

Evaluation of Anti-Administrative Corruption Policies in Palestine: Case Study of the Palestinian Ministry of Finance (2004-2013)

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Abstract: The phenomenon of administrative corruption is pervasive in many Palestinian public organizations. This problem appeared clearly in 1997 after the report of general observation authority as well as the confirmation of the observation committee in the legislative council in 1998 on the names who accused of being corrupted without taking any real actions against them. In 2002, the first actual step began by the preparing of a comprehensive reform plan aiming to rebuild the organizations of the Palestinian Authority on the basis of fairness and transparency, in addition to the separation of the prime ministry from the presidency. Given the security circumstances and the subsequent obstacles, execution was postponed till 2004; the year in which corruption was faced. This is the result of international pressure on the Palestinian Authority and the domestic one in relation to the need to take concrete steps. In 2005, the illicit gain law was issued to fight corruption but it didn't activate and it was amended in 2010 by issuing anti-corruption law followed by the establishment of anti-corruption organization and other following bodies such as the court of the corruption crimes. Accordingly, Palestine commenced the actual steps in cooperation with many institutions for fighting corruption in the public sector; however, those efforts needs more work in the shadow of a lot of corruption forms, especially abuse of money, embezzlement and other. It is evident that there are obstacles such as the absence of the legislative council, the weak political will and the volatile security status quo in the Palestinian territories as a result of the Israeli pressures and its repercussions which hinders the public sector institutions' development and thus the state as a whole. The operation of evaluation of anti-corruption policies is a missing circle. Rarely, these policies have been evaluated to find out the strengths and weaknesses and to measure the extent to which they achieved their desired goals.

Key words: Administrative corruption, policies of anti-corruption, the ministry in fighting corruption, personal benefit, desired

INTRODUCTION

Corruption is one of the most dangerous challenges facing societies and countries; it has many dangerous effects on both democracy and the rule of law and leads to human rights violations and life quality deterioration. Moreover, corruption might increase crimes and terrorism as well as all threats against humans, therefore, the issue of fighting corruption is an old issue expressed by both religious and human rules considering it a great threat to the well-being of the world. In modern times, the United Nations convention of anti-corruption was legalized in 2003 in order to coordinate the international efforts and to improve the national laws of anti-corruption; Palestine had joined this convention lately.

The first report issued by the Palestinian general control in 1997 is considered the first organized effort against administrative and financial corruption, the report

provided that there are many breaches committed by high rank officials in the Palestinian Authority, especially in the misuse of their authority, no procedures were taken and this file was closed (Ismaeel, 2012; Matei and Matei, 2011).

Furthermore, the report of the observation committee in the Palestinian legislative council in 1988 confirmed most of the conclusions made in 1997 and demanded of taking all the necessary procedures against corruption, however, no procedures were taken due to the absence of the rule of law and the weakness of the judicial system.

Since 2002, the efforts of anti-corruption had started by the order of the late president Arafat and the government adopted a comprehensive reform plan based on: first, the need of building institutional system. Second, the need to find programs and procedures to reform any defects and breaches within integrity and transparency in the public sector (Ismaeel, 2012).

In 2004, the plan of 2002 was activated and in 2005 anti-administrative corruption took more formal shape by issuing many laws such as illicit gain law of 2005 and the reform and development plan of 2008 to achieve prosperity and integrity.

In 2010, the Palestinian anti-corruption commission was established to coordinate and join the efforts of official institutions, civil society organizations and all the parties charged with monitoring and accountability followed by court and prosecution charged with anti-administrative and financial corruption in the governmental sector. Its work was started in 2012 and this followed by the national strategy on anti-corruption of 2015-2018.

The ministry of finance is one of the most important ministries dealing with corruption within its 23 general departments, therefore, it is very important to evaluate the policies of administrative corruption in Palestine: study case in the Palestinian ministry of finance from 2004-2013.

