Full Length Research

Future challenges for policy makers in the battle against corruption in Egypt

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Corruption is a widespread phenomenon which exists in all types of societies with variations in degrees. Egypt's ranking of 114 out of 177 impelled the Egyptian government to adopt the national anti-corruption strategy. The study aims to examine current contributions of the state's institutions in combating corruption. Results deduced from conducted semi-structured interviews recommended raising the level of social satisfaction from the political system and the government as well as creating a positive relationship between social satisfaction and political stability. The study concludes by emphasizing on the significance of the citizens role, their awareness and participation, in combating corruption.

Key Words: Combatting corruption, National Anti-Corruption Commission, Egypt, Public Policies.

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH PROBLEM

Corruption has been a widespread phenomenon which exists in all developing and developed societies with variations in degrees. Many countries are currently taking this issue seriously due to the obvious connection between societal satisfaction and the supply of citizen needs in response to public demands. There is no doubt that corruption endangers stability and security of society by constantly undermining public institutions and values of democracy, moral values, justice, and equality in addition to jeopardizing sustainable development and rule of law (Borja. 2017).

In Egypt, financial, administrative, moral, and political corruption is deep-rooted in all state institutions. This serious phenomenon is considered one of the major obstacles to the development of different plans and programs.

The study aims to examine current contributions of the state's institutions in combating corruption. Strategies have been adopted to confront corruption in order to build economy based on a solid foundation that would enable the country to reach the rank of developed countries. This research seeks to identify the concept of corruption, its causes, and its negative effects on the state institutions and the Egyptian economy. We hope to develop possible future solutions that will address this serious phenomenon and enable officials to carry out comprehensive reforms in the state institutions. This will lead to supporting the economy and promoting society. (Moustafa, 2017)

How will the current Egyptian political system achieve social satisfaction? Can public policy makers achieve social satisfaction in the scarcity of resources and new economic reform policies; or is the ordeal of corruption so imbedded in the society that it consumes such efforts? What challenges will the policy makers face through an unstable social reality? What are the measures Egypt took to address these challenges? These questions will be tackled by this paper.

METHODOLOGY

The study encompasses a qualitative analysis that uses primary data collection, through interviewing members of

the Suez Canal University branch for Anti-Corruption and Coordination Committee, in addition to employing academic literature, articles, and reports as secondary sources for the research.

The paper is divided into four sections; the first one covers the conceptual framework, and the last one presents final remarks and recommendations. The middle sections discuss the challenges related to combating corruption as well as the national and international efforts to overcome the problem of corruption in public institutions.

I. Conceptual Framework for Study

a.   Defining Public Policy

The concept 'public policy' has been used in the context of managing the affairs of state and society. Thus public policies in a comprehensive sense are the outputs of any political system. Consequently, it is a major input that must be carried out by the government whether this responsibility is administered by bureaucrats directly or indirectly.(Marume, 2016)

This governmental responsibility is managed in two cases:

> The implementation of general policies is imposed by the political system (top-bottom approach) through binding, 'authoritarian or compulsive' decisions used to organize societal behavior and provide a better standard of living to citizens by serving their needs. (Sabatier, 1986)
> Suggestions raised by governmental administrative bodies are based on direct contact with the society within a specified political system. (Adnan, 2017)
> We can thus assure that public policies in this sense are considered the output of the political system, and at the same time, it is the output that government administrative bodies use to implement such policies in various fields like education, health, housing, transportation, and social security. Additionally, public policies are essential for ensuring better resources distribution.

b.   Defining and classifying corruption

There are diverse definitions for corruption, this is due to the complex nature of the phenomenon and the multiplicity of different angles through which we can look at it. Yet some of these definitions have been widely accepted, including the definition of the World Bank for corruption which focuses on the abuse of public power for achieving private gains and benefits. However, this definition is heavily criticized, as it limits corruption only to the public and governmental sector.

