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Democracy: Public Accountability and the 25 January Revolution in Egypt

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Abstract

The 25 January revolution in Egypt in 2011 has continued to inspire valid debates on public accountability and leaders-citizens' relation in a democracy, especially in almost all the democracies in Africa due to persistent poverty and under-development arising from bad governance and lack of the rule of law. This paper examined the nature of the public accountability and the extent to which its deficit contributed to the 25 January revolution in Egypt in 2011. The paper is located in frustration-aggression theory using the data obtained from secondary sources and analyzed through the descriptive statistics. It argues that accountability of the government to the citizens is very essential to the actualization of their democratic rights, thus, there should be no disconnection between the leaders and citizens in the public affairs. The paper found out that lack of accountability of the government to the citizens was one cause of the 25 January revolution in Egypt in 2011. It concludes among others, that transparent, honest and effective relation between the government and the citizens in the decision and policy making processes as well as in the management and distribution of resources in a state indicates an acceptable public accountability that is based on the people's perspectives of their expectations and democratic rights. It recommends among others that the Egypt's government and other Africa's national governments should be guided by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Universal Declaration on Democracy, mainly the second part in sections 13-15 as adopted in Cairo on 16 September 1997 in their exercise of authority and governance.

Keywords: Democracy; Egypt; January revolution; Public accountability; Twenty Five January

Introduction

The 25 January revolution in Egypt among other revolutions in the North Africa and the Middle East generally referred to as the Arab spring that occurred in early 2011 has continued to inspire valid debates on public accountability and leaders-citizens' relations in governance toward socio-economic and political development within states, especially in nearly all the African states characterized with poverty, unemployment, political crisis and absence of infrastructures due to lack of the rule of law, maladministration and corruption. Somewhat, this can be attributed to the long-established discourse and attraction in the affairs of democratization and undertakings aiding states to be more accountable to their people (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2014). Over the

last few years, there has been an increasing acceptance of the necessity of governance and accountability in development (OECD, 2014). Even today, the military coups rechristened 'intervention in African states' within the last three years also call for concerted effort toward leaders-citizens' relation, alas, good public accountability in the continent. On 30 August 2023, Gabon came to be the most recent nation to go through a military coup after Niger in July 2023; Burkina Faso in 2022; Chad, Guinea, and Sudan in 2021; and Mali in 2020 (Ngima, 2023). Although each coup is distinctive, their origins can be generally associated with democratic deficits and inability of elected governments to deliver freedom, security and development (Kasambala, 2023). Thus, poor leadership, country-wrecking corruption, mass abuse of power and neglect of the rule of law, constitution and citizens added to the military's exculpation of the coups in these African states (Falola, 2023).

Egypt's revolution started ten days after the Tunisian Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali-led government was ousted (Kwelle, 2019). On the 25th of January 2011, thousands of people of Egypt started to move into Tahrir Square, the notable centre of Cairo on a protest against the autocratic government of President Mubarak. Then, on the 11th of February 2011, on the heat of the protest, Mubarak vacated the office of the president of Egypt. The reason for the 25 January revolution in Egypt "centred on corruption in government, absence of free speech and free elections, police cruelty, high unemployment and persistent use of emergency rule"

(Random History cited in Kwelle, 2019, p. 308).

Public accountability has been identified in different prisms as democratic accountability (International IDEA, 2016), political accountability (Fearon, 1999), electoral accountability (Przeworski, Stokes, & Manin, 2003), domestic accountability (OECD, 2014) and public sector accountability (Bovens, 2005). However, public accountability defines the relationship between the governor and the citizens (Schedler, 1999). Thus, in electoral accountability citizens can utilize voting in an election to disapprove or approve their representatives. Therefore, in reaction to under-achievement, representatives are held responsible by the means of sanctioning (Przeworski, Stokes, & Manin, 2003). Accordingly, accountability implies checks on the use of political authority (Lindenberg, 2013).

