Cultural Competency Teaching and Practice in the MENA[1]

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The study focuses on the policymaking process in the higher education sector in Tunisia and critically assesses it through a case study of the important reforms in the first decade of the twenty-first century. This includes the move to a new certification structure, adapted from the Bologna European model of higher education accompanied by a parallel quality assurance reform with the creation of a competent body. The study is organized into three parts: the first briefly describes the modern higher education system in Tunisia, the policies pursued in this field, and the major reforms that the country has experienced since independence. The second deals with the challenges of forming higher education policies, reforms, and quality assurance systems in Tunisia. The third presents the research methodology and the main results. The conclusion discusses the weaknesses, causes and potential impacts of the policy process.

Cultural Competence Teaching   Policy Making   Tunisia   Higher Education   MENA

Across the globe, youth and adults with access to even broadcast media are made aware of governmental challenges to deliver basic services in an equitable way. Challenges intensify when people perceive economic and social injustice. Their demands are mediated by public administrators with varying success, depending on the political will of government leaders, cultural norms, and available resources. World regions – the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) among them – struggle with internal and external influences from drought to sectarian strife to competition in global capital markets. These challenges are causing societal change at such a rapid pace that even the wealthiest nations, with highly skilled administrative and educational workforces, cannot meet basic human needs.

By providing culturally appropriate and accessible services, the significance and positive perception of a government office is likely to increase. If public service providers are to effectively serve the culturally diverse population of the modern era, their levels of baseline cultural competence must be determined and organizational change instituted to increase the cultural competency of the service providers. Cultural competence and cultural competency are employed here and throughout the literature interchangeably. A culturally competent organization is grounded in "knowledge, skills, and values to work effectively with diverse populations and to adapt institutional policies and professional practices to meet the unique needs of client populations".[5]

The purpose of this article is to survey the research efforts of MENA governments and educational institutions to integrate awareness of history, religious law and traditions, family systems, and language with diversity training skills in public agencies and

master's programs in public administration (PA). This article reviews the relevant research and practice of the last 20 years, suggesting a theory of change for future U.S.-MENA partnerships to bridge gaps in training and teaching.[6] The article builds on the good governance efforts of ASPA, its Section on Effective and Sound Administration in the Middle East (SESAME), the Doha Institute, American University in Cairo, the Association for Middle Eastern Public Policy and Administration (AMEPPA) and other MENA-related organizations in the analysis and recommendations for future collaborative research as well as the NASPAA efforts.

The study contributes to theory, pedagogy and practice through document analysis of MENA cases, arguing that cultural competency among public administrators is a process of "evolutionary, not revolutionary change".[7] Examples of process-tools for navigating demographic, economic, and environmental change are suggested, including the National Center for Cultural Competence in the United States and rigorous program evaluation as suggested by Weimer and Zemrani and Carrizales et al.[8] The program evaluation process consists of research on programs which are implemented to achieve some positive effect on a group of individuals.[9]

Section 1 reviews the existing literature. Section 2 explains the research methods. Section 3 provides an analysis and discussion of the results. Section 4 concludes by proposing an agenda for future research along with the research limitations, aiming to foster collaboration among U.S. and MENA scholars and practitioners for innovative classroom and experiential learning as well as on-the-job training.

Cultural Competence in the MENA

As previously stated, a culturally competent organization is grounded in "knowledge, skills, and values to work effectively with diverse populations and to adapt institutional policies and professional practices to meet the unique needs of client populations".[10] Culturally competent policies and practices by which government organizations improve communication and service provision are key components in achieving socioeconomic equity among increasingly diverse publics (Gooden, 2017).

Getting to cultural competence can be considered a journey in leadership development. Hamid (2017) discusses that the empowerment of future generations of public servants, calling for more collaboration among schools of PA around the globe to more deeply explore how the overall, "meta" curriculum and practitioner skills can encourage analytically rigorous leaders; that is, through a curriculum that is more globally oriented.