A more contemporary definition would widen the scope to include the misuse of any authority whether in the public or private sector. Corruption is defined as 'the abuse of entrusted authority to fulfil private interests and gains'. (Brookes et al, 2013)

Different types of corruption include administrative, financial, and political corruption. This criminal act varies according to size and type/category. Classifying corruption according to size depends on the size of gains achieved and the rank of the official who undertakes such a crime; in this case, we could divide corruption into minor corruption and gross corruption. (Van et al, 2018). Minor corruption, which is done by small employees and officials, is typically unorganized and aims to facilitate complicated rules and regulations (red tape). Gross corruption is generally performed by senior and top ranking officials. This type is characterized by being systematic and easy to operate, and the most common kind is preferential treatment, payoffs, and grants.This type usually exists in developing countries and the least developed countries, which suffer from the lack of rules and regulations governing work. (" 4 Types of Political Corruption",n.d.) Other categories may include job and administrative corruption, bureaucratic corruption, moral corruption, and others. ("Corruption, reasons and signs", 2012)

II. Challenges related to combating corruption

a.   Indicators of corruption

Bribery, theft, and fraud are evident in both public and private sectors. (Saltaji, 2018) This is manifested by taking advantage of one's job, acquiring illegitimate wealth, showing lack of respect for laws and regulations, and exhibiting lack of equal service and injustice. Misuse of lawful position, power, and authority by public employees holding administrative office for personal reasons, attaining benefit or money undermine the fairness of the work by public office holders and governmental bodies. Other forms include the use of money as commissions, paid to government employees discretely in-order to provide special assistance to a specific person.

Exploitation of government or administrative corruption by the private sector are also indicators of corruption. Examples of such include giving jobs to companies outside the framework of publicized tenders in exchange of money or benefit and having banks involved in suspicious transactions such as fund balances.(Stroligo et al, 2013).

Corruption may also involve lack of transparency and red tape. This is revealed by manipulating the state rules and regulations (routine) in putting obstacles preventing the interests of citizens and can be due to government's failure to perform its duties for the public.(Abou Deya, 2004).

b. Causes of corruption

One of the main reasons leading to corruption is the weakness of institutions in the political system, as well as the prevalence of tyranny and dictatorship. In democratic systems, there is a supervisory body outside the control of the executive authority that can account for any financial and administrative irregularities, which lowers the tendency of corruption The phenomenon of corruption is increased by the lack of political awareness, lack of knowledge of the mechanisms and administrative systems through which power is exercised, and lack of expertise and efficiency to manage the affairs of the state increases the phenomenon of corruption.("The causes of corruption, 2011)

- Lack of judiciary independence is one of the important causes for corruption. The importance of judiciary independence derives from the existence of an independent and impartial judiciary system that performs its work fairly, exercises its power in society without discrimination, and promotes justice among individuals through peaceful dimensions of good governance.
- Corruption also occurs due to social reasons. The population and attitudes towards family lead to the preferential treatment in the Arab societies in general. Oftentimes, preferential treatment is not considered part of corruption; on the contrary, the society usually provides assistance to select individuals and promotes continuity of such actions by deeming them legitimate.
- Lack of organization in managerial units can also lead to corruption. The complexity of the organizational competencies of administrative units, the lack of systematic procedural organization of work, the lack of clarity of terms of reference and job description/responsibilities overreliance on individuality, and personalization may lead to the exploitation of public office and unfair distribution of positions. (Afendi, 1999).
- Other factors may include
o defaults and lack of needed structures such as banking and economy-related management in addition to technological deficiency in the country
o the level of ignorance, underdevelopment, unemployment, lack of civilizational awareness, poor wages, salaries, and income disparities

between the public and private sectors as well as poverty, which are all directly proportional to the phenomenon of corruption
o the weakness of the role of the media, its limitations, its inability to expose corruption, the lack of transparency in the work force, in addition to the lack of readiness to disclose correct information

III. **Challenges arising from historical event, human behavior, or natural causes**

Challenges faced by any society may be due to any unforeseen circumstances or behavioral reasons that lead to undesirable effects that require treatment. This is rather complex, interrelated phenomenon and may involve issues such as ignorance and poverty. Thus economic challenges may have political and social impacts while social challenges may result from poor economic policies and so on.

The process of examining such challenges requires a study of a particular problem closely, identifying its dimensions, and formulating a government policy that fully addresses the most important real challenges in order to reach solutions that may contribute or help policy makers to control them in what is known as 'the agenda setting stage'.

There is no doubt that the strongest challenge facing the government in the aftermath of the so called 'Arab Spring' was the issue of security and combatting terrorism. This challenge could have been the lawful justification for not providing necessary services or moving on towards tackling developmental areas such as low levels of education in schools and universities, increased poverty, and prevalence of nepotism and clientelism in recruitment for governmental/public jobs and positions.