Since democracy is said to be the government of the people, by the people and for the people, it also implies that citizens have critical responsibility in the success of democratic government in the management of resources of the state for common good. In fact, if those in authority cannot be accountable to the people for their deeds and inactions, for their decisions, policies and their expenditures, democracy continues to exist as a paper procedure (Bovens, 2005). Fitly, democratic system of government is distinct from others by the capacity of the citizens to hold politicians and public officials accountable in the state. Thus, public accountability establishes the link between the

state and its citizens, on whose stead a state, especially one with inclination of constitutionality, is anticipated to govern, but unfortunately, lack of public accountability has led to diverse forms of corruption and created a very wide gap in economic inequality between classes in Egypt before the revolution. For instance, Lesch (2011) stated that much earlier before the revolution, the media were inundated with reports on corrupt ministers and politicians, to the level that non-NDP MPs organized a "front against corruption", compelling the parliament to talk about firm anti-corruption laws. No doubt, the need for adequate public accountability across African countries will continue to witness scholarly debates and advocacy that will spur the necessary support for its entrenchment in all the governmental affairs in the continent. Thus, it is the thrust of this paper to address the nature of the public accountability in Egypt and how its deficit contributed to the issues that led to the 25 January revolution in 2011.

Theoretical Basis

This paper is based on the frustration-aggression theory. The frustration-aggression theory was created by John Dollard, Neal Miller, Leonard Doob, Orval Mowrer, and Robert Sears (Dollard et al., 1939). This social conflict theory though "expanded and modified by scholars like Leonard Berkowitz (1962) and Aubrey Yates (1962), appears to be the most common explanation for violent behaviour stemming from inability to fulfill needs" (Faleti, 2016, p.47). Thus, the psychological concepts of motivation and behaviour with frustration and aggression are used by scholars who depend on this elucidation (Anifowose cited in Faleti, 2016). The theory avers that, "aggression is always a consequence of frustration" (Mbah, 2014, p.127). The four central elements which determine aggression include: magnitude of frustration, aggression cues, arbitrariness of frustration and cognitive activities and emotional process (Mbah, 2014). Dollard et al posit, that strength of aggressive reaction depends in part on "the amount of residual instigation from previous or simultaneous frustrations" (Mbah, 2014, p.130).

The principal interpretation which this theory submits is that aggression cannot easily be taken as an innate response but should be seen as a consequence of frustration, and so in a condition where the rightful need(s) of a person is turned down by the way the polity is organized directly or indirectly, the sense of dejection may cause such an individual to express his vexation by violence targeted at those he holds accountable or he is connected by other means for his situation. This defines the core logic in relative-deprivation proposition that, the greater the discrepancy, however minimal, between what is looked for and what is perceived achievable, the greater will be the possibilities that vexation and violence will arise (Gurr, 1970). In thoughts of the proponents, the theory postulates that frustration leads to aggression and when the root of the frustration cannot be confronted, the aggression shifts over to an individual not responsible for it (Dollard et al., 1939). The psychological examination of group violence is the groundwork of this theory (van de Goor et al., 1996).

The importance of this theory in this paper lies on its explanation for the disappointment and frustration of the citizens, and their consequent aggression on the government of Egypt due to lack of public accountability which has led to diverse negative socio-economic conditions such as corruption, poverty, unemployment, inflation among others. In fact, however intricate the inter-connection of economic and brutal skirmish, it is usually related to one only cause: penury (van de Goor, et al., 1996). Principally, this correlation highlights systematic knowledge on revolution. Thus, in a circumstance where multitudes dwell in penury amidst a little and affluent group of persons in their own state or their own community, they are likely to ask for dramatic shift or rebel (van de Goor, et al., 1996). Accordingly, before the revolution in Egypt, Lesch (2011) stated that the dichotomy between the rich and the poor became severe. The World Bank announced by 2006, 26% of Egyptians were grappling to live on less than $2 a day (Lesch, 2011). Unemployment soared amongst young people who became seriously disaffected. Also, in 2005, the chief of a fact-finding team within the Ministry of Interior who ran away to Zurich declared that, "the Mubarak era will be known as the era of thieves, and his official business is looting of public money, and we find that the super-corrupt, ultra-delinquents have attained state posts" (Lesch, 2011, para. 32). In situations like these, where citizens do not have their desires met, there may be a tendency to confront those they hold accountable for their expectations. This is symbolic of frustration-aggression theory on one side and relative-deprivation theory on the other side. However, while utter penury may cause indifference and inactions, comparing with those in the same community who are well off may stimulate drastic change with even clash as relative-deprivation theory asserts (Hegre et al. cited in Alli, 2016).