Hamid (2017) also notes a 2003 UN conference on reforming PA curricula and cites, inter alia, Bremer and El Baradei (2008), on both market needs and social needs being mismatched with curricula. Based on a survey of 40 American University in Cairo Global Public Affairs students, he sees four competency areas which are: technological skills, "customer" or "client" satisfaction – which could be framed in the context of this paper as "citizen accountability" or responsiveness to citizens or citizen-centered delivery systems – thinking critically, and teamwork. Cultural competency would seem to most correspond to the last three. Indeed, Hamid argues that focusing on these

6 Deborah Trent, *Transnational, Trans-Sectarian Engagement: A Revised Approach to U.S. Public Diplomacy toward Lebanon*, Dissertation: The George Washington University, Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration (2012), http://pqdtopen.proquest.com/doc/1038836409.html?FMT=AI; Nicholas Weimer and Aziza Zemrani, "Assessing the Level of Cultural Competencies in Public Organizations," Public Administration Quarterly, 41, no. 2 (2017), pp. 273-296; Catherine Craven, "Thinking About Governance Through Diasporas: Decentering the State and Challenging the External/Internal Binary," SFB-Governance Working Paper Series, No. 76, Collaborative Research Center (SFB) 700 (2018); Deborah Trent. "Many Voices, Many Hands: Widening Participatory Dialogue to Improve Diplomacy's Impact," University of Southern California Center on Public Diplomacy Perspectives Paper 4 (Los Angeles: Figueroa Press, 2018), accessed 4 October 2018 at: https://www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org/sites/uscpublicdiplomacy.org/files/useruploads/u39301/Many%20 Voices,%20Many%20Hands%20Web-Ready%205.30.18.pdf (Internet), accessed 20 October 2018 at http://www.sfb-governance.de/publikationen/sfb-700-working_papers/wp76/WP76.pdf

7 Zemrani and Lynch, "Morocco's Dance with Democracy".

8 Weimer and Zemrani, "Assessing the Level of Cultural Competencies"., ibid; Carrizales et al, ibid.

9 P.C. Cozby & S. Bates, *Methods in Behavioral Research*, 12th ed, McGraw-Hill Education (2012).

10 Carrizales et al, ibid.

specific competencies – which include ethics – would help to mitigate corruption, societal conflict, poverty, and other challenges of increasingly diverse cultures.

Exploring other MENA curricula, the Moroccan School of Public Administration (ENSA), shows a more traditional curriculum despite the clear vision of a more responsive public servant. The educational challenge is at the heart of ENSA's "project." It focuses on several dimensions: the skills and qualities expected of a senior Moroccan official in the next 10 years; the expectations and needs of administrations in terms of senior management and support; the extent to which ENSA can realistically meet all these expectations; and articulating the content of trainings with changes in PA perspectives. It is to these challenges that the initial training cycle must respond. Indeed, it is a new generation of "senior civil servants" that ENSA should henceforth train. The re-engineering of the training aims to make them "very competent civil servants," "effective managers," true "vectors/accelerators" of the reforms and "ambassadors of the values of the public service," but one needs to read between lines if there is any call for training for cultural competency (ENSA website, retrieved April 9, 2019). Modern and distinctive pedagogical methods are favored to ensure professional training and a differentiated rendering of scenarios, case studies, work portfolios, and simulations to encourage stronger involvement of professionals and practitioners.

Globalization has propelled both positive and tumultuous political "opening-up" in the broader Middle East. The so-called "spring" of Arab civil society in the last decade has resulted in a sustained democratization in Tunisia. The Saudi Arabian monarchy has begun to grant women some political rights, while major shifts in economic policy compel all adults to become less reliant on government subsidies. The Syrian civil war has created the biggest refugee crisis post-World War Two (UNHCR, 2018) their general resistance to returning to Syria.

