

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.11042591

THE ROLE OF GOVERNANCE IN ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EGYPTIAN CULTURAL POLICIES: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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Received: 11/11/2025

Accepted: 18/12/2025

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ABSTRACT

This research addresses the governance of cultural policies, focusing on the integration of governance principles into policy-making in Egypt and their impact on cultural institutions, policy effectiveness, and cultural sustainability. The study employs an analytical approach by examining Egypt's performance in global governance indices issued by organizations such as the World Bank, United Nations, Transparency International, and the Mo Ibrahim Foundation. It also analyzes budget allocations for the Ministry of Culture over several years and reviews data from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics regarding the cultural sector. Additionally, the study assesses the relationship between governance and cultural institutions to determine its nature and implications. The findings revealed a significant link between governance and cultural policies. Egypt's declining governance indicators highlighted weak cultural policies, largely due to marginalization, inadequate budgets, and insufficient attention to cultural infrastructure. The study also found that policy-making processes were predominantly hierarchical rather than participatory, limiting their effectiveness. The research offers practical recommendations to improve cultural policies by adopting a comprehensive governance framework that addresses weaknesses and promotes stronger, more sustainable cultural development.

KEYWORDS: Governance, Cultural sector, Cultural Policy, Sustainable Development.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, achieving sustainable development has become a primary goal of governments in all countries, whether developed or developing (Altaany et al,2025). Moreover, the Egyptian government has taken steps to discuss sustainable development and the importance of realizing its goals through environmental, social, economic, and cultural development on one hand, and by re-evaluating the policies related to each of these areas on the other. This stems from the understanding that achieving development depends on two main factors: the nature of the policies formulated and the performance of societal institutions in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities (Nassef et al,2023).

Consequently, societies have recently witnessed a dynamic movement in reshaping their policies due to changes brought about by globalization, the knowledge revolution, and technological advancements, which have diminished the effectiveness of existing policies. Additionally, the increasing frequency of crises caused by corruption, as well as the absence of integrity and transparency, has adversely impacted the stability and well-being of societies (Alsaleh, 2024).

Governance has been introduced to stabilize society and ensure effective public policies by reducing negative practices. Its importance grew after international reports highlighted its role in achieving sustainable development. Governance helps governments identify challenges, improve institutional management, and promote integrity, transparency, and justice, leading to sustainable development (Abas,2019).

In the cultural sector, governance is crucial for overcoming issues like corruption and poor management. Culture plays a key role in economic growth, job creation, international relations, and human development. Thus, governing the cultural sector is essential for achieving comprehensive, sustainable development, promoting national identity, and improving citizens' well-being (Seleim & Bontis,2009).

Governance is based on the concept of empowerment, whether by empowering human resources working in the cultural sector or by empowering policies to ensure their effectiveness in achieving sustainable development. Thus, the governance of cultural policies contributes, on one hand, to empowering and developing the cultural sector in light of the formulated policies by reviewing, monitoring, and evaluating the implementation of plans. On the other hand, this

review and evaluation provide indicators of the success of governance systems in that sector and its policies by assessing the improvements made and enhancing the plans and policies in place. Ultimately, this helps create an environment capable of growth and sustainability, in line with the state's vision and the sustainable development agenda.

1.1. First: The Study's Problem and Questions

The state has prioritized the cultural sector due to its contributions to various fields—political, economic, and social—both domestically and internationally. It views the cultural sector as a key player in achieving sustainable development because of its strong links to other sectors and its ability to boost the national economy by increasing income, reducing unemployment, and strengthening national identity. However, despite its importance, this sector faces several challenges that hinder its effectiveness. These challenges include ineffective cultural policies, lack of follow-up and evaluation of cultural plans, limited budget allocation, low competency of cultural workers, and poor coordination between administrations.

Revising cultural policies and improving management systems have become imperative. Consequently, countries have adopted governance as a means to combat corruption in the cultural sector, address challenges related to control and oversight, and enhance the effectiveness of policy implementation. In light of this, the study seeks to examine the impact of applying governance mechanisms to overcome the challenges facing cultural policies.

Accordingly, the study aims to address two central questions

1. Is there a practical implementation of governance mechanisms in the cultural sector?
2. How does the application of governance mechanisms contribute to enhancing the cultural sector and reinforcing its role in achieving sustainable development?

These central questions are further explored through several sub-questions

1. To what extent are governance principles established and embodied at the managerial level in the formulation of cultural policies?
2. What is the impact of cultural governance on the performance of cultural institutions and its implications for development?
3. How is Egypt's situation reflected in governance indicators related to the cultural sector?
4. What are the challenges that hinder the

effectiveness of cultural policy governance?

1.2. Second: Importance of the Study

The study's significance is twofold

1. **Academic Aspect** The study is a descriptive and analytical examination that tests the validity of theoretical propositions from critical theory and stakeholder theory within the context of Egyptian society, specifically regarding the impact of governance on enhancing the effectiveness of current cultural policies.
2. **Practical Aspect** The study's importance lies in diagnosing the implementation of governance principles in shaping cultural policies. This helps decision-makers understand the reality of governance in the cultural sector and its impact on achieving sustainable cultural development through effective policy implementation and governance mechanisms.

1.3. Third: Study Objectives

The study aims to achieve the following objectives

1. To assess the extent to which governance principles are embedded and applied at the management level in shaping cultural policies.
2. To investigate the impact of cultural governance on the performance of cultural institutions and its implications for development.
3. To monitoring the implications of Egypt's position in governance indicators on the cultural sector.
4. To identify the challenges that hinder the effectiveness of cultural policy governance.

1.4. Fourth: Theoretical Framework of the Study

Critical Theory: Critical theory, which emerged in the 1930s, aims to critique the Enlightenment philosophical project representing Western modernity, which has strayed from achieving human values such as freedom, justice, and human rights, especially after the rise of totalitarian regimes like Nazism (Boumnir 2010).

This theory originated from Marxist thought, which focused on analyzing the social, cultural, and political environment where communication occurs. Some called it the socio-cultural approach (Al-Mashaqqbeh 2015). It belongs to the Frankfurt School and draws its ideas from prominent thinkers such as Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse. It emerged as a response to the dominance of the capitalist system, arguing that ideas are the primary source of power (Jones, 2010).

Critical theory focuses on correcting the imbalance resulting from Marxist economic determinism, paying attention to cultural oppression of the individual and the impact of human activity on larger social structures (Ritzer 2010). It also seeks to integrate theory with practice to confront authoritarianism and achieve individual autonomy (Al-Dulaimi 2016).