Therefore, to avert conflict in the polity, when there is a general feeling of dejection by individuals or groups due to failure of those in authorities not meeting their expectations, the wise thing the leaders can do is to know what are expected of them from the citizenry and look for ways to settle them. However, in situations like these, leaders believe that succumbing to citizens demands is a reflection of their lack of strength within the system. This should not be so, but rather be seen as efforts of the leaders to meeting people's expectations.

Democracy: Conceptual and Theoretical Explorations

Democracy either in its formulation as a system of government based on its ethical advocacy or its formulation arising from the understanding of contemporary sociological findings amongst other perspectives has continued to put political scientists and other scholars across the world at variance as to its connotations. Thus, in relation to its definitions, it is seen as an "essentially contested concept" (Gallie, 1956), and therefore does not have a consensus definition, and raises an endless debates about its meaning and application. Like most concepts in the social science, it possesses ideological components which make empirical

reality unnecessary as a way of solving the argument (Little, 1981). Consequently, definitions and conceptions of democracy will be discussed as deemed suitable for this paper.

The presence of democracy which is obtained from the Greek word demos, implying the citizenry started in the venerable Greek city-states circa 500 BC (Rourke & Boyer, 2004). Democracy plainly signifies "government of the people" (Almond et al., 2005, p.27). For over 2000 years, no doubt, democracy was seen intermittently and normally in remote places. The development of English democracy, then the American and French revolutions in the late eighteenth century, indicated the change of democracy as an ordinary aspiration to a fundamental national and international political ideology (Rourke & Boyer, 2004).Democracy importantly implies that governments obtain their being from the will of the majority of the people directly as it was in the Greek city-states or indirectly in large political system such as the modern states we have today. Thus, Richard R Fagan as cited in Ntete-Nna (2004) enumerates the following as the main features of a democratic system of government:

1. There is effective participation of individuals and groups in the decisions that most affect their lives.
2. There is a system of accountability whereby the behaviour of the leaders and officials can be monitored, judged and if necessary changed by those who are subject to their authority.
3. There is political equality (in the sense of equal opportunity to participate in the political process, etc) (p. 43).

Consequently, elections, competitive political parties, free mass media, and representative assemblies make indirect democracy a possibility. Therefore, democracy can be defined as "the 'rule of citizens' in which the people have the right to participate in the making of decision that will affect them" (Mogalekwe & Sebudubudu, 2006, p. 209). This entitlement is conferred on the representatives who are voted for in periodic elections.

According to Molomo (2006), "Democracy is a process of electing leaders into office in an open and transparent manner and holding them accountable to the electorate" (p.24). To guarantee transparency and accountability, of great importance, it involves the entrenchment of an organizational structure, ethics and benchmarks to ease free and clean elections and adequate supervision of democratic processes to ensure transparency and accountability (Molomo, 2006). Thus, in general, democracy in the modern world implies representative government, the democratic component involving approved ballot and prospect for sack (Raphael, 1990). Therefore, "the essence of political democracy is that the politicians are subordinate to the public, in whom are vested the fundamental rights of criticism, opposition and dismissal" (Arthur Lewis cited in Ubhenim, 2004, p.6).

Democracy is a changeful standard (Green, 1999). Diamond (1999) regards it as the sole trade in town. According to him, democracy is said to be the foremost type of government ahead of any envisioned choice. It is more and more judged, rain or shine, that democracy presents a solution to crucial problems of the society (Wantchekon, 2012). In this perspective, he sees democracy as "a set of representative institutions that strive to uphold liberal values" (Wantchekon, 2012, p.1). Democracy is a doctrine of the United Nations. Thus, the United Nations in 2002, through its former Commission on Human Rights had proclaimed transparency and accountability in public administration in the number of principles of democracy (United Nations, n.d.).

However, one of typical attributes used to present democracy in sub-Saharan African continent is "neo-patrimonial" marked by firm executives, widespread patronage and use of country assets for political validation (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997). In other words, Ake (1994) states that, in nearly all of Africa, state authority is formed in such a manner as to make democracy unfeasible. A gripping analysis in Africa is that the political class exhibits apathy, to this day, in changing the authoritarian post-imperial country (Ake, 1994). No doubt, this was the situation in Egypt before the 25 January 2011 revolution. For instance, among others, the political structure that Mubarak ruled centred power in the executive arm of government (Lesch, 2011). Also, the poverty of the agrarian and city workforce differed from the enlarged assemblage of affluence and associated corruption (Lesch, 2011).