Similar to many citizens around the world whose voices go unheard by local, national, and international agencies, Middle Eastern families, farmers, and small business owners do not equally benefit from efforts to improve public service delivery. Forced migration, internal displacement, foreign and expatriate labor, and globalization have affected cultural diversity differently within each Arab nation. These intra-national and MENA-wide socioeconomic shifts will continue to require government administrators recruited for and trained in cultural competency.

Since 2010, ASPA publications and conferences have treated cultural competency skill-building as a key area of focus for theory and practice. For example, in *PA Times*, Wilson (2015) notes that the accelerating demographic diversity of urban and exurban locales compels us to pay more attention to cultural competency skill-building.[11] With the turn of the millennium, ASPA has also been expanding international ties. SESAME was founded about five years ago, with a mission to increase MENA-U.S. communication and collaboration (https://aspasesame.weebly.com/). Scholar and SESAME member J.S. Ott and colleagues contributed the section's first research effort on cultural competency.[12] The present article is the second. More are anticipated in the future research agenda.

How does cultural competency facilitate good governance? Globalization has increased the networked orientation of public service delivery and government-citizen relations.[13] Increased cross-sector governance and access to information, transportation, and capital in most countries have heightened awareness of and need for more public accountability, or good governance.[14] The standard of good governance is participatory, transparent, responsive, equitable, inclusive and cost-effective implementation of government programs that follow the rule of law.[15] Denhardt and Denhardt (2011)

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11   Catherine Wilson, "The Importance of Cultural Competence in Public Administration," *PA Times* (2015), accessed 31 October 2018 at: https://patimes.org/importance-cultural-competence-public-administration/

12   Ott et al, ibid.

13   Donald Klingner, "From Local to Global," in: Mary E. Guy and Marilyn M. Rubin, Eds., *Public Administration Evolving: From Foundations to the Future* (New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 64-82.

14   Ibid.

15   Yap Kioe Sheng, "What is good governance?" United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (undated), accessed 31 October 2018 at: https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/good-governance.pdf

Diversity Courses
N=65
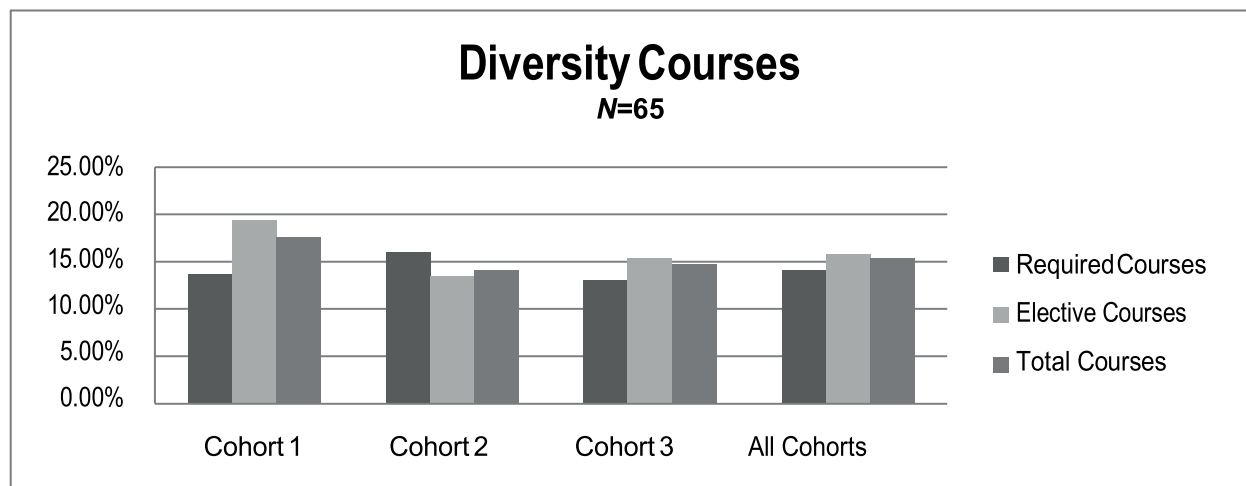
Reprinted with permission from Nick Weimer, Thesis for the completion of the requirements of the MPA program, University of Texas Pan American, 2011.

