successful local initiatives
	Ability to believe in having hopeful and confident future	Lack of insurance on agricultural productions. Weak role of corporate social responsibly (CSR). Big companies and factories performing in local places could develop their local comm unities through effective CSR	
	Enjoy safety and security Farmers are not given due attention Subsidized fertilizers are provided to land owners not renters		
Pillar 6: Health	Establishing an integrative electronic network among medical units working in each local community and its surrounding communities that would help the following; providing better and various services for local citizens , scientific research, exchanging experiences, and creating integrative knowledge	Unused medical equipment due to lack of human resources	Not mentioned
	Promoting ethics among all levels of human resources working in medical units to treat local citizens in a more respective, kind and conscience way Promoting health prevention programs Enhancing governance of health sector on local level	Unused buildings. (both finishes and semi-finished hospitals and health care units)	
Pillar 7: Education and Training	All agreed that quality of education need to be improved	USAID project for supporting talented students (technological and scientific schools) is degraded due to lack of financial and administrative support	In Minia, the governorate launched a local competition “Markaz with No Illiteracy”. It has a great impact on mobilizing local resources for this target

(*continued*)

Table AI.

Pillars	Comments/priorities of local communities	Lost opportunities	Successful local initiatives
	Modern and advanced curricula are needs	In Minia, no public lands is available for building new schools and the governorate depend on citizen to donate their own land (class intensity range between 70-80 student)	In Delinga and Maghag ha villages, Minia, agricultural schools are linked to land reclamation programs as schools are requested to reclaim number of Faddans
	Technical education/training is very important particularly in rural areas	Closing the "educational farms"	
Pillar 8: Culture	Re-embed positive values such as productivity, accepting other, mercy, social solidarity into local communities	Programs did not consider impact of the drama, art, media and social networks on our society particularly on youth	Minia squares were decorated in co-ordination with Minia University giving chances to students of Fine art school to innovate
	Flourishing the role of family, school, mosques and churches in manner of community prevailing attitudes and values	Male law enforcement made the environmental problems more sophisticated	"Developing the New Valley initiative" perform art workshops. Many participants developed ideas for startups through these workshops
	Filtering imported values	In Minia, male employment of ancient religious antiquity. (both Islamic and Christian). One third of Egypt's antiquity is located in Minia; however, tourism is not a main economic activity. Atonic museum is under renovation for many years and only small budget is required to finalize it	

(*continued*)

Table AI.

Pillars	Comments/priorities of local communities	Lost opportunities	Successful local initiatives
	Role of media and drama in building role models	In Minia also, two international discoveries happened in Tuna El Gabal Village, however, no proper attention and marketization was done Many schools and/or public libraries are closed or degraded Inherited habits should be treated as a treasure. These are well examined in terms of appropriateness and conveniency to our communities Many cultural activities are taking place, however, with limited impact due to weak management Close of many successful projects such as Child Library, Child Club, Mobile Library. . .etc.	
Pillar 9: Environment	Local administration pays the price of other entities not performing their work	National and International aid directed to environmental projects does not consider actual needs of local communities	In Minia, a local initiative was done with local NGOs to develop main squares. Another initiative was done to household-waste collection
	Growing landfills problem. (particularly in Monifia governorate) Enhancing role of local NGOs in waste management	Governors have no authority on national protected areas	

(*continued*)

Pillars	Comments/priorities of local communities	Lost opportunities	Successful local initiatives
Pillar 10: Urban Development	"Social housing" projects that serve urban development	Having a clear comprehensive policy for urban development in order to encourage local citizens as well as the private sector to align their own personal and investment plans	Having a clear comprehensive policy for urban development in order to encourage local citizens as well as the private sector to align their own personal and investment plans
	Encouraging citizens' localization in newly established urban communities	Male implementation of the already existing law that puts daily fine on unpermitted buildings. (unified law article no.119)	
	Newly built housing projects does not have adequate modern sewage system, let alone other services such as schooling, social and sports centers		

Table AI.