Public Accountability: Conceptual Analysis

Public accountability is made up of two words: public and accountability. The word 'public is basically an adjective qualifying the accountability, and simply implies what concerns the people as a whole and is plainly the straight contrast of private. It is identified with the government, especially in political science and administrative studies. On the other hand, accountability is obtained from the Latin word 'accomptare' (to account), an affixed formation of "computare" (to calculate), which in turn is got from "putare" (to reckon) (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). The idea of rendering account has its earliest origins in record keeping operations in connection to administration and loaning structures that finally emerged in Rome (Plescia, 2001), after their first formation in Egypt (Ezzamel, 1997), in Israel (Walzer, 1994), and in Babylon and Greece (Urch, 1929; Roberts, 1992). However, accountability can be said to be a duty to explain for one's actions, take commitment for them and reveal and uphold outcomes (International IDEA, 2016). Accountability is fundamental linking outlook of the sustainable development goals (SDG) setting regarding the standard of organizations in SDG 16 (i.e. peace, justice and strong institutions). According to Schedler (1999), accountability is comprised of three means of averting and correcting the misconduct by the public office-holders. These include the giving of report on the

deeds of the officials, basis for such deeds, and discipline (or satisfaction for such deeds).

In this paper, public accountability can be defined as the duty by government agencies and corporations who are given custody of public resources to be answerable for fiscal and social responsibilities to the citizens who have directly or indirectly voted them into such authorities (Kwelle, 2019). It involves the accountability of public officials and transparency in public sector among others (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2011). However, public accountability as shown in democratic accountability refers to diverse methods by which citizens, political parties, legislatures, presses, voluntary organizations and observers give response to, approve or disapprove office-holders in control of initiating and making state guidelines (International IDEA, 2014). It is a main part of quality administration (OECD, 2014). It facilitates the distribution of authority (separation of powers) and the general oversight over the use of state assets. It adds to curtailing the possibility of misrule and fraudulent activities, which is vital to the realization of citizens' rights (OECD, 2014). In the words of Finn (1994), public accountability is a duty of all who have position or employment in the government. Consequently, the distinctive characteristic of present-day democratic government is public accountability (Bovens, 2005).

The common features across all the identified forms of public accountability include transparency, answerability and enforceability. In transparency, the people possess right to information concerning the undertaking that the government has made and if it has fulfilled them (OECD, 2014). In answerability, the people have authority to ask the state to account for its activities while enforceability is the case where the people are able to disapprove the government if it fails to meet certain benchmarks. Also, the output of any assessment of public accountability in government should either be sanction or reward. Thus, it signifies that until there is some sanction for proven abuses of power, rule of law and accountability do not exist (Schedler, 1999). In the same vein, Behn (2001) affirms that, accountability implies punishment while interpreting the former.

The assessment of any public accountability comprises both horizontal and vertical elements. The horizontal accountability is the function of separation of powers among the executive, legislature and judiciary organs of the government. But for effective horizontal accountability, scholars like Guillermo O'Donnell and Richard Sklar provide a "concept called 'auxiliary precautions' institutions of 'horizontal' accountability" (Diamond et al., 1999, p.3). It refers to the ability of state structures to monitor misuse of power by other public bodies and arms of a state (O'Donnell; Sklar cited in Diamond et al., 1999). The reason for this corroborates the thoughts in the Federalist Paper, No. 51 that, "if men were angels, no government would be necessary" and "if angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary" (Cited in Diamond et al., 1999, p.3). It states further, "a dependence on

the people, is no doubt, the primary control on the government: but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions" (Diamond et al., 1999, p.3). Nevertheless, in the present, the functional differentiation of states has grown far above the three traditional separation of powers in government. Thus, the "list of 'agents of accountability' has expanded to include institutions as variegated as election commissions, electoral tribunals, auditing agencies, anti-corruption bodies, ombudsmen, administrative courts, constitutional courts, human rights commissions, and central banks" (Diamond et al, 1999, p.3). Interestingly, studies have shown that, corruption would all in all reduce when there is better horizontal accountability or supervision among arms of the state (Kiewiet & McCubbins, 1999). Notwithstanding, another study also indicates when officials in one arm of the state can persuade officials in different arm to manoeuvre, heightened supervision could lead to heightened corrupt practices (Brierly, 2020). Thus, O'Donnell (1994) observes that:

> The horizontal accountability characteristic of representative democracy is extremely weak, or non-existent in delegative democracies. Since institutions that make horizontal accountability effective are seen by delegative presidents as unnecessary encumbrances to their "mission", they make strenuous efforts to hamper the development of such institutions. (pp.61-62)

This was the case of President Hosni Mubarak in Egypt before the revolution, for example, reports by the government agencies of Egypt detailed instances of profligacy, putting up for sale or buying by direct order instead of bidding, and refusing to abide by legal procedures among other violations (Lesch, 2011). On the other hand, vertical accountability is a situation where the people make their government accountable via elections. It is the supremacy of popular sovereignty over the elected officials of a state. However, the capacity of the media and civil organizations in ensuring oversight over governmental bodies has also added to another form of public accountability referred to as diagonal accountability (Luhmann, Marquardt & Mechkova, 2020).

No doubt, restricted or lack of public accountability leads to political corruption. Political corruption is said to be the misapplication or perversion of government office for one's own benefits, in which corrupt actions cover swindling, taking of public money or receiving kickbacks among others (De Vries & Hector, 2017; Ferraz & Finan, 2008; World Bank, 1997).In the definition by Transparency International, corruption implies personal benefit obtained through the misuse of power vested in one's office (Transparency International [TI], 2024). It impairs assurance, undermines democracy, hinders economic progress, and in addition aggravates inequity, indigence, social inequality and territorial plight (TI, 2024). Since the people may see it as a mark of bad representation by which it drives them to disapprove the office-holder, corruption can

be the rejection for the office seekers' appraisal (De Vires & Hector, 2017). However, as argued differently, democracy, all things considered, appears to possess zero issue on decreasing corrupt practices, whereas economic development is linked with reduction in corrupt practices (Gandhi & Ruiz-Rifino, 2015). Explaining the nature of corruption in Egypt before the 25 January revolution, Lesch (2011) states that quite a few of the top intricate system of corrupt practices comprised land transaction by the ministers of housing (Al-Magharabi), tourism (Zuhair Garana) and transportation (Mohamed Mansour). Al-Magharabi, moreover, approved the Mubaraks on the subject of land transaction, and equally important gave government land and flats meant for under-privileged renters to kingpins and associates (Lesch, 2011). In another instance, Lesch writes that Ahmed Ezz's attainment in authority gives still greater remarkable case in point. His unusual rapport with Gamal Mubarak helped him to obtain unsafe bank credits and repay former credits by taking different ones. Tycoons and members of the government were favourable to him like he was to them. In this respect, the US Diplomat referred to Ezz as "the most reviled of the politico-businessmen" (Lesch, 2011, para. 28).

Inter-connection of Democracy and Public Accountability

Liberal democracy made upon the consent of the people, must also be accountable to the people who made it. Duly "democracy thus goes hand in hand with an effective, honest and transparent government,

freely chosen and accountable for its management of public affairs" (Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU], 1998, p.vi). Likewise, Gauba (2006) states that:

> John Locke (1632-1704) who thought of government as a 'trustee' of the power vested in it by the people for the protection of their natural right to life, liberty and property, nevertheless, felt it could not be fully trusted. He wanted the people to remain constantly vigilant. He thought of the people as a householder who appoints a watchman for protecting his house, and then, he himself keeps awake to keep a watch on the watchman! (p.425)

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) envisioned liberal democracy as a political instrument that would see to the accountability of the rulers to the ruled, as humans want to be happier (Bentham cited in Gauba, 2006). By this, the leaders are expected to be straightly accountable to an electorate who will regularly check if their targets have been judiciously attained. In John Stuart Mill's thought in his "On Liberty", a representative democracy ensures that government is answerable to the people and makes citizens of good wisdom able to work towards public concerns (Gauba, 2006). Accordingly, Universal Declaration on Democracy adopted in Cairo on 16 September 1997, states that "public accountability, which is essential to democracy applies to all those who hold public authority whether, elected or non-elected, and to all bodies of public authority without exception" (IPU, 1998, p.vi).