As a result of individuals being appointed in office without sufficient experience and efficiency, administrative corruption (unethical practices among many government officials) has become intensified. The deterioration in local bodies, social disobedience, and lack of respect for laws led to a weakened sense of patriotism on the national level and job loyalty.

After the revolutions of January 25th and June 30th, tackling corruption became one of the biggest challenges for Egyptian regime because it drained any effort exerted in the field of sustainable development. This came in line with the international efforts to combat corruption.

IV. **International efforts to combat corruption**

International agreements to combat corruption and reduce its risks were signed by most western countries

and later became a basis for international efforts to combat corruption. This section will discuss the efforts of both international and Arab countries to deal with the issue of corruption.

Western international efforts to combat Corruption

1. The international program against corruption which was launched in 1999 through the Center for International Crime Prevention (CICP) provides technical aid for the States by request. (Kim, 2014). This includes providing administrative assistance for countries and organizations that this organization encompasses. It published several documents in all the languages of the United Nations which include the following ones:

    United Nations Manual for Anti-Corruption Policy ("UN Guide for anti-corruption policies",2003)
    United Nations Manual Anti-Corruption Toolkit ("UN anti-corruption toolkit", 2004)
    Helping Countries Help Themselves Fight Corruption ("Interpol's Corruption-related Crime", 2000)
    Measuring Corruption at the Village Level ("Measuring corruption", 2002)
    Prevention: an Effective Tool to Reduce Corruption ("Tool to Reduce Corruption", 1999)

2. The Vienna declaration and programme of action was issued as a basis for addressing the challenges of the 21st century, ensuring commitment to fight corruption adopted by the Tenth United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime and Punishment of Offenders, 17 April 2003. ("Crime Resolutions", 2001)

3. The most detailed agreements of the United Nations Convention, which came into force on December 14, 2005, included a collection of around 71 articles related to corruption practices and persons who apply them. The characteristics of public officials have paid much attention to the cooperation of United States and their role in combating corruption by facilitation of information exchange procedures (the creation of the Intelligence Information Unit, judicial proceedings, extradition, money recovery, and technical assistance). This agreement is characterized by a high degree of clarity, based on its implementation mechanisms, and represented at a conference by member states, which have become an integrated body with specialized offices, laws, and regulations. ("UN Convention Against Corruption", 2004)

4. Despite their limited scope, themes, and geographic extensions, international declarations remain the most important strategies to combat corruption, especially when they are strengthened and made binding. The most important ones include United Nations Declaration against Corruption and Bribery in Commercial Transactions, Agreement of the European Council on Criminal Law against Corruption, Agreement of the Council of Cities Law against Corruption, The European Commission's Twenty Guidelines for Combating Corruption, November 1997 , model law for public employee behavior, agreement on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Commercial Transactions, and Protocols (I and II) of the Agreement on the Protection of the Financial Interests of European Communities. ("Criminal law convention", 1999)

5. As some of the largest sponsors of community development programs and funded at the state level, the World Bank launched a campaign against the so-called 'cancer of corruption,' and its efforts included four main themes: preventing all forms of corruption in projects funded by the Bank as a precondition to assist developing countries, defining the terms and conditions of lending and developing negotiation policies, selecting and designing the project, and providing support to international efforts to combat corruption.("Combatting corruption", 2018)

Arab efforts to confront corruption

Like other European countries, Arab states also pledged to combat corruption at their meeting with ministers of the Interior Council, Arab administrative bodies, and the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice. It is doubtless that Arab countries benefited from international and western experiences in taking precautionary measures and conducting research on the dimensions of this phenomenon and its developments. The success is evident in this latest consolidation of the Council of Ministers within the Arab parties to strengthen Arab agreements and national projects with the goal of confronting crime and combating corruption. Perhaps these are the most important efforts by Arab countries to confront corruption:

1. Preparing an Arab Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and initiating a new legislation or amending the existing legislation to comply with the requirements of that Convention

2. Preparing an anti-corruption agreement and to

initiating its development within the context of the legislation. In accordance with this agreement, the Arab countries have committed themselves to taking legislative measures to trade Acts related to Corruption that were not covered by national penal laws.