The research problem: Corruption in its broad context is considered the main source for the failure of development efforts and the perpetuation of poverty in any society. In the presence of corruption, the ability of the state to implement its development plans relating to the well-being of the citizens, the achievement of equality and justice and the establishment of the rule of law state diminish because corruption depletes resources earmarked for development projects. In Palestine, this issue had a special feature due to the new experiment of PA since 1995 and the donors requests to fight corruption, after ranking Palestine in 2003 in the (87) rank between corrupted countries. In 2004, Palestine ranked (108) and (107) in 2005 giving a serious indicator about this spread of corruption. In the period of 2006-2013, Palestine was not listed on the international corruption indicators due to the lack of valid information.

However, in the report of 2012 the financial waste in the public sector amounted \$700 million and the disappearance of \$360 million in addition to referring to waste time by some officials and in 2013 there were 650 complaints of administrative corruption in the anti-corruption commission and 115 accused in the year 2015 anti-corruption commission has received 480 complaints 30% of which are outside the jurisdiction (Ahmadi and Avajyan, 2011).

The ministry of finance had witnessed many corruption cases as (8) persons were accused and the investigation still going on against another (6), the waste in this ministry because of corruption totaled \$150 million.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) (Gong, 2003) realized the importance of anti-corruption and its

consequential dangers on the stability and security of society that could undermine the values of democratic institutions, moral and just values and jeopardizes sustainable development and the rule of law. Therefore, the problem of this study is represented in the following question: to what extent the policy of anti-corruption had managed to reduce administrative and financial corruption in the Palestinian sectors in general and in the ministry of finance in particular?

Significance of the study

Scientific importance: The study dealt with an important issue in the academic field through investigating three major cases; first is the effects of corruption in the Palestinian society, second the definition of corruption, reasons and its effects and third the making of anti-corruption policies.

Scientific empirical importance: The empirical importance is represented in applying this study on employees from the ministry of finance and a sample of beneficiaries to investigate their satisfaction about the ministry and the partners of the ministry in fighting corruption.

Limits of the study: The study has the following limits:

- Duration: the study is limited to the period of 2004-2013
- Place: the study is applied in the West Bank especially in the ministry of finance
- Sample: the sample is limited to 10% of the ministry of finance employees, 22 of them are policy-makers and 96 clients dealing with the ministry

Objectives of the study: The study is seeking to achieve the following objectives:

- Analyzing the policies of anti-corruption in Palestine and its compatibility with the international policies of anti-corruption
- Clarifying the techniques of cooperation and coordination between the ministry of finance and the effective partners in anti-corruption
- Evaluating the success of anti-corruption in the Palestinian public sector
- Concluding suggestions and recommendations to help the PNA in developing the policies of anti-corruption

Literature review: After reviewing the related literature regarding corruption and anti-corruption policies, the researcher concluded the following remarks.

Methodologies: It is clear that studies used different methodologies as studies combined between the quantitative and qualitative approaches within the comparative approach. Moreover, the analysis and evaluation of public policies depend on using the preventive approach not only the treatment approach as problems are faced before they became exacerbated. While reviewing different studies, it was evident that there are different methodologies (Carr, 2009). For example, Ahmed Ismail analyzed the public policies to anti-administrative corruption in Egypt using the case study approach through the analysis of the documents and records of the direct observation and experimenter participation of a number of interviews with 100 academicians employees and citizens, recording the analyst for a number of the facts of the corruption in the Arab Republic of Egypt. While Ani Matei and AMP; Lucia Matei in Eastern Europe followed an analytical methodology to provide a practical guide on the assessment models of policies proposed by the World Bank and the European Union to these states through the amendment of the policy of strategies used in combating corruption. Meanwhile, Dilli, Raj and Khanal followed and descriptive analytical approach in Nepal through the application of survey on a sample of (350) Nepali citizens. In Iran Zahra Avjyan and Freydon and Ahmedi used an analytical approach to analyze the national strategy of anti-corruption according to modern trends in order to evaluate the Iranian policy of 2004.

Meanwhile, some researchers studied the polices of anti-corruption, for example, Bishop and others analyzed (14) specialized studies of anti-corruption polices in African countries such as (Uganda and Madagascar) and a group of Asian countries (India, Indonesia, the Philippines) and countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are (Argentina and Brazil) within three empirical studies and six descriptive studies to conclude various findings. Heilman Bruce and Ndumbaro Laurean adopted an analytical approach in addition to interviews with (22) public managers in Tanzania. Noore Alam Siddiquee reviewed the related literature regarding the policies and strategies of anti-corruption in Malaysia through (15) written reports.