This theory holds that societies that prevent cooperation and deprive individuals of choice are oppressive. It asserts that humans are capable of making rational collective decisions and shaping their environment. The current society is criticized as irrational or oppressive because **it destroys two essential human traits** the ability to transform the environment and to make rational collective choices (Craib 1999).

Critical rationality is primarily based on using critique as the main mechanism for understanding all situations, ideas, and social reality. It is influenced by Marx's concept of social critique, which aims to change social reality to one where individuals are freer. Critics expanded this concept to include a radical critique of Enlightenment rationality and its manifestations of political and cultural control (Boumnir).

Thus, according to dominance is a prevalent feature in all states, where the stronger imposes its will on the weaker. This dominance can come from the state over the people to spread its ideology or from a stronger group over a weaker one. Culture, in particular, is often suppressed either to control citizens by clouding their minds or because the state fails in its duties and deprioritizes culture. Often, the goal is to reinforce ignorance to secure the ruling power.

Governance is seen as a means to liberate citizens from all forms of corruption, especially state dominance. It relies on participation, transparency, and democracy, enabling citizens to hold authorities accountable, ensuring benefits for all parties equally.

Stakeholder Theory: The Stakeholder Theory is derived from a combination of social and organizational disciplines, emerging from four organizational management research trends: strategic and organizational planning, systems theory, corporate social responsibility, and organizational theory. This theory is described as a set of ideas aimed at maximizing stakeholder value (Haataja, 2020). It defines stakeholders as "any group or individual that can affect or be affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives." The theory was integrated into management systems in the 1970s and gradually developed by Freeman in

1984. In this context, Donaldson & Preston (1995) argued that this theory focuses on managerial decision-making, where the interests of all stakeholders have intrinsic value, with no group dominating others (Abdullah & Valentine 2009).

This theory gained prominence when researchers realized that an organization's activities impact the external environment, requiring accountability to a broader audience than just shareholders, including government bodies, political groups, unions, communities, and more (Yusoff & Alhaji 2012). The theory posits that considering stakeholders' interests ensures better outcomes for all, and traditional financial indicators do not fully reflect organizational performance. Moreover, effective stakeholder management leads to long-term profitability.

In light of this theory, the diversity of stakeholders within society becomes evident, highlighting the importance of governance, which relies on participation, equity, and transparency to enhance the effectiveness of cultural policy implementation.

1.4. Study Concepts

The study is based on two main concepts

The Concept of Governance: Governance refers to oversight, guidance, and management. The Global Governance Commission defines it as "The various ways in which individuals and public and private institutions manage their common affairs" (Jamshed & Tabassum 2023: 2-3).

The fundamental difference between governance and government is that governance requires authority, but this authority does not necessarily come from government bodies. Governance includes cooperation between the state, civil society, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and public and private institutions. It is characterized by decentralization, market-based management, and collaboration between the public and private sectors, instead of traditional supervision and centralization (Keping 2018).

Procedurally, governance is defined as mechanisms aimed at improving the efficiency of the administrative system by activating accountability, oversight, and ensuring collaboration among all stakeholders to achieve the common good.

The Concept of Cultural Policies: Cultural policies are defined as "the set of conscious practices in a society aimed at fulfilling specific cultural needs using available resources" (Alasuutari & Kangas 2020: 6).

Procedurally, cultural policies are defined as actions reflecting the state's vision for culture, aimed at organizing cultural work to achieve sustainable

cultural development.

2. PREVIOUS STUDIES

In reviewing socio-cultural studies, (Moro & Legale 2023) explored the role of cultural policies in achieving social integration, while (Farrugia 2022) examined the effectiveness of cultural policies in enhancing integration and reducing social divisions. (Papazoglou 2019) discussed the impact of cultural policies on social and economic development.

Regarding cultural policies in public policy, (Richer 2021) studied the positioning of cultural policies and their methodologies for promoting the arts. (Mohamed & Abd Almeguid 2022) addressed challenges facing Egyptian museums in cultural policies, while (Asare 2020) discussed factors hindering smooth implementation of cultural policies.

Other studies focused on improving cultural policies. (Nam 2008) investigated ways to enhance cultural policies, while (McConnell 2009) examined factors contributing to the success of cultural policies.

On the role of culture in supporting the economy, (Teruya 2003) revealed the contribution of cultural policies to political, economic, and social objectives, while (Yang 2023) analyzed the relationship between cultural policies, the economy, and society.

Regarding governance, (Ahmad & Saleem 2014) examined the impact of governance on human capital development, while (Yan & Liu 2023) focused on cultural governance's role in enhancing cultural sustainability. (Karunia et al. 2023) evaluated the impact of good governance on public organizations' performance.

Other studies examined the impact of governance on the cultural sector, such as (Moon 2001), which explored the impact of cultural governance on cultural performance, and (Su & Cai. 2019), which discussed the importance of cultural governance. (Kim et al. 2023) highlighted the role of cultural governance in managing conflicts in heritage renewal projects.

Studies also explored the effects of governance models on the cultural sector, such as (Iaione et al. 2022), which studied participatory governance, and (Redaelli 2020), which analyzed multi-level governance. (Wang et al. 2022) discussed challenges facing hierarchical governance in cultural sustainability.

2.1. Commentary on Previous Studies

It is evident from previous studies that cultural policies receive significant attention at both regional and international levels, as culture is a dynamic

factor in achieving social and economic development in most countries worldwide. The challenges associated with cultural policies – such as insufficient funding, weak organizational structures, centralized decision-making, and marginalization within public policy – are not limited to Egyptian society but are clearly observed in many countries across Asia, Europe, and Africa. This is demonstrated by studies conducted in Asian countries such as Vietnam, Taiwan, South Korea, and China; European countries including Italy, Malta, Greece, the United Kingdom, and the European Union; and African countries such as Ghana.

Consequently, Egypt's situation should be understood within a context that is interconnected with global and regional challenges shared by both developing and developed nations. This provides an opportunity for comparison and the utilization of international models that have adopted cultural governance as an approach to addressing these challenges and enhancing the effectiveness of cultural policies. Previous studies have shown that applying governance principles – such as transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency – contributes to improving the performance of cultural policies and enhancing their sustainability in many countries.

Accordingly, the current study is based on the fundamental assumption that governance represents a key approach to strengthening the effectiveness of Egyptian cultural policies, especially as Egyptian society faces challenges similar to those experienced globally. The focus on the Egyptian context is justified by the researchers' affiliation with this society and the availability of official and statistical data, which allows for evaluating Egypt's cultural policies within a global context, and for proposing more comprehensive development strategies based on international experiences.

2.2. Benefits from Previous Studies

1. Theoretically: Helped in understanding the study's variables and concepts.
2. Methodologically: Contributed to determining the methodology and data collection tools.
3. Comparison: The research findings will be compared with those of previous studies.