3. Developing an anti-corruption law to help Arab countries develop their National legislation to include such measures

4. Preparing a law on an anti-money laundering guideline, which has helped to develop national legislation to combat money laundering in some Arab countries ("Anti money laundering law", 2005)

5. Preparing an Arab code of conduct for civil servants and initiating its formulation at the national levels, ensuring the prevention of corruption, and protecting the society from its harmful effects.("Implementing a Code of Conduct", 2010) The most important Activities implemented in this context include:

• Transparency, Accountability and Anti-Corruption Conference held in Beirut on 23 October, 2003, at the invitation of the United Nations Program on Management of Quantities in Arab States ("Rampant corruption in Arab States, 2018)

• The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Arab Union of Banks. The aim of this conference was to launch an initiative on means to promote transparency.

• Accountability in the Arab States and preparation for the Paris Conference organized by the OECD,("OECD-MENA Governance Programme", n.d.) the organization of economic cooperation and growth in early 2004. This was the first Arab attempt to enact legislation in accordance with the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

• Arab International Conference on Combating Corruption organized by Naif Arab University for Security Sciences in Riyadh from 6 to 8 October, 2003.("Academic efforts in fighting corruption, 2014)

V: Egyptian efforts to combat corruption

Egypt ranked 114 out of 177 in the 2013 Corruption Perceptions Index conducted by Transparency International,("corruption perceptions index", 2013) prompting the Egyptian government to adopt an anti-corruption public policy. The State of Egypt has adopted a national anti-corruption strategy in accordance with Council of Ministers Decision No. 2890 of 2010, followed by the decision of the Minister of Justice and the

Chairman of the National Anti-Corruption Commission No. 9236 of 2012 to establish secondary committees as branches of the National Committee, amended by resolution 6649 of 2013. In 2014, the Commission became The National Anti-Corruption Organization headed by the Prime Minister under Resolution No. 493 operating in accordance with the United Nations Anti-Corruption agreement. ("National Anti-corruption Commission", n.d.)

The four-year national anti-corruption strategy began in December 2014 and will continue until December 2018. It is currently being implemented by various bodies such as the National Commission for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Anti-Corruption Branch, the House of Representatives, local councils of governorates, government ministries and agencies, as well as various supervisory bodies, councils, universities, research institutes, media, civil society, and civil society organizations.

The National Anti-Corruption Commission: The National Committee for Combating Corruption was established pursuant to the decision of the President of the Council of Ministers No. 2890 of 2010 and amended by Resolution 493 of 2014 under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister and Member of the Council, the Minister of Local and Regional Development, the Minister of Justice, the Head of the Administrative Committee, the Head of the Commission Administration Control, and representatives from the Ministry of Interior/Ministry of Foreign Affairs/General Intelligence/ Central Auditing Organization/Anti Money Laundering Unit/Public Prosecution.("Sub Coordinating Committee", n.d.)

The committee is concerned with the implementation of several duties including the following ones: ("National Coordinating Committee", n.d.)

• Implementing the effective enforcement of the provisions of the United Nations Convention against corruption and of international and other regional agreements

• Formulating a unified Egypt vision expressed in international forums

• Following up on Egypt's implementation of its international obligations arising from this Agreement and other international agreements

• Participating in related conferences, teams, and groups

• Conducting a periodic review of national legislation, regulations, and decisions related to preventing and combating corruption and determining its adequacy and compatibility with the provisions of the signed international agreements

The Secondary Egyptian Anti-Corruption Coordination Committees/Branches: The National Committee (previously mentioned) established the Anti-Corruption Branches of the National Anti-Corruption Commission in various Egyptian regions under the decree of the Prime Minister No. 1022 of 2014 under the chairmanship of Head of the Commission Administration Control/Chairman of the Board of Directors and a representative of the Ministry of Interior/Ministry of Local Development Administration Development/Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Ministry of Justice/Public Prosecution/General Intelligence / Commission Supervision Department/Central Authority for Accountancy (CAA)/Anti-Money Laundering Unit Money.