Democracy and accountability are inextricable. Thus, in the inter-connection of democracy and accountability, democracy has been said to be a political system in which mechanisms and institutions exist to promote and enforce the accountability of rulers to whom they rule (Chabal, 1986). The core of democracy is to make the politicians sensitive and accountable to the citizenry. Accountability consists of two pertinent values. It must have the supremacy of answerability (the right to obtain pertinent facts and clarification of deeds) and enforceability (the right to exert sanctions if the facts or grounds are considered unsuitable). In other words, public accountability involves a citizen's right of access to information on actions of government, the right to sue government and to look for remedy through unbiased bureaucratic and legal procedures.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the proponent of popular sovereignty, posits public accountability of government differently. In his theory of 'social contract', sovereignty besides the fact that it stems from the citizenry, it stands to abide with the citizenry in the state (Rousseau cited in Gauba, 2006). People allow their consent to give power to their sovereignty in the 'general will' which denotes their own greater selves. Being an exponent of 'direct democracy', Rousseau believes that sovereignty cannot be a third party. According to him in his "The Social Contract", "The people's deputies are not, and could not be, its representatives; they are merely its agents, and they cannot decide anything finally" (Rousseau cited in Gauba, 2006, p.426). He proposes serious participation of citizens in the activities of government and making of the laws. He hopes that every citizen should gather to determine what is best for the group and make the suitable laws. Rousseau was in support of a political system in which the law-making arm and the executive functions are distinctly separated. On the other hand, he desires the people themselves to form legislature, while the executive duties were to be in the hands of the government. The citizens need a government to organize public affairs, be of use as an agent of instruction, propose legislation and implement the judicature (Rousseau cited in Gauba, 2006). In a government like that, there would be a constant accountability to the citizens in fulfilling the mandate of the 'general will'. Any government that is not accountable to the people can be substituted.

However, corruption arising from lack of public accountability and abuse of power continues to emerge the bane of governance in Africa as it were in Egypt prior to the 25 January revolution. Thus, Lesch (2011) writes:

> Along with promoting privatization, many ministers appointed in the mid-2000s promoted corruption on an unprecedented scale. They sold significant portions of the public sector for their personal benefit and decreased public investment in agriculture, land reclamation, housing, education and health. In turn, they promoted private investment in rarely successful

export-oriented agriculture, the construction of gated communities for the elite and establishment of for-profit private universities and hospitals. (para 24)

The voting in the autumn 2010 unified this relationship of the state, party, legislature and capitalism of cronyism (Lesch, 2011). This situation is not only present in Egypt but in other African countries. Thus, in Nigeria, Ekekwe (1986) stated that practically all elevated positions in the state have been changed into paths and methods for private accumulation. This is one of the effects of the "feudalization of the state" (Ekekwe, 1986, p.117). Heads of state-owned enterprises and government institutions use their 'good offices' to get riches and fiscal goods (Ekekwe, 1986). It is vivid to remark that the outcome of all the above undemocratic attitudes breed irresponsible and unaccountable government among others which were potent evidences for the explanations of the wave of poverty, conflicts and neglects of citizens' welfare in Egypt before the 25 January revolution.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

The data for this research paper were obtained through documentary method. By this method, journals, statistical records and documents from reputable international organizations were carefully observed, and the secondary data got from them as shown in the tables. The analysis was based on the average score of scale used on the index of indicator from 2000 to 2010 through which evaluations were used for the purpose of identifying and interpreting the extent and status of the public accountability before the 25 January revolution in 2011.For example, the score of values in the scale of index for the measure of corruption perception and freedom from corruption respectively range from 0 to 10, where 0 = highly corrupt and 10 = very clean (for corruption perception index of the Transparency International [TI]), and 0 to 100, where 0 = high level of corruption and100 = very low level of corruption (for freedom from corruption index of the Heritage Foundation). Each average of the indicator represents the country's (Egypt's) status in public accountability within the stated period in the table before the 25 January revolution.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Egypt's Public Accountability before 25 January Revolution

Indicator	Scale used on the index of indicator	Average score of scale used on the index of indicator (2000 – 2010)	Status
Public accountability: transparency in the public sector and accountability of public officials	0 to 100, where 0 = worst possible score and 100 = Best possible score	46*	Lack of public accountability. Corrupt

Source: 2010 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) Report: Summary. Accessed at http://www.allafrica.com/.../

Note: *Stands for the value got as regional average for North Africa, and therefore represents Egypt as no other value was seen in IIAG's Report on public accountability in the period under study.