3. CULTURAL POLICIES: HISTORICAL ROOTS

Between 1966 - 1972, the foundation of the "new cultural policies" was laid, with UNESCO adopting the "Declaration of Principles of International

Cultural Cooperation" in 1966. UNESCO argued that culture, as a social reform, should be part of the social and economic goods provided by the state. A series of conferences followed, setting the strategy for cultural policies. The first such conference was held in Venice in 1970, followed by a significant step in Helsinki in 1972 to establish the model of new cultural policy (Vestheim 2019).

Hence, numerous models of cultural policies have emerged, with each country adopting the model that best suits its needs. In general, the most prominent ones are

State Bureaucracy Model: The state fully controls cultural policies, centralizing funding in its institutions (Milkintas 2021).

Liberal Model: Cultural institutions are privately owned and market forces regulate cultural policies with minimal state intervention (Ibid).

Arm's Length Cultural Policy Model: The state provides funding but leaves cultural institutions free to manage themselves (Pauliukeviciute & Raipa 2014).

Nation's Liberation Cultural Policy Model: This model emphasizes nationalism, promoting national culture after liberation from external dominance (Ibid).

State Prestige Model: It aims to preserve a nation's cultural identity to bolster its global prestige, commonly used in France (Ibid).

In Egypt, the bureaucratic model dominates, with the state controlling cultural institutions. Studies such as (Hassan 2022) and (El-Qamhawy 2023) highlight the centralization and lack of community participation. Due to economic conditions, the cultural sector suffers from heavy reliance on the state for funding and the absence of a genuine democratic cultural project.

To create an effective cultural policy, Egypt needs to rely on partnerships between the three sectors (government, private, and civil society) in funding, formulating, implementing, and evaluating policies. This will enhance transparency and cooperation across different ministries.

3.1. The Importance of Cultural policies

Cultural policies have gained significant importance in state strategies due to the symbolic and material presence of culture and its connection to various societal systems. Cultural industries have improved the economic and social status of nations by reducing unemployment and promoting national identity. Governments have thus prioritized the cultural sector and integrated cultural policies into political, economic, and social agendas.

Clear cultural policies also define a state's vision for the cultural sector, help it set practical strategies, and foster collaboration with other sectors to ensure cultural sustainability. They also help evaluate the state's performance and enable cultural professionals to plan and execute strategies effectively.

Cultural policies focus on building infrastructure, utilizing cultural resources for development, and preserving cultural heritage for current and future generations. In Egypt, these policies aim to create an inclusive, creative, and vibrant cultural environment that allows citizens to express themselves freely while embracing global cultures (Mohamed & Abd Almeguid; Abu Ghazi, 2014 a). Legislative support and cooperation between government and civil society are essential to achieving these goals.

3.2. Elements of Cultural Policies

Cultural policies consist of several key elements that vary by country but generally include five core components:

Cultural Legislation Acts as the formal tool for managing cultural activities. It is influenced by economic and political factors and must align with the cultural sector's developments both domestically and internationally (Azizi & Bofegelian 2023). For example, Egypt's 2014 constitution, updated in 2019, emphasizes the protection of cultural heritage and access to cultural resources (Egyptian Constitution 2019).

Cultural Planning Involves governmental activities and programs aimed at assessing and addressing cultural needs. Effective planning requires research into current cultural challenges and citizen needs (Simjanovska 2011).

Cultural Funding Essential for policy implementation. Many cultural policies fail due to inadequate budgets for cultural institutions.

Administrative Organization Defines the roles and relationships of cultural actors and ensures effective implementation of policies. It involves central and decentralized bodies managing cultural activities and avoiding conflicts between formal and informal institutions (Azizi & Bofegelian).

Cultural Structures Necessary for executing cultural practices, with a focus on organizing, monitoring, and budgeting for cultural institutions.

These elements highlight the importance of legislative support, strategic planning, adequate funding, effective administration, and robust cultural structures in developing and implementing successful cultural policies.

The implementation of cultural policy involves several stages, each integral to the process

Policy Formation This initial stage focuses on setting long, medium, and short-term goals aligned with national policies. It involves defining the cultural infrastructure, including institutions and sectors, and establishing mechanisms for data collection, implementation, and evaluation (Al-Mohammadi & Ben Abdullah 2022).

Planning This stage involves strategic planning with other ministries, reflecting three models: cultural planning, which emphasizes local creativity and resources; arts policy, which focuses on various art forms; and creative cities, which aims at enhancing cultural uniqueness and economic impact (Pauliukeviciute & Raipa).

Implementation This phase puts the plan into action through legislative measures and partnerships with private and public institutions. The Ministry of Culture, along with other ministries, manages this stage. Effective implementation requires adequate funding and alignment with the country's strategic goals (Azizi & Bofegelian).

Evaluation Ongoing evaluation is crucial for assessing progress and adjusting policies. It involves monitoring, reviewing, and making necessary adjustments based on performance indicators. Transparency and accessibility of cultural sector data are essential for effective evaluation (Abu Ghazi 2014 b).

Overall, successful cultural policy requires clear goals, strategic planning, robust implementation, and continuous evaluation to adapt to new challenges and ensure alignment with national priorities.

3.3. Governance of Cultural Policies

Despite the significant role of culture as an economic driver, its contribution to sustainable development remains limited due to practical neglect, even though it is included in the political agenda. This neglect is attributed to the centralization of cultural institutions, which has led to fewer visitors, reduced community awareness, and insufficient funding from civil society organizations and private entities. Consequently, those interested in cultural affairs have called for the governance of culture to ensure effective management capable of overcoming these challenges. This need has become especially pressing after years of government performance characterized by weak accountability and evaluation mechanisms, as well as poor cooperation between various ministries and sectors.

The root causes of these imbalances lie in what is referred to as the "institutional bottleneck,"

manifesting in the inefficiency of institutional management, lack of transparency and accountability, absence of an integrated future vision, weak public service performance, and the inadequacy in preparing and implementing public policies (Ettijahat Foundation 2014).

Moreover, the process of formulating cultural policies often sees them being exploited for the benefit of political actors rather than for cultural advancement. This has created a gap between the intended goals of cultural policies and their actual outcomes. As a result, the governance of cultural policies has become imperative to prevent their misuse as tools for political empowerment or the promotion of political ideologies.

Cultural governance is defined as the involvement of governments, either directly or indirectly, in promoting and managing the programs of cultural organizations operating within specific geographical boundaries and under unique financial and administrative arrangements (Schmitt 2011).