The committee undertakes a number of tasks, the most important of which are the following:

- Preparing the necessary studies to develop the national strategy to combat corruption
- Establishing the most appropriate procedures and mechanisms for the coordination of the supervisory bodies of the State for exchange information and experiences
- Receiving reports on the facts of corruption, investigating the facts of the perpetrator, and studying all the manifestations of corruption in units of the administrative apparatus of the state
- Proposing the most appropriate solutions to eliminate corruption and developing recommendations for publication culture of integrity and transparency in society

The Suez Canal University chose Mr. Mohamed Mustafa El-Naseej (interviewed), Secretary General of Suez Canal University, to be the university's representative in the Secondary Anti-Corruption Coordination Committees Ismailia Governorate branch. President of the University then issued a decree on May 2015 to form a committee to follow up the executive anti-corruption plan of the Suez Canal University. Members included Dr. Tarek Rashid Rhami, Vice president, Dr. Yasser Mohamed Mustafa, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy (interviewed), Prof. Dr. Mohamed Hassan Shkidaf, Professor, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (interviewed), Dr. Amany Ahmed Ismail Khodair, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Commerce for Community Service and Environmental Development, and Dr. Hoyda Abrahim Abdul Halim, Lecturer at the Faculty of Science. ("SCU anti-corruption committee", n.d.)

The task of this committee is to cooperate with the Secondary Anti-Corruption Coordination Committees Ismailia Governorate branch and to follow up the University's anti-corruption plan.

V: Discussions, results, and recommendations

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four members – out of five in total- of the Suez Canal University branch for Anti-Corruption and Coordination Committee to investigate their opinion with regards to the importance of combating corruption. These interviews focused on qualitative data to ensure providing personal insights into the issue of combating corruption in Egypt. Interviews focused on two groups of questions: the first examined their perception of the issue, and the second set of questions explored their vision of means of combating corruption.

All interviewees agreed in principle that citizen participation, new binding laws, and legislature as well as revising public policies are necessary to encounter the problem of corruption. They also asserted the need to refine Egyptian people's perception of corruption to include various things that may not be properly addressed as a form of corruption, including being negligent in performing one's job and receiving tips for conducting work-related duties. Respondents emphasized the importance of reinvestigating work ethics and values to include non-financial forms of corruption like job exploitation, misuse of public property, and the use of work tools and facilities to accomplish personal tasks.

With respect to means of combating corruption, different opinions were noted. The administrative member interviewed thought that the best way to combat corruption was to adopt a top-bottom approach, while the views of the academic staff on this approach ranged between 'totally disagree', 'disagree', and 'maybe'. The member from the top level management believed that political stability is the main indicator that contributes to improving anti-corruption in all domains, while academic staff perceived it as one of the requirements to promote combating corruption provided that other aspects are included.

On the other hand, all interviewees agreed that combating corruption is a broad concept that does not only entail financial and governmental agencies reform but should be expanded to cover all sectors of society.

CONCLUSION

Finally, we must not forget the role of society in the success of public policies, through the role of every active citizen. Just as the citizen demands rights, they are required to assume responsibilities to ensure success of public policies. Here are some of the most important ones:

- Implementing and enforcing laws, regulations, and instructions strictly and staying aware that

these laws and regulations are enacted for the protection and organization of social behavior

• Maintaining public property, services, and public order

• Contributing to all media, civil society organizations, and public opinion to provide these services and follow them according to their individual and legitimate needs

The challenge of creating an effective parliament needs to be addressed in future. The MP is a citizen first and a representative of a social group and a certain region. He is certainly aware of all the special circumstances of his region and society and thus will take his role in legislating the laws, regulations, and decisions that will provide the required services, provided that there is justice and a sense of citizenship.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To eliminate corruption in Egypt, we need to focus on the moral and ethical aspects as well as activate the role of legal and social control in exposing corruption. This can be achieved by relying on the principle of experience and efficiency in the appointment of public positions. This principle will constrain the role of nepotism and favoritism which basically depends on sub-allegiances that serve as a harbor for ethical problems in general, not to mention the issue of corruption.

We need to create policies for economic development based on solving social problems by increasing per capita income and eliminating poverty. Increasing the income of the individual, eliminating unemployment, activating social care, and paying attention to health, education, culture, and other services will help the Egyptian society to control and ultimately overcome corruption.

In the case of implementation of the proposed recommendations in addressing the challenges, the proportion of the impact of these challenges on society will rise and certainly will increase the level of social satisfaction on the political system and the government of a positive relationship between social satisfaction and political stability. As we have mentioned, this will be achieved by policy makers if they are serious about eliminating these challenges. This requires public figures with a national perspective and a national identity as well as patriarchy and not a narrow view of personal interests.

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