Furthermore, the report of anti-corruption agency in Kosovo evaluated anti-corruption policies in the period of 2009-2011 within a qualitative approach to analyze documents and different anti-corruption programs.

In China, Gong Ting adopted the theoretical analysis of anti-corruption policies and programs. In addition to assessment the published reports and governmental studies conducted since 1978.

Finally, in South Africa, Indira Carr used a literature review approach for the reports and public studies through the model of Principle, Agency, agent (PAC), it is an economical approach followed in Europe to analyze anti-corruption polices.

Findings: Many of the results of these studies, depending on place of each evaluation studies of anti-corruption policies and different liability mechanisms in combating administrative corruption as well as different research methodologies used in addition to the different orientations of researchers in the evaluation of policies against administrative corruption, depending on the environment surrounding them, the objective to be achieved as a result of these studies. For example, the results of Ting Gong study showed the ineffectiveness of anti-corruption policies because of the ambiguity of the definition of corruption in China and the age of legislative laws can be modified or developed by the successive developments as well as the study showed that the programs and policies in the fight against administrative corruption reflected the point of view of decision makers without taking into account the economic and social considerations and human resources in the implementation of the control campaigns while the results of the report of the anti-corruption agency in Kosovo showed weak policies and implementing programs to fight administrative corruption because of not linked to the political will of the lawmakers of the people's desire in the fight against corruption and demonstrated the activation of the laws and legislation related to control policies and surpassed the benefit of influential figures and close to the authority (Siddiquee, 2010).

Bsihop and others study explained that those countries follow two polices, the first monitoring with the provision of rewards and the second prevention through the enactment of legislation and the development of strategies to combat corruption and reached this study that Asian countries are most effective in policies and programs for combating corruption while the African States in the last position, note that most of the policies of the first method is the impunity and imprisonment and financial rewards to those who reveals corruption cases whereas the second was in the enactment of legislation and laws and develop national strategies to combat and indicates that the first method is the most successful of the second method in combating administrative corruption must therefore undertake evaluation studies each mode on an end to know how effectively the way of development and modernization.

The rest of the studies give similar findings regarding the anti-corruption polices, however, Numbro and

Heliman concluded that the spread of the phenomenon of corruption in the Tanzanian institutions official was great prompting the citizen, civil society institutions and donor countries and international organizations to criticize the failure of the government to implement the strategy of combating corruption which suffers from paralysis and weak decisions and actions and programs. While Indira carr study concluded that policies to anti-corruption in the whole of the theory and the process based on the strengthening of accountability and transparency, however, this policy did not take the right is therefore, unable to curb the spread of the phenomenon and expansion in South Africa's governmental sector.

Third (recommendations): Most of the studies recommended that:

- Establishing clear strategies for anti-corruption according to sanctions laws as well as preventive programs in the public sector
- Activating the execution of available anti-corruption strategies
- Conducting studies in other countries regarding the same issue
- Finding supervisory, moral and religious alternatives to form a certain policy to combat corruption

Remarks (differences and similarities): The review of the previous literature, benefited the current study to develop a conceptual framework and therefore helped formulate research questions related to it in line with the accumulative scientific method and addition to the scientific knowledge of where the others ended. These literatures will enrich the current study in the identification of a clear perception of the concept of administrative corruption and its types, consequences and the mechanisms of fighting it.

Those studies enriched the current study, taking into consideration most of the variables that have been dealt with in the previous studies which worked for the assessment and analysis of policies and strategies to combat administrative corruption, using scientific methodologies with mostly analytical and treatment nature, while the methodology of the current study is evaluating the impact as well as the approach of the case study (Werner, 1983).

Previous literature dealt with the role of corruption in spreading poverty, family disintegration, administrative failures, the national belonging and development. Also, it discussed the role of the political elites in making corruption rampant. However, it did not measure these effects. Whereas the current study aims to assess

anti-corruption policies and to measure the extent to which these policies was able to achieve its objectives and promoting transparency and fairness in the governmental sector, furthermore, clarification how to the policies affected the performance of the governmental sector and then the general satisfaction, using some indicators such as the availability of the material and human resources to implement the policies, the link between the economic level of the public employee and the practice of corruption, the political and administrative cover for corruptors, the accused of the administrative corruption, the quality of the work of the judiciary and the rule of law, favoritism and nepotism in recruitment, the respect for the time of the general function to measure the amount of waste of time of the general function, the indicator of bribery and others.