The importance of cultural governance stems from two main reasons: first, many cultural organizations rely on external resources in addition to their own income, which underscores the need for accountability. Second, governance plays a critical role in fostering trust, well-being, and sustainable growth within cultural organizations (King & Schramme 2019).

Achieving sustainability in cultural governance requires a collaborative approach to shaping and implementing cultural policies. Such governance relies on a systemic vision of culture and an understanding of how different cultural elements operate and thrive within local contexts. Governance systems in the context of sustainability aim to strengthen cross-sectoral relationships, establish "rich platforms" for dialogue and action, and reduce inequalities and social divisions, while prioritizing engagement with "hard-to-reach communities" (Duxbury 2014).

Overall, effective governance necessitates selecting policies that meet public needs and enhance transparency and accountability, while reducing corruption and improving democratic institutions (Lukman 2022).

3.4. Egypt's Status in Governance Indicators

Various organizations assess institutional governance effectiveness using specific indicators to guide policymakers. This paper will focus on prominent global governance indicators.

World Bank Governance Indicators (WGI) The WGI includes composite indicators based on over 30

data sources, covering six broad dimensions of governance across more than 200 countries and regions from 1996 to 2022. These dimensions are: Governance Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, Control of Corruption, Voice and Accountability, and Political Stability and Absence of Violence. The indicators are measured on a scale from -2.5 to 2.5 or as percentiles from 0 to 100, where higher values indicate better outcomes.

The following figures illustrate Egypt's performance in these global governance indicators from 2017 to 2022.

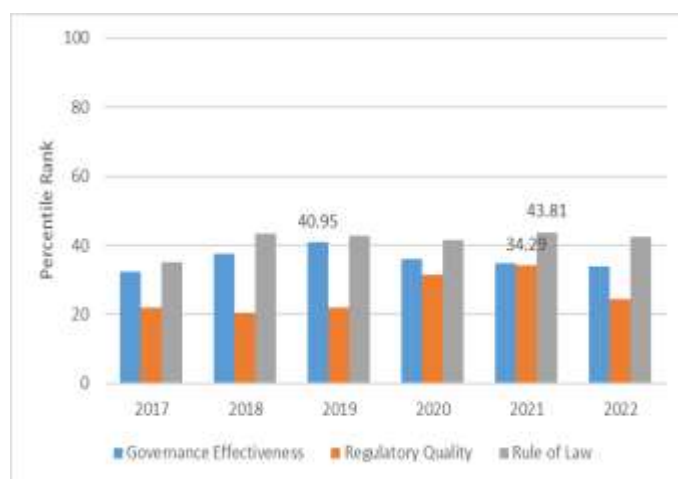


Figure 1: Egypt's Performance on Global Governance Indicators Regarding Governance Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, and the Rule of Law during the Period (2017–2022). The Chart was prepared by the Researchers. The Most Recent Data is from 2022.

Source: World Bank, Worldwide Governance Indicators, 2023.

The data indicates that in terms of governance effectiveness, 2019 had the highest percentage for Egypt, but did not exceed 41%. This was followed by a decline in subsequent years. For regulatory quality, there was a relative improvement in 2020 and 2021, but it then declined again, and the highest percentage not exceeding 35%. Regarding the rule of law, the percentages have fluctuated, reaching their peak in 2021 but generally not exceeding 44%.

As for control of corruption, voice and accountability, political stability, and absence of violence, as shown in Figure 2, the control of corruption indicator reached its highest percentage in 2017, but not exceeding 40%, and then experienced a decline followed by stability in 2021 and 2022. Voice and accountability had its highest percentage in 2017, but this was very low, at just 14%. Political stability and absence of violence had its highest percentage in 2021, but this did not exceed 15%.

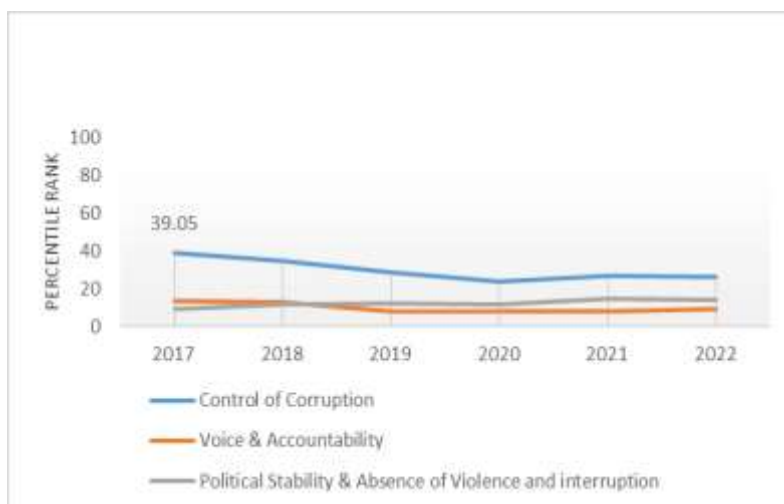


Figure 2: Egypt's Performance on Global Governance Indicators Related to Freedom of Expression, Accountability, and Political Stability During the Period 2017–2022. The Chart was prepared by the Researchers. The Most Recent Data is from 2022.

Source: World Bank, Worldwide Governance Indicators, 2023.

Based on all six indicators and percentages from the previous figures, Egypt's performance on the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) is varied. However, 2021 saw improvements in three indicators regulatory quality, the rule of law, and political stability and absence of violence. Meanwhile, control of corruption and voice and accountability were highest in 2017 but declined thereafter. Government effectiveness peaked in 2019 and then declined year by year.

Overall, according to the latest indicators from the World Bank for 2022, all indicators showed a decline except for voice and accountability, which improved. Notably, Egypt's performance remains low, with no indicator exceeding 44%, posing a barrier to

achieving Egypt's vision for sustainable development. This suggests that the policies adopted by the Egyptian government are not sufficiently effective and contain some gaps, possibly starting with issues in controlling corruption, the rule of law, and political stability, as indicated by the metrics.

Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International: This tool aims to measure the level of corruption across all sectors of society. The Corruption Perceptions Index ranks 180 countries and regions worldwide based on the perceived levels of public sector corruption, on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). The following chart illustrates Egypt's position on the Corruption Perceptions Index from 2017 to 2023.



Figure 3: Egypt's performance on the Corruption Perceptions Index during the period from 2017 to 2023. The Chart was prepared by the Researchers. The Most Recent Data is from 2022.

Source: World Bank, Worldwide Governance Indicators, 2023.

Monitoring Egypt's performance on the Corruption Perceptions Index reveals that its performance is relatively stable, with scores consistently ranging between 30 and 35. In 2023, Egypt scored 35 out of 100 and ranked 108 out of 180 countries, indicating a continuing critical situation regarding corruption control.

Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation: The Mo Ibrahim Index is a tool for measuring and monitoring governance performance across 54 African countries through four main categories: security and rule of law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunities, and human development. Each category includes subcategories that provide quantitative measures of comprehensive governance

dimensions. The 2022 Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance includes 81 indicators. Scores range from 0 to 100, with 100 being the best. Rankings are based on these scores and expressed as a position out of 54.

The ten-year trends used in this research offer additional layers of analysis by measuring changes in scores from the first to the last year of the period. They compare performance on each governance measure between 2021 and 2012, providing an assessment of change. Trend rankings, which constitute the third layer of analysis, evaluate mid-period trends from 2017 to 2021, helping to identify early signs of trajectory shifts by comparing mid-period trends with the full ten-year period.

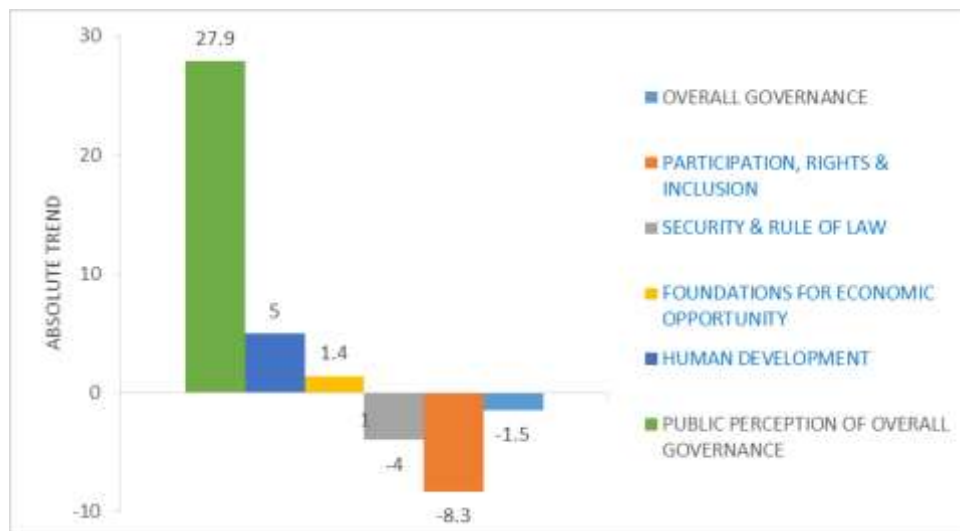


Figure 4: Egypt's position on the Mo Ibrahim African Governance Index during the period from 2012 to 2021. The Chart was prepared by the Researchers. The Most Recent Data is from 2022.
Source: World Bank, Worldwide Governance Indicators, 2023.

According to the indicators from the previous chart, Egypt's overall governance score has deteriorated over the past decade (2012-2021), with the most rapid decline occurring in the last five years (2017-2021). Egypt has seen improvements in two of the four main categories since 2012: economic opportunities and human development. However, there has been significant deterioration in participation, rights, and inclusion, as well as a decline in security and the rule of law. Despite this, public perception of overall governance has improved over the past decade. In 2021, Egypt achieved a score of 48.4 out of 100, ranking 27 out of 54 countries in overall governance.

E-Government Development Index (EGDI) by the United Nations: The EGDI measures the development of e-government and is based on a comprehensive survey of online presence across all

193 UN member states. It assesses national websites and the implementation of e-government policies and strategies across various sectors for delivering essential services.

This index is a weighted average of three standardized indicators on important aspects of e-government: the Online Service Index (OSI), the Telecommunications Infrastructure Index (TII), and the Human Capital Index (HCI). These indicators are composite measures that can be analyzed independently. EGDI scores range from 0 to 1, **with countries categorized into four levels**

Low EGDI values range from 0.0 to 0.25.

Medium EGDI values range from 0.25 to 0.50.

High EGDI values range from 0.50 to 0.75.

Very high EGDI values range from 0.75 to 1.00.

The following chart illustrates Egypt's performance in terms of e-service development and

e-participation.

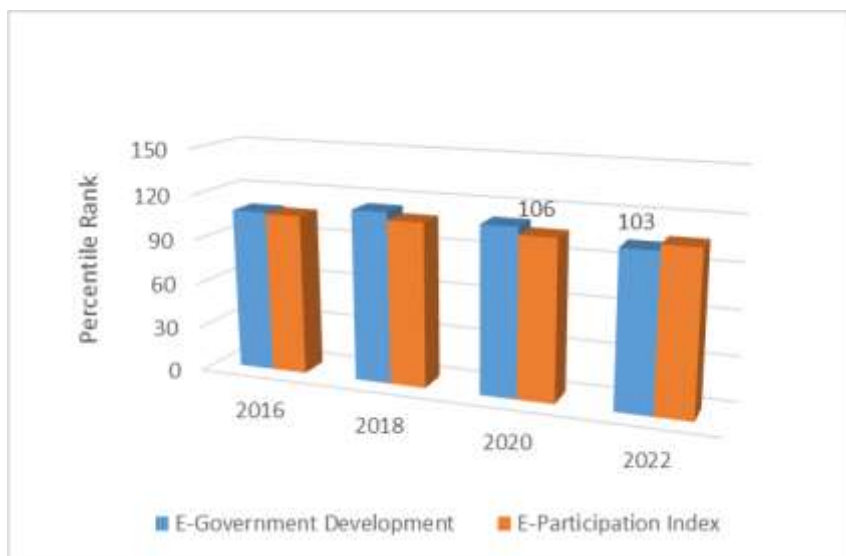


Figure 5: Egypt's performance on the e-Government Index during the Period from 2016 to 2022. The Chart was prepared by the Researchers. The Most Recent Data is from 2022.
 Source: World Bank, Worldwide Governance Indicators, 2023.

Based on the data in the previous chart, Egypt has shown improvement in digital transformation. According to the "E-Government Survey 2022" by the United Nations, Egypt is classified as a high-performing country, ranking 103 out of 193 countries for e-services, its best rank in recent years. However, Egypt dropped to 107 in e-participation in 2022, a decline from its 106th position in 2020. Overall, while Egypt has advanced in technological aspects and digital services, significant challenges remain in fighting corruption, upholding the rule of law, and improving governance principles, as reflected by various governance indicators.

After presenting the position of Egyptian society in governance indicators, the next section will highlight the implications of this for cultural policies and the Egyptian cultural sector.

A. The Ministry of Culture's budget is from the below 1% of Egypt's total national budget across recent years: According to figure No. (6) Below, statistics indicate that the budget of the Ministry of Culture is always less than 1% of the total national budget. This continued decline in the Ministry of Culture's budget allocations highlights the continued marginalization of the cultural sector. Despite its recognized importance for sustainable development.