show with examples from around the world how accountability is strengthened when public employees focus on shared identity-making and cross-sector deliberation of collective interests within and among increasingly diverse societies.[16] The practice of representative bureaucracy – wherein a governmental agency workforce reflects the ethnic, racial, and economic characteristics of the people being served – fosters performance and increases public trust. Because migration and globalization are increasing diversity within and across societies, maintaining such representativeness – and promoting social equity – requires cultural competency scholarship and training everywhere.[17]

The quality of governance and teaching PA are two interrelated issues that should be addressed all together in the MENA countries.[18] As highlighted in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the promotion of democracy and good governance, including efficient and effective PA, is among the best ways to ensure that the moral values of freedom, equality, solidarity, environmental protection, and shared responsibility are respected. Democracy and good governance are goals in themselves because of the values on which

they rest, where cultural competency is a key factor across the different themes.

The limited status of cultural competency as a component of or contributor to good governance is common beyond MENA. Weimer investigates the extent to which the Masters in Public Administration (MPA), as a terminal professional degree program, provides cultural competency education.[19] Weimer examines the content of all NASPAA-accredited courses. The figure below shows that less than 20% of three cohorts (of 2010-11, 2009-10, and 2008-09 accredited PA programs) were offering required or elective courses in diversity and cultural competency.

Good governance in the areas of human security and law enforcement will continue to increase the need for cultural competency training as populations become more diverse socioeconomically. Frequent news reports indicate the need for reform to reduce racial profiling, discriminatory regulation, and other unconsciously or intentionally biased crime prevention methods in the United States, MENA, and elsewhere.

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16   Janet and Robert Denhardt, *The New Public Service: Serving, Not Steering* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2011), pp. 28-29, 195-200.

17   S.T. Gooden, "Social Equity and Evidence: Insights from Local Government," *Public Administration Review,* 77 (2017), pp. 822-828

18   Aziza Zemrani, "Teaching Public Administration: The Case of Morocco." *Journal of Public Affairs Education* 20, no. 4 (2014), pp. 515-28.

19   Nicholas Weimer, "The Culturally Adapted Public Administrator: How Accredited MPA Programs are Preparing Administrators With Cultural Competency," partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Public Administration, University of Texas Pan American (2011).

Appreciation for and implementation of cultural competency is a leader's work, strengthening both the skills of the lead manager or elected or appointed official as well as the organization and publics being served.[20] In the process of public sector leadership capacity development, both colleges and universities and management development institutes have critical roles to play by providing adequate training that meets the challenges of a diverse and global citizenry.

Stakeholder mapping for rigorous program evaluation is the basis of a robust toolkit for PA faculty and managers to support culturally sensitive and appropriate relations, policy innovation, and good governance overall. Fundamental to these process-tools is identifying, recognizing, and collaborating mutually with all interested and affected stakeholder groups.

Initial planning of a cultural competency training and implementation agenda should be guided by a theory of change.[21] Theorizing change through an inclusive and participatory process across stakeholder groups establishes shared goals and helps anticipate obstacles to implementation (Taplin & Clark, 2012).[22] A stakeholder-centric mapping of the assumptions, inputs, outputs, longer-term outcomes, and impacts of a cultural competency or other program helps generate a plausible, logical path from the status quo to the desired results (Ibid, p. 8).[23]

While the need for culturally competent public service providers is clear, operationalizing and training can be extremely difficult and costly for many public service agencies. Therefore, it is critical for a public manager to first consider all desired outcomes and their expected effects on all stakeholders before beginning the process of organizational change. For example, s/he should assess the current cultural make-up of the community being served and that of the agency or unit in question. It is likewise important to survey the specific needs and desires of the community, e.g., whether the public agencies are producing culturally appropriate and responsive programs, incorporating cultural competency into the agency's mission and operations, and identifying the connection between the agency's daily operations and the intended results. The manager should also calculate the cost of implementing the requisite training and organizational change, and alternatively, the cost of not implementing training and organizational change. These and many more priorities must be addressed before shifting a public program towards cultural competence, and the program evaluation process is a valuable model for assessing all of these areas.