Study questions: The study seeks to answer the following questions in addition to the main question:

- To what extent are the goals of administrative anti-corruption policies clear and what are the financial and human potentials available to carry it out in the public sector in general and the ministry of finance in particular?
- To what extent the multiple effective partners and the use of anti-corruption strategies and techniques contribute to improving integrity and transparency in the Palestinian public sector?
- To what extent had the policies of anti-corruption faced obstacles during implementation what is its effect on desired outcomes?
- To what extent the national anti-corruption policy meets the international polices and how is it related to international aids?

Theoretical framework

Evaluation: Organized educational, continuous and objective efforts to measure the results of projects, programs and polices to measure its connections, competence, effectiveness and continuous effects. Dr. Salwa Sharawi Joma'a defines evaluation as the organized objective efforts to measure the results of projects, programs and polices to measure its connections, competence, effectiveness and its continuous effects.

Public policies: The principled guide to action taken by the administrative executive branches of the state with regard to a class of issues in a manner consistent with law and institutional customs. Dr. Salwa Sharawi Joma'a defines public policy as a set of decisions taken by the

state to overcome a certain problem facing a wide sector of the society those decisions may be preventive or within a treatment efforts to face the problem in hand.

Corruption: A form of dishonest or unethical conduct by a person entrusted with a position of authority, often to acquire personal benefit. Corruption may include many activities including bribery and embezzlement, though it may also involve practices that are legal in many countries. The researcher views administrative corruption as a set of activities breaching the public law or general morals carried out by public employees, using their authority to gains personal financial or non-financial gains publicly or secretly.

Polices of anti-administrative corruption: The researcher defines those polices as the rules and programs as well as projects and decisions taken by the state to prevent spreading the phenomenon of administrative corruption in the institutions of the governmental sector.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted the following methodologies:

Impact evaluation model: This model provides a summary of the policies, programs and projects under evaluation and then identify the content of policy with the statement of its components and the extent of their interrelationship and identifies questions to be answered and shows the extent of the change as a result of the implementation of

the policy, clarifies the causal relationship between the changes and the policy applied. It consists of five components: inputs, activities, outcomes, revenues and the impact.

Case study approach: The ministry of finance is the case study within the empirical data collected through the survey and interviews to reach the descriptive quantitative indicators to answer the study questions.

Tools and data collection:

- Primary sources: interviews and three questionnaires
- Secondary sources: the theoretical frame within different books, studies and published articles
- The starting year of this study is 2004

The sample of the study consisted of 10% of the employees of the ministry of finance in the West bank totaling (1200) employees whereas excluding (970) employees working in Gaza strip. It is worth to mention that public employees in Palestinian public sector are totaling (175000) employees.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the empirical data

Description of the sample of anti-corruption policy makers (Table 1), its obstacles and advantages (Table 2): The males in this sample are (90.9%) while the females were (9.1%).

Table 1: The advantages of anti-corruption polices according to policy makers

Items	Percentage according to the answer						Mean	SD	%
	Very high	High	Average	Low	Very low				
Varied between plans, laws, reports, regulations and strategies	31.8	54.5	13.7	-	-	4.18	0.66	83.64	
Qualified human resources	31.8	59.1	9.1	-	-	4.23	0.61	84.55	
Technological potentials to cope with international developments	9.1	72.7	18.2	-	-	3.91	0.53	78.18	
Available and non-restricted financial ability	45.5	45.5	9.0	-	-	4.36	0.66	87.27	
Clear objectives for anti-corruption	40.9	54.6	4.5	-	-	4.36	0.58	87.27	
Free media and press	18.2	45.5	31.8	4.5	-	3.77	0.81	75.45	
Serious political will to face corruption	31.8	31.8	18.2	18.2	-	3.77	1.11	75.45	
General average of the domain	-	-	-	-	-	3.93	0.47	78.55	