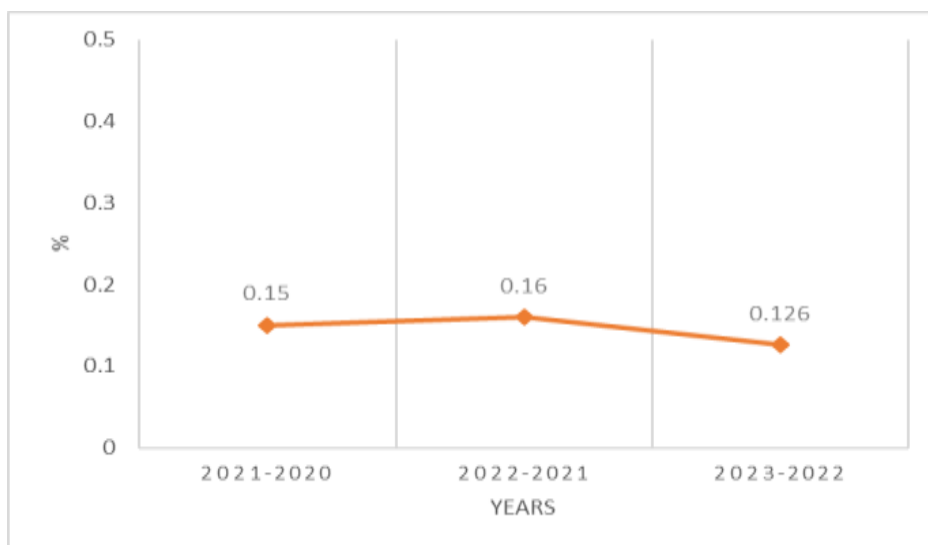


Figure 6: The Percentage of the Budget Allocated to the Ministry of Culture From the State's General Financial Budget.

B. The status of the Egyptian cultural sector according to data from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics

- Percentage of employees in the cultural sector relative to the total number of employees in

various state sectors

The following chart (Figure 7) illustrates the percentage of employees in the cultural sector compared to the total number of employees in the public sector/ state-owned enterprises over a period of five consecutive years.

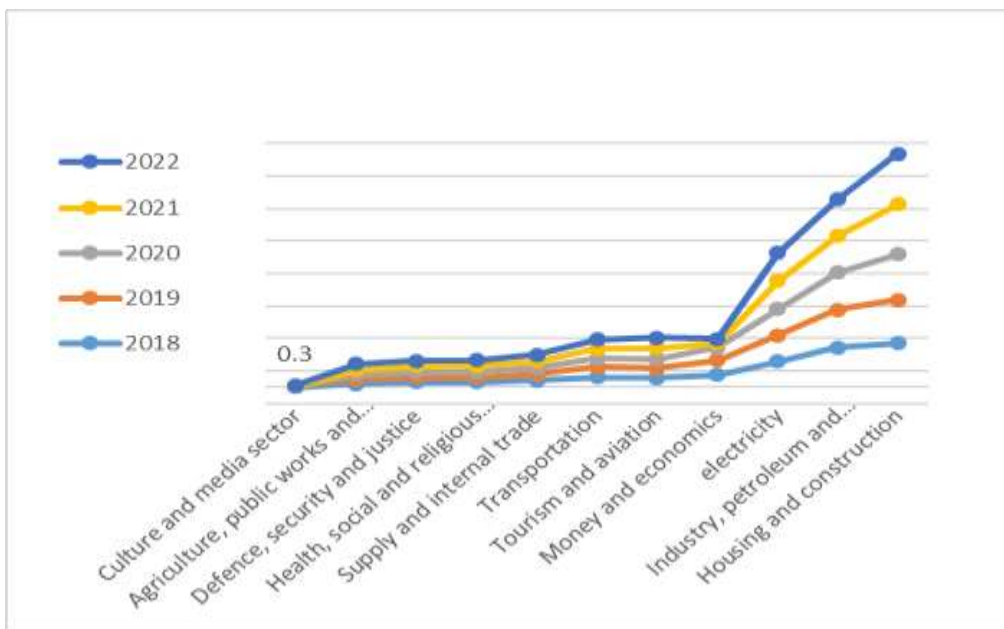


Figure 7: The Proportional Distribution of Employees in the Public Sector/Business Sector During the Period From 2018 to 2022.

Comparing the percentage of employees in the cultural sector with other ministries, the chart shows that the cultural and media sector has the smallest number of employees, constituting only 0.3% of the total number of state employees. Reviewing the statistics for the percentage of employees in the cultural and media sector over five years (2018-2022)

indicates that the percentage remains relatively stable, as shown in Figure 8. This stability reflects the stagnation and neglect experienced by the cultural sector, which is treated as a secondary, less important area by the state. This has led to weak cultural policies, likely exacerbated by the consistently low budget allocated to the sector over the years.

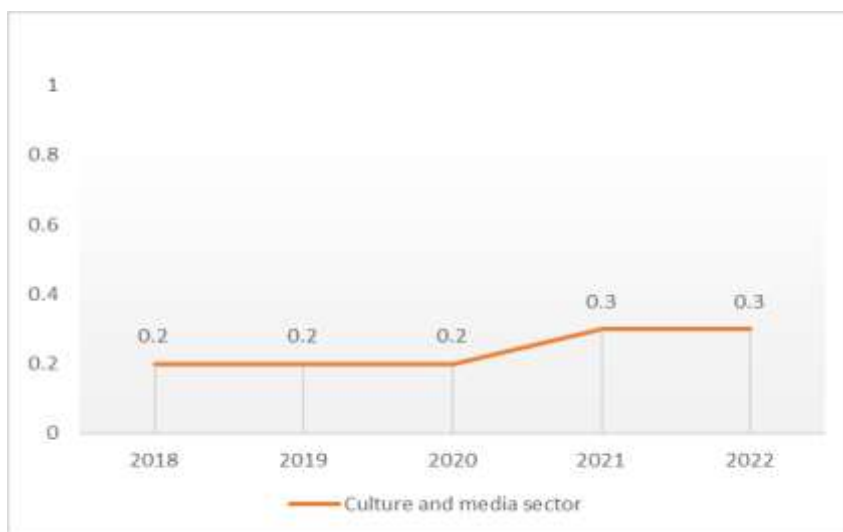


Figure 8: The Proportional Distribution of Employees in the Culture and Media Sector Relative to the Total Number of Employees in the Public Sector/Business Sector of the State During the Period From 2018 to 2022.

Distribution of Cultural Institutions across Provinces:

Table 1: Distribution of Cultural Sectors in 2021.