Public-private partnerships for teaching and training are utilized across the globe. The National Center for Cultural Competence in the United States and the Pan-American Health Organization are two examples.[24]

Effective implementation of the foregoing tools and processes depends on morally grounded bureaucratic and political will. How power politics and corruption vary across cultures/societies and should be a cultural competency factor in PA skill-building and management training. Prasad, Martins da Silva, and Nickos present ways for understanding the nature of corruption from society to society and how to reduce it in a practical way.[25] What is considered an abuse of political power in one society may not be in another. It is a very important issue in determining how cultural competency training can improve service delivery and minimize the risk of corruption.

Weimer and Zemrani scan the horizon for future issues in professional and organizational development.[26] These authors see cultural competency as the next BIG thing that will confront organizations head-on, moving

20   Chris Taylor Cartwright, *Assessing the Relationship Between Intercultural Competence and Leadership Styles: An Empirical Study of International Fulbright Students in the U.S.*, Dissertation: Portland State University (2011), https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/open_access_etds/759/

21   Dana Taplin et al, "Theory of Change TECHNICAL PAPERS: A Series of Papers to Support Development of Theories of Change Based on Practice in the Field," NY: Center for Human Environments (2013), accessed 22 October 2018 at https://www.alnap.org/help-library/theory-of-change-technical-papers-a-series-of-papers-to-support-development-of-theories, p. 2.

22   Dana Taplin and Heléne Clark, "Theory of change basics, a primer on theory of change" (2020), accessed at:

http://www.theoryofchange.org/wp-content/uploads/toco_library/pdf/ToCBasics.pdf on 13 June 2018.

23   Ibid, p. 8.

24   Carrizales et al, 2016.

25   Prasad et al, *Approaches to Corruption: a Synthesis of the Scholarship*, Studies in Comparative International Development (2018), accessed on:

https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-018-9275-0, first online 21 August 2018.

26   Weimer and Zemrani, "Assessing the Level of Cultural Competencies".

to a more globalized society. They offer a thorough and thoughtful approach to assess needs and develop a culturally competent staff. It seems that cultural competency training might be especially helpful for first responders no matter the context, especially in very disrupted states of the MENA region.

Given all this, the authors offer the following theory of change for encouraging and sustaining culturally aware teaching curricula and PA across the region:

For the MENA, an evolutionary integration of cultural competency across government agencies and their implementing partner institutions and organizations will reflect the languages, history, and values of Islam and the other Abrahamic faiths. They will blend gradually, over time, with governance trends in other global regions. The blending process can be facilitated by collaborative, inclusive, and participatory multi-sector, multi-stakeholder program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

In future research, the change theory will be informed, reinforced, and adjusted using the process-tools of inclusive program design, monitoring, and evaluation.[27]

Methods

To achieve the purpose of this study, the authors used an inductive, qualitative document analysis approach. According to Bowen, document analysis is defined as a "systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material".[28] The purpose of reviewing the documents is to analyze systematically the content of a variety of documents to make conclusions based on the research objective.[29] In order to perform document analysis, O'Leary's (2014) steps process was applied by identifying a list of critical documents; collecting research documents; assessing their credibility and biases; examining their evidence; and then analyzing the collected documents.[30] Then document analysis was used to paint an overall picture featuring the variety of research surveyed on the efforts of MENA governments and educational institutions that integrate awareness of history, religious law and traditions, family systems, and language with diversity training skills in public agencies and master's programs in PA. The reviewed documents are websites, the government published reports, and organizational and institutional documents using keywords including cultural competence/competency, PA, public management, good governance, training, teaching, curriculum development, and Middle East. These methods are limited to gathering, reviewing and interrogating secondary data.