Table 2: Egypt's Corruption Perception before 25 January Revolution

Indicator	Scale used on the index of indicator	Average score of scale used on the index of indicator (2000 – 2010)	Status
Corruption Perception Index (CPI): An indicator of perception of public sector corruption, i.e administrative and political corruption.	0 to 10, where 0 = Highly corrupt 10 = Very clean	3.2	Lack of public accountability. Corrupt

Source: Transparency International (TI) Reports (2000 – 2010) accessed at http://www.transparency.org/cpi, and the average computed by the author.

Table 3: Egypt's Freedom from Corruption before 25 January Revolution

Indicator	Scale used on the index of indicator	Average score of scale used on the index of indicator (2000 – 2010)	Status
Freedom from corruption	0 to 100, where, 0 = High level of corruption and 100 = Very low level corruption	32	Lack of public accountability. High level of corruption

Source: The Heritage Foundation Reports accessed through http://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Egypt/ and the average computed by the author.

Table 4: Egypt's Control of Corruption before 25 January Revolution

Indicator	Scale used on the index of indicator	Average score of scale used on the index of indicator (2000 – 2010)	Status
Egypt control of corruption	- 2.5 to 2.5 - 2.5 = Weak and 2.5 = Strong	-0.60	Weak. Lack of public accountability

Source: The World Bank Reports accessed through http://www.theglobaleconomy.com and the average computed by the author.

From table 1, data from Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) showed that, the public accountability to the citizens of Egypt was at poor condition, being 46% out of 100% (best possible score) before the 25 January revolution in 2011. Public accountability represents accountability of executives and other public officials for use of funds and results of actions by the electorate, legislature and judiciary, and extent to which public employees within the executive are

accountable for use of resources, administrative decisions and results. This restricted or lack of public accountability was also seen in table 2. To this lack of public accountability or government corruption in the system, the rating of Transparency International on the level of corruption at the average score of 3.2 points from 2000 to 2010 attests to the data from IIAG. The corruption perception index is an indicator of public sector corruption, i.e. administrative and political corruption. This is also a reflection from the Heritage Foundation and the World Bank as represented in tables 3 and 4 respectively. The Heritage Foundation's score for the Egypt's freedom from corruption index is derived from Transparency International's CPI. High index values denote lower level of corruption. While World Bank's control of corruption index captures perceptions of the extent to which public power in Egypt is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption as well as 'capture' of the state by elites and private interests. Control of corruption index of the World Bank assesses the likelihood of countering red tape, corrupt officials and other groups. High index represents less corruption. On the other hand, average Egypt's score for freedom from corruption index of Heritage Foundation before the 25 January revolution in Egypt in 2011 was 32 points (high level of corruption), while the World Bank's control of corruption in Egypt at same time was -0.60 (weak), as shown in tables 3 and 4 respectively. All these represent restricted public accountability or level of government corruption before the 25 January revolution in Egypt. Consequently, the study suggests deficit in public accountability or high level of government corruption as one cause of the 25 January revolution in Egypt in 2011.

The data collated in tables 1 to 4 have shown that deficit in public accountability of the government or government corruption in Egypt through diversion of public funds, lack of transparency in public sectors, graft, nepotism, embezzlement, political and electoral fraud, was one of the main causes of the 25 January revolution. As it affects the citizens of Egypt, implications of lack of public accountability or government corruption is strongly associated with poverty and under-development as well as with direct indication of popular misery. The majority of the population of Egypt do not have stake in the economic and social processes of the state and do not share a common hope in the future with the small elites. Economic difficulty can be endured when the people know there is a better future ahead or perceive that suffering is at least, somewhat morally distributed. This was not the situation in Egypt where the state-led development encouraged crony capitalism that benefited only small minority new business elites in Egypt who conspired with the regime of Mubarak to amass wealth that cannot be imagined compared to the majority of the population surviving on 2 dollars per day. An IMF study shows that an increase of just 0.78 percent in corruption reduces the income growth of the poorest 20% of the people in a country by 7.8% in a year (Campaign Against Arms Trade [CAAT], 2009). The final communiqué from 2006 G8 St Petersburg Summit is clear on the consequence of corruption that, "The net

effect of corruption is felt most directly and disproportionally by the poor" (CAAT, 2009). Other associated implications of corruption are seen in high prices in goods and services to consumers especially the common citizens; reduction in investment which leads to reduction in goods and services; inflation; reduction in commitments from donor agencies; reduction of foreign investments; and government inability to finance budget, etc.