	Governorates	Theatres	employees	Culture councils	employees	Culture associations	employees	libraries	employees
1	Cairo	17	1049	25	589	67	880	230	1464
2	Alexandria	5	306	9	220	13	140	127	2932
3	Port Said	1	1	7	104	5	30	37	101
4	Suez			8	64	7	89	11	61
5	Damietta	1	27	8	167	4	42	25	70
6	Dakahlia	2	7	25	485	8	255	81	485
7	Sharqia	1	4	19	551	3	13	70	310
8	Qalyubia			16	560	5	55	58	343
9	Kafr El Sheikh			16	230	10	176	27	75
10	Gharbia	1	13	12	374	7	39	49	286
11	Menoufia			19	558	9	92	51	381
12	Beheira	1	71	17	474	5	49	43	228
13	Ismailia	1	7	6	130	7	54	41	170
14	Giza	3	326	17	483	8	78	144	1094
15	Beni Suef	1	4	8	281	8	82	47	173
16	Fayoum			5	442	7	114	34	252
17	Minya			15	574	13	128	53	409
18	Asyot	2	8	17	408	12	95	67	492
19	Sohag	1	46	15	337	14	135	39	204
20	Qina	1	7	13	323	6	38	38	166
21	Aswan	1	71	16	281			44	203
22	Luxor	1	5	11	802	4	48	11	92
23	Red Sea			11	169	7	82	24	154
24	New Valley	1	24	12	147	9	53	19	62
25	North Sinai			7	103	2	13	11	12
26	South Sinai			7	86			11	11
27	Matrooh			6	84	1	5	11	11
Total		41	1976	347	9026	241	2993	1403	10302

Cultural Institutions Distribution: The previous table shows that cultural centralization is a dominant feature in Egypt, which a significant concentration of theaters in Cairo, which holds 41.5% of the nation's total. Generally, there is a shortage of theaters. In addition, the distribution of employees in theaters exhibits irregularity; for example, although the number of theaters in Qena and Aswan is the same, the number of employees is vastly different – Qena has only seven employees, while Aswan has seventy-one. This indicates a lack of systematic planning by the Ministry of Culture in distributing cultural sector staff across provinces. Some provinces, like Qalyubia, Kafr El Sheikh, Menoufia, Suez, Fayoum, Matrouh, North Sinai, and South Sinai, lack theaters altogether, reflecting the state's diminished focus on the theatrical sector.

Cultural voids in regional areas are prevalent in many Arab countries, with cultural and artistic production often centered in capitals and major cities. A comparative study of Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt revealed that cultural dynamics are stronger in capitals, which are better equipped and have effective networks of artists and intellectuals. In contrast, regions suffer from a lack of

cultural and artistic output and access. This deficit is often due to the absence of real cultural policies, inadequate human resources, financial and technical weaknesses, and insufficient training of involved parties (Kasab & Bent Slimane 2013).

Regarding cultural palaces and houses of culture, although these institutions are widespread across Egypt, there is notable irregularity in staff distribution. For example, while Suez, Damietta, and Beni Suef each have eight cultural palaces, their staff numbers are 64, 167, and 281 respectively, highlighting the disparity in workforce allocation.

Cultural associations are present in most provinces, though absent in Aswan and South Sinai. Libraries are also available across various provinces. Similar to other cultural sectors, there is a notable irregularity in workforce distribution, indicating a lack of effective cultural planning and clear, informed cultural policies.

Changes in the Number of Cultural Institutions (2017-2021): This section will detail the total number of cultural associations, cultural palaces, museums, theaters, cinemas, libraries, and the number of books and pamphlets printed during the period from 2017 to 2021.

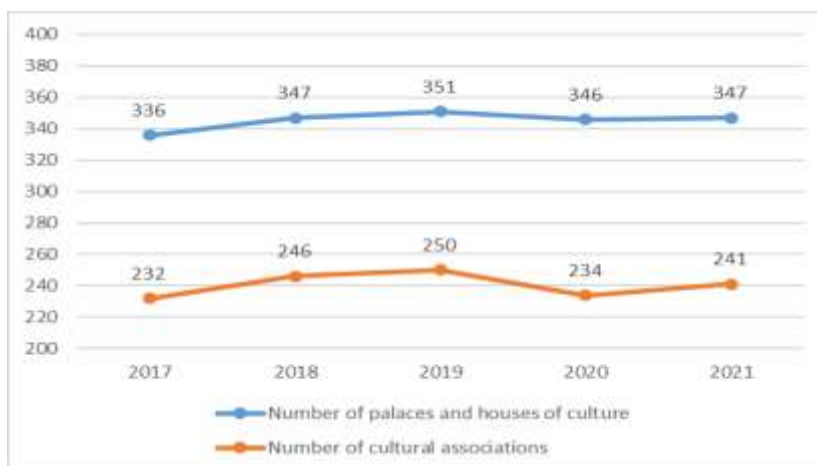


Figure 9: The Total Number of Cultural Associations, Cultural Palaces, and Cultural Houses During the Period From 2017 to 2021.

It is evident from the previous figure that cultural associations and cultural palaces saw an increase in their numbers until 2019, but then experienced a decline in 2020. This was due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, which required social distancing to reduce the spread of the virus. As a result, the majority of places that allowed gatherings were closed at that time. However, in 2021, they witnessed a relative increase in their numbers, though they did not return to the level they were at in 2019.

As for museums, their numbers increased over

four consecutive years, but there was a decline in 2021. In contrast, cinemas saw a decline in their numbers over four consecutive years, followed by a slight increase in 2021. This generally reflects a lack of government interest in art and its use as a tool to serve its policies. Meanwhile, public theaters in the governorates remained stable in number over four years, with only one additional theater being added in 2021, as shown in figure (10). This leads us to conclude that their numbers have remained relatively stable.