Findings

To address the overall state of cultural competency instruction and practice in the MENA, as shown below in Table 1, the document analysis identified 16 studies related to the status and future needs of MPA programs conducted in and on MENA educational and government institutions. Of these, one is also globally oriented, seven are regionally focused, and eight are country-specific.

One regional study argues that, regardless of the MENA's rich culture and long history of administration, the region continues to be inefficient in public organization, requiring reform at the level of a cultural "overhaul".[31] Another analysis

27   Kenneth Bush and Colleen Duggan, eds. *Evaluation in the Extreme: Research, Impact and Politics in Violently Divided Societies*, International Development Research Centre (2015), accessed 31 October 2018 at: https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/54839/IDL-54839. pdf?sequence=1#page=316, pp. 133-134; Weimer and Zemrani, ibid; Trent, *Transnational Engagement*.

28   G.A. Bowen, "Document analysis as a qualitative research method", *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2) (2009), pp.27-40.

29   E.R. Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research,* 12ᵗʰ ed., (Wadsworth: Cengage Learning, 2010).

30   Z. O'Leary, *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project* (California: Sage Publications, 2014).

31   Behrooz Kalantari, "Middle Eastern Public Management: A Cultural Approach to Developmental Administration." *Public Organization Review* 5, no. 2 (2005).

addresses governance reform priorities related to the MENA.[32] Those related to cultural competence are: to decentralize PA, transferring knowledge to the local level and civil society, increasing participation, inclusion, and diversity; and emphasizing human resource development for more participation and inclusion, in this case, through training.[33] A third suggests that PA practices in the Middle East can be improved by operationalizing competencies in measurable ways, inculcating impartiality and collective decision-making, and auditing ethics compliance.[34]

Three studies on Morocco inform the present research: Zemrani and Lynch; Zemrani; and Weimer and Zemrani.[35] The first of these three argues for slow, "evolutionary" change while noting that revolution may occur if the king and others with great power abandon constitutional reforms and other political reforms. This research explores the Moroccan experience in its endeavor toward a more democratic government through more effective PA and the ability of public administrators to meet new and more complex challenges. The article discusses the evolution of the higher education system, focusing on the teaching of PA. In the process of public sector leadership capacity development, both colleges and universities, and management development institutes, have critical roles to play by providing adequate training that meets the challenges of a diverse and global citizenry.

On Egypt there are three studies that inform efforts to build public service capacity, including cultural competency training. First, there is a need to improve management structures in Egypt and the Middle East

in general.[36] Second, political will and government endorsement of transformational reform, as well as favorable perceptions of managers toward training and intra-organizational support for inclusive training, are key to public sector transformation.[37] Third, training should aim to raise critical thinking and management analysis skills.[38]

One relevant study from and on Iran was located.[39] Although it deals with employee/productivity levels in public libraries in Iran, and not cultural competency of employees, the findings indicate that the cultural characteristics of an effective library have a positive effect on its administration. "Managers can bring important changes or modification to the organization to improve organizational status and influence leadership and management practices by surveying organizational culture. This process is called organizational culture management".[40]

One study was also found on Iraq. It finds that PA practitioners and scholars within and beyond Iraq must more fully appreciate and mediate the problems of ethnic division, corruption, and infrastructure vulnerabilities by applying "an Islamic way of thinking" about the primacy of faith and family.[41] The article seeks to provide an overview of Iraq's PA characterized by political and social chaos. The problems that plague the PA system in Iraq are connected to social imbalance caused by the war, the negative effects of the quota system within the public service based on ethnicity and religious affiliations, corruption, and the lack of consultation for advice for policy making from other nations.