Table 2: Obstacles of anti-corruption polices according to policy makers

Items	Percentage according to the answer						Mean	SD	%
	Very high	High	Average	Low	Very low				
The absence of the legislative council	90.9	9.1	-	-	-	4.91	0.29	98.18	
The weakness of the public system	36.4	59.1	-	4.5	-	4.27	0.70	85.45	
The absence of media in general	40.9	36.4	2.7	-	-	4.18	0.80	83.64	
The weak coordination between actors	31.8	45.5	22.7	-	-	4.09	0.75	81.82	
Ambiguity of anti-corruption goals	31.8	45.5	18.2	4.5	-	4.05	0.84	80.91	
The failure of laws, regulations, plans and activities	13.6	68.2	18.2	-	-	3.95	0.58	79.09	
The absence of modern control database	22.7	54.5	18.3	4.5	-	3.95	0.79	79.09	
Party and sects categorizations	36.4	27.3	31.8	4.5	-	3.95	0.95	79.09	
Weakness of political will	27.3	36.4	31.8	4.5	-	3.86	0.89	77.27	
Absence of suitable technology	9.1	72.8	13.6	4.5	-	3.86	0.64	77.27	
Interests conflicts	36.4	27.3	22.7	13.6	-	3.86	1.08	77.27	

According to the open question about the suggestions of policy makers to make those policies successful were as follows: activating the role of the legislative council, the political will, media role, spreading anti-corruption culture in society, activate coordination between actors, activating laws and making new elections.

With regard to the most prevalence types of administrative corruption, the findings showed that (81.8.5%) of the policy-makers considered high corruption while (18.2) considered small corruption.

With regard to the question: have anti-corruption policies any positive effect on reducing corruption through 3004 till 2014 (Table 3)?

The findings of the questionnaire of the clients of the ministry of finance: The findings showed that (86.6%) of the clients are males and (13.5%) are females.

To answer the following question: do you pay the income tax, additional tax and customs fees for the ministry? The findings showed that (77.1%) of the clients are paying their taxes while (19.8%) pay sometimes and (3.1%) don't pay their taxes.

Moreover, the findings showed that 9.4% of the clients think that taxes are fair while (40.6%) clients thought it is somehow fair while (50.0%) thought that all taxes are not fair at all.

To answer the following questions: If you asked to evaluate the performance of the ministry and the ease of carrying out your deals from 2002-2014 what are the best years? (Table 4-6). The findings showed that the best years are 2002 and 2008, respectively.

Table 3: Samples' answer

Policies	Yes	Somehow	No	Total
Frequency	6.0	10.0	6.0	22
Percentage	27.3	45.5	27.3	100

Table 4: With regard to the spread of bribery according to the employees

Do you think that bribery is spread in the public sector especially in the ministry of finance?	Yes	Somehow	No	Total
Frequency	4.0	26.0	98.0	128
Percentage	3.1	20.3	76.6	100

Table 5: With regard to the spread of embezzlement according to the employees

Do you think that embezzlement is spread in the public sector especially in the ministry of finance?	Yes	Somehow	No	Total
Frequency	15.0	67.0	46.0	128
Percentage	11.7	52.3	35.9	100

Table 6: With regard to the spread of absenteeism according to the employees

Do you think that absenteeism is spread in the public sector especially in the ministry of finance?	Yes	Somehow	No	Total
Frequency	13.0	64.0	51.0	128
Percentage	10.2	50.0	39.8	100

Moreover, clients thought that the most prevalence types of administrative corruption the findings showed that (64.4%) considered high political corruption while (26%) considered small corruption while (9.4%) thought that there is no corruption.

The findings regarding the opinions of the ministry's employees: The males formed 62.5% while females were 37.5%. The employees were 46.9%, department heads 28.1%, managers 17.2%, general managers 6.3% and finally vice managers 1.6%. The whole sample of employees totaled 128 male and female employees, among them there are 68.8% undergraduates 21.9% graduates and 7.8% with diploma and 1.65 answered (other).

Most of the sample thought that the weak political will encourages the administrative corruption followed by the dominance of one party and in the last rank the weak coordination between organizations and concerned people.