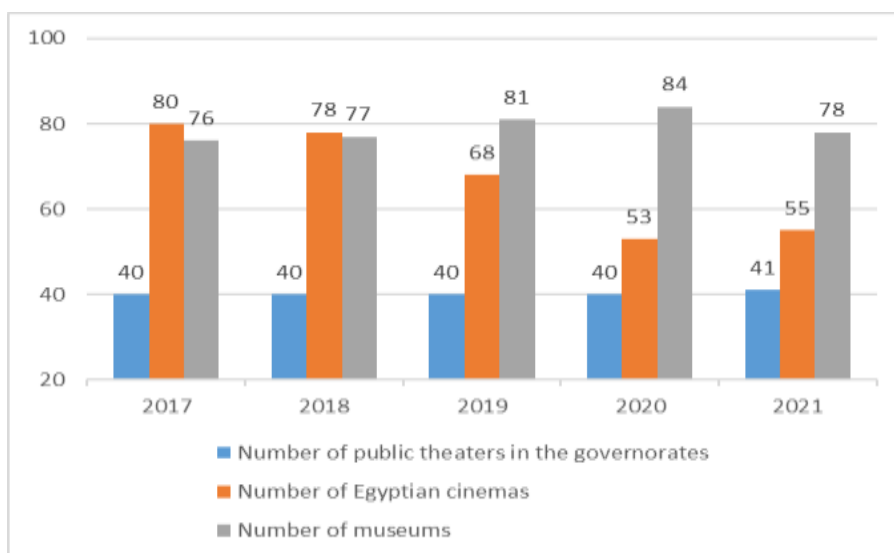


Figure 10: The Total Number of Museums, Cinemas, and Theaters During the Period From 2017 to 2021.

Referring to the total number of libraries, books, and booklets published during the period (2017-2021), as shown in figure (11) below, it is clear that the year 2019 represented the highest percentage of printed books and booklets, as well as the highest

number of libraries over the five years. However, 2020 witnessed a significant decline in the number of books and booklets printed over the five years, along with a reduction in the number of libraries during the same year. This sharp decline is attributed to the

COVID-19 pandemic and the exacerbation of economic crises.

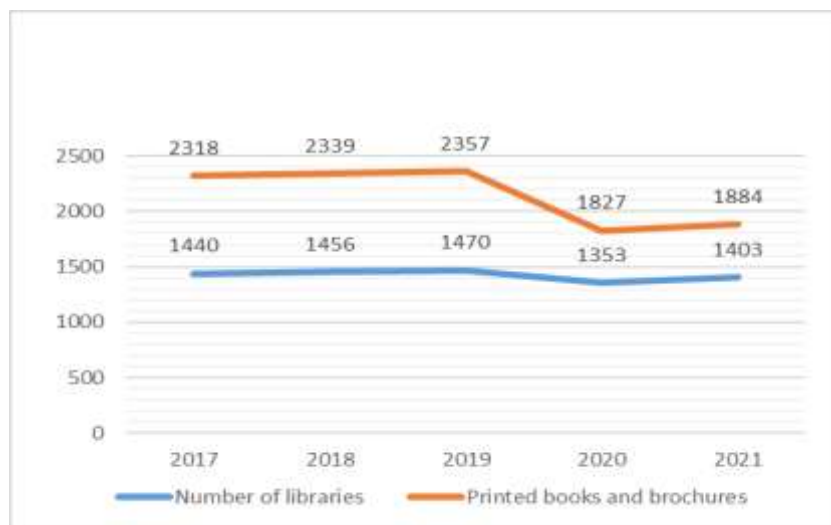


Figure 11: The Total Number of Libraries, Books, and Pamphlets Printed During the Period From 2017 to 2021.

From the overall statistics mentioned earlier, it is evident that the cultural sector remains marginalized by the state, and cultural policies continue to be weak. This weakness is largely due to the deteriorating economic conditions in Egyptian society and the significant reduction in the state budget allocated to the Ministry of Culture, with no alternative funding sources for the cultural sector. This indicates the absence of genuine institutional governance in Egyptian society, as pointed out by the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance, which highlighted a decline in comprehensive governance indicators over the past ten years in Egypt, resulting in a negative score of (-1.5).

It is worth noting that under the current economic conditions, challenges have become more severe, with cultural policies appearing very weak. The justification for reducing public budgets allocated to culture is the shortage of resources and the need to cut costs, with priority given to "more urgent" measures such as healthcare, social security, and so on. Therefore, since funding remains critical, other support tools must be strengthened. This can only be achieved if cultural policy is understood as a comprehensive social policy, which requires a multi-stakeholder approach to joint governance of culture. This involves "vertical" coordination of various priorities and agendas at the concerned levels (national, regional, and local governments, the private sector, and civil society), aligning cultural policies with policies related to other aspects of society (Di Federico, Hunyadi & Inkei 2013).

The importance of governance in cultural policies, especially in the current circumstances, lies in its aim

to achieve cultural solidarity. This means that every capable individual bears their share of responsibility in supporting and promoting cultural work – those with financial means contribute financially, those with knowledge contribute intellectually, and those with expertise contribute with their experience. In the end, everyone contributes to protecting culture from the challenges it faces, enhancing its activities and nurturing its diversity. It is essential that solidarity is based on a set of guiding principles and implemented through specific mechanisms. Solidarity is the mutual contribution and collaboration between states, institutions, organizations, and individuals to accomplish their cultural project, enabling those with the means to empower others to achieve collective goals (Al-Qiyam 2007).

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research highlights the critical role of governance in shaping and enhancing cultural policies in Egypt. The findings emphasize that effective governance structures are vital for the development and sustainability of the cultural sector, which has historically been marginalized. The study also points to the necessity of a multi-stakeholder approach that fosters collaboration among government, civil society, and the private sector to create a comprehensive cultural policy framework.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that current economic challenges and reduced budget allocations have significantly weakened cultural policies, requiring innovative funding solutions and strategic prioritization of cultural initiatives. Recognizing

culture as a key component of social policy can help align cultural goals with broader societal objectives, contributing to human development and national identity.

The research calls for a renewed focus on governance principles that prioritize transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in cultural policymaking, especially after the experiences of various countries have demonstrated their positive impacts and effectiveness in strengthening cultural policies. Strengthening governance in the cultural sector is essential for fostering a vibrant cultural ecosystem that reflects the diverse voices and heritage of Egypt's people.

To address these challenges and unlock the full potential of the cultural sector, **the following recommendations are proposed**

1. Strengthening governance frameworks: Clear governance structures should be established to define roles and responsibilities among stakeholders, including government entities, civil society, and the private sector. This will improve coordination and collaboration in cultural policy development and implementation.
2. Increasing budget allocations: The government should prioritize cultural funding by increasing allocations to the Ministry of Culture. This financial support is crucial for developing cultural infrastructure, supporting initiatives, and ensuring the sustainability of cultural institutions.
3. Enhancing stakeholder engagement: Engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including artists, cultural professionals, and community representatives, is essential for creating inclusive cultural policies. Regular consultations and participatory methods should be used to ensure policies reflect community needs and aspirations.

Acknowledgements: The authors extend their sincere appreciation to Umm Al Quwain University and Zagazig University for their academic and institutional support throughout the development of this research. Special thanks are also due to the Ministry of Culture in Egypt and the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics for providing access to data that contributed to the analytical depth of this study. The authors are grateful to all reviewers and colleagues whose constructive feedback helped enhance the quality of this work.

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