Qatari PA is mentioned in a case study on the United Arab Emirates (discussed below), noting

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32   Adriana Alberta, and Fatma Sayed, "Challenges and Priorities in Reforming Governance and Public Administration in the Middle East, Northern Africa, and Western Balkans," in: *Special Workshop on Public Administration in Arab-Mediterranean Countries,* INAP, Madrid, Spain, September, vol. 22. 2007.

33   Ibid.

34   Paul et al, "Managing HR in the Middle East: Challenges in the Public Sector," *Public Personnel Management* 41, no. 3 (2012).

35   Zemrani and Lynch, "Morocco's Dance with Democracy"; Weimer and Zemrani, "Assessing the Level of Cultural Competencies"; Zemrani, Aziza. "Teaching Public Administration".

36   Tarek Hatem, "Egypt: Exploring management in the Middle East," *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 24, no. 1-2 (1994).

37   Dina Wafa, "Capacity-building for the Transformation of Public Service: A Case of Managerial-Level Public Servants in Egypt," *Teaching Public Administration 33*, no. 2 (2015).

38   Jennifer Bremer and Laila El Baradei, "Developing Public Administration and Public Policy Master's Programs in Egypt," *Journal of Public Affairs Education 14*, no. 3 (2008).

39   Soraya Ziaei, et al, "Identifying Dimensions and Components of Competent Organizational Culture of Public Libraries in Iran," *Palma Journal*, 16, issue 3, no. 2 (2017).

40   Ibid, pp. 477-8.

41   Cosmina Craciunescu, "Iraq's Public Administration Policies: An Overview," *Review of Public Administration and Management* 5, no. 1 (2017).

its majority expatriate workforce, wealth, openness to globalization, and a "unique combination of traditional and formal organization".[42] Qatar is also among the nations discussed by Meek (2018) in the development of a framework for integrating cultural competency into the curriculum of PA programs for improved governance in "disrupted states".[43]

Regarding the status of cultural competency teaching and training in Turkey, a study led by a Turkish scholar in collaboration with a U.S.-based faculty researcher was one of two English-language peer-reviewed analysis with any bearing on the present article. Onder and Brower (2013) offer a "broad overview of Turkish PA" over the past 20 years.[44] They explain how Turkish and American PA differ, while basic theories, research practices, and pedagogy are similar. While this study draws helpful comparative context, especially for a major MENA power, a need for more research on the topic at hand is indicated. The second study focuses on the teaching of analytical methods among undergraduate students of public policy, calling for a new cadre of administrators to create a skilled cadre of government-employed.[45]

Three analyses of PA teaching and practice in the United Arab Emirates inform current and future approaches to advance cultural competence and good governance in this nation and others in the region. Two are by Arab scholars and one short, cross-national comparative essay is a collaboration among a SESAME member and two students.[46]

From the literature on public health evaluation come many insightful approaches to intentional culturally sensitive management. For example, cultural competency of program administrators includes not only self-awareness of one's preferences and biases but also, toward the citizens served, "cultural humility" about their lived experiences, identities, perceptions, and the behaviors they generate.[47][48]

Bridging gaps across generations is another key dimension of cultural competency. Integration of cultural competency in MPA teaching and training in the MENA, as elsewhere, stands to promote the understanding of the millennial generation of, e.g., the impact on their quality of life of global climate change. This would foster evolutionary change through governmental action to protect the environment and reduce human suffering, instead of violent revolution.[49]

Overall, the table arrays some general and specific comments about the relationships between cultural competency, diversity, and service delivery. There is a common thread across all the articles about the necessity of cultural competency in the MENA region and how these skills can be honed through education and training. The second common thread is good governance and how teaching PA can be effective in reaching that goal.