Suffice to say that despite the negative impact of corruption with respect to economic hardship, it also impacts negatively on the fair distribution of resources across the population, increasing income disparity, and undermining the effectiveness of essential services of the government to the people. This may in turn, undermine long term sustainable development, economic growth and equality. Suitably, the World Bank states that, "Corruption is among the greatest obstacles to economic and social development", while the UN Convention Against Corruption states, "Corruption is a key element in economic underperformance and major obstacle to poverty alleviation and development" (cited in CAAT, 2009). As a confirmation of corruption in Egypt, "Mubarak kept 40 billion dollars in his personal property, his wife and their two sons kept 3-5 billion dollars in their personal accounts" (Sarihan, 2012, pp.75-76). More so, "When people tried to protest the economic inequality, Mubarak's despotic military forces either jailed or killed them" (Sarihan, 2012, pp.75-76). Accordingly, relative deprivation and frustration-aggression theories suggest that individuals become "aggressive when they feel something or someone is blocking them from fulfilling a strong and perceived fair economic desire" (van de Goor et al, 1996, pp.20-21).

Consequently, on the national holiday, Police Day, 25 January 2011, motivated by the happenings in Tunisia, the people of Egypt assembled, and began the demonstrations that led to the 25 January revolution. They were crying out for a stop to corruption, unfairness, bad economic situations, and the 30-year-old rule of President Hosni Mubarak (Houissa, 2014). According to Levey (2011), Egyptian courts did arraign former President Hosni Mubarak for corruption and convicted while absent his ex-finance minister, Youssef Boutros Ghali to 30 years in jail on indictments of corruption and pocketing of public funds. Also, annoyance with nepotism and corrupt practices was lead grouse of people demonstrating on the roads in Libya, Syria and Yemen besides Egypt (Levey, 2011). As a further proof to lack of public accountability or government corruption as a major cause of the 25 January revolution, CNN Middle East International TV Edition in Hosni Mubarak Facts, May 31, 2014 states:

> May 17, 2011: Suzanne (Hosni Mubarak's wife) is released on bail after she gives up bank accounts worth 83.4 million dollars and a villa. May 21, 2014: Mubarak is sentenced to three years in prison after being convicted of embezzlement. His sons, Gamal and Alaa are

sentenced to four years each in the same charge.

Indeed, lack of public accountability or government corruption perpetrated by the public officials and institutions as well as lack of transparency in the administration of public affairs, was an essential explanation for the poverty, disregard of welfare, and consequently the 25 January revolution in Egypt in 2011. This situation is prevalent in the African continent (Ake, 1994; Ake, 1996).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Public accountability is a crucial component of democracy and good governance with the capacity to limit the likelihood of misuse of power and corruption by leaders thereby leading to the realization of the democratic rights of the people, and averting conflict in Egypt and other countries in Africa and across the globe. Therefore, transparent, honest and effective relation of the government with the citizens in the decision and policy making processes as well as in the management and distribution of resources in a state should be an indication of acceptable public accountability that is based on the people's perspectives of their expectations and human rights. Thus, accountability of the government to the citizens is an essential promoter of democracy, good governance and development in a state. From the foregoing, this paper recommends as follows:

(a) The government of Egypt should always involve their citizens in the formulation and execution of government policies for utmost trust in public accountability.

(b) There should be an effective and efficient horizontal accountability among the executive, legislative and judiciary arms of government that corresponds to the norms and standards of checks and balances in government. On the other hand, the citizens should be well-informed and properly guided in their responsibility to the vertical dimension of accountability to be able to sanction corrupt public officials or politicians when necessary.

(c) Egypt's government and other Africa's national governments should be guided by the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) Universal Declaration on Democracy, especially the second part in sections 13-15 as adopted in Cairo on 16 September 1997 in their exercise of authority and governance.

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