With regard to the most prevalent types of corruption, 65.5% of employees thought that is small corruption while 28.9% thought that it is big corruption while 5.5% didn't see any type of corruption (Table 7 and 8).

Obstacles of carrying out anti-corruption policies:

Corruption in the Palestinian Authority institutions is a real problem needs actual efforts to prevent it. Furthermore, some supervisory, curative and punitive mechanisms must be followed to reach satisfactory results to make the state free from corruption. But these efforts faced a number of constraints, representing in the Israeli pressures to restrict freedom of movement, the weakness of the financial resources, the weakness the political and party will, the obstruction of the legislative council, not conducting presidential and parliamentary elections, the domestic Palestinian division, the newness of Palestinian state age which pass a transitional phase and thus the newness of public policies concerning the combating of corruption. Most importantly, the recent establishment of anti-corruption authority in Palestine in addition to other obstacles. Other obstacles are:

Table 7: With regard to the spread of extortion according to the employees

Do you think that extortion is spread in the public sector especially in the ministry of finance?	Yes	Somehow	No	Total
Frequency	4.0	29.0	95.0	128
Percentage	3.1	22.7	74.2	100

Table 8: With regard to the spread of nepotism according to the employees

Do you think that nepotism is spread in the public sector especially in the ministry of finance?	Yes	Somehow	No	Total
Frequency	80.0	30.0	18.0	128
Percentage	62.5	23.4	14.1	100

- The lack of the following up model to cope with the goals of the policies
- The weakness in human and financial potentials available to fight corruption
- The failure in coordination and information exchange between concerned people
- Party interests and lack of objectivity
- The conflict interests
- The absence of the legislative and control council

CONCLUSION

The findings of the three questionnaires agreed largely that corruption is widespread in the institutions of the Palestinian Authority in its administrative and financial forms, more types of corruption prevalent the nepotism, the least is the bribery, embezzlement, abuse of credit, this was of the opinion makers of policies to combat corruption and the public dealt with the ministry of finance said the grand corruption is most prevalent in the public sector in addition to the presence of the relationship between gender and the practice of corruption and believe that the larger percentage of the staff of the ministry of finance said that the small corruption is most prevalent in the Ministry of Finance and attributed the causes of the spread of corruption to the disruption of the legislative council, the weakness of the policies, the weakness of the Palestinian judiciary and another number of reasons. The process of evaluation of policies for combating corruption is a missing link in the public sector. For its part, anti-corruption commission have evaluated the strategy of 2012-2014 by using systems analysis method. Consequently, there are some efforts to face corruption but the measurement of those efforts differs from the actual measurement and the actual achievement is seen through exposing real cases and this phenomenon is difficult to measure since it has social features and committed secretly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the previous findings, the study recommended the following.

For Palestinian anti-corruption commission: The adoption of a system of financial or moral incentives to informers about cases of administrative and financial corruption in the public sector, genuine partnership and give clear tasks of the Palestinian media, posing some supplementary legislation in accordance with the

provisions of the United Nations Convention against corruption follow the confidential and public censorship approach to expose the home of corruption and information availability.

For the ministry of finance: The reduction of the tax value in line with income, granting of facilities in dealing with the audience of the finance ministry, the regular payment of monthly salaries, providing incentives to the staff of the public sector, the submission of the budget of the ministry for the beginning and end of each year to the concerned authority, the activation of the role of the circles of the ministry of finance, particularly, censorship, and domestic auditing circles and finance ministry's income tax court, developing morals of employees through training courses and developing a model to assess anti-corruption policies and laws organized them within finance ministry.

For decision makers: Conducting legislative and presidential elections, separating the three authorities, the preference of the Palestinian judiciary and urging the political staff for a genuine will to fight corruption, an educational project upbringing next-generation resistant to corruption must be planned, the teaching of the evils of corruption in basic schools and the adoption of the course speaking the impact of corruption on the development as free subject in the universities.

For citizens: Developing the religious and moral influence for all age and educational groups through the mobility of people to show the evils of corruption and to develop the spirit of initiative and boldness concerning information about any corruption issue and renouncing of nepotism through which corruption became acceptable to some and is rejected by others.

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