Conclusion

This article is an early attempt to survey the English-language theorizing and case studies around cultural competence levels and training in the MENA. The literature review finds a dearth of research in English

42 J.W. Fox et al, *Globalization and the Gulf* (Routledge, 2006).

43 Jack Meek, "Making a difference: Good governance in disrupted states", *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, 24:2 (2018), accessed at: https://doi.org/10.1080/15236803.2018.1458011

44 Murat Onder and Ralph S. Brower, "Public Administration Theory, Research, and Teaching: How Does Turkish Public Administration Differ?" *Journal of Public Affairs Education 19* (2013).

45 Mete Yıldız et al, "Teaching Public Policy to Undergraduate Students: Issues, Experiences, and Lessons in Turkey," Journal of Public Affairs Education 17, No. 3 (2011), pp. 343-365.

46 Samier, Eugenie. 2014. "Designing Public Administration Curriculum for the United Arab Emirates: Principles for Graduate Programmes for a Modernising Arab Islamic State." *Administrative Culture*, 15, no. 2, pp. 222 - 246.

47 Ott et al.

48 Janaka Jayawickrama and Jacqueline Strecker, "The Ethics of Evaluating Research: Views from the Field," in: Bush and Duggan, *Evaluation in the Extreme*.

49 Zemrani and Lynch; V. Bobadilla and E. Harris, "Through the Student Lens: A Review of Understanding Environmental Policy", *Public Administration Review*, 75: 633-635 (2015).

#	Author(s)	Article	Research Focus	Observation
	TABLE 1: REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CASES			
1	Peter Mameli	Under New Management	Citizen involvement and training of authentic public sector leaders in MENA countries.	Addressing best practices from a comparative perspective
2	John Bhuiyan Dixon, Shahjahan Bhuiyan, Yılmaz Üstüner	Public Administration in the Middle East and North Africa	Defining the relationship between the state and civil society, for good governance	Though many Arab nations have western-style administrative institutions, implementation varies by locale because of differences in cultural patterns, societal structures and behaviors.
3	Aziza Zemrani	Teaching Public Administration: The Case of Morocco	Improving PA education to support administrative reforms among MENA countries undergoing transitions in their political, economic, and societal affairs	Curricula should be adapted to the needs of society to increase good governance
4	Murat Onder and Ralph S. Brower	Public Administration Theory, Research, and Teaching: How Does Turkish Public Administration Differ?	Adaptation of PA curriculum to meet the needs of Turkish society emphasizing critical thinking and sound research methods	Turkish and U.S. PA share basic theories, research practices, and pedagogy a common thread in the other articles examined in the present study
5	Sophie Hennekam, Louba-Tahssain-Gay, Jawad Syed	Contextualizing Diversity Management in the Middle East and North Africa: A Relational Perspective	HR/diversity management and policy practices in MENA countries is severely under-researched	The only article in the present study to address diversity, though not how to improve practice though cultural competence courses and assessment as per Weimer and Zemrani, below
6	Behrooz Kalantari	Middle Eastern Public Management: A Cultural Approach to Development Administration	The underlying causes of political and administrative ineptitude in the MENA	Suggests that administrative problems can be addressed through a 'cultural overhaul'
7	Cosmina Ioana Craciunescu	Iraq's Public Administration Policies: An Overview	An overview of Iraq's public administration characterized by political and social chaos.	Adaptation of western PA teaching orientation is not sufficient to improve governance there
8	Paul Iles, Abdoul Almhedie, Yehuda Baruch	Managing HR in the Middle East: Challenges in the Public Sector	Examines the appropriate elements of contemporary HRM as practiced in the west in comparison to Middle Eastern countries	More research and training is needed in conflict of interest mitigation, unbiased decision-making, ethics, fair competition, and transparency.

9	Mete Yildiz, Mehmet Akif Demircioglu and Cenay Babaoglu	Teaching Public Policy to Undergraduate Students: Issues Experiences, and Lessons in Turkey	Analyzes the diffusion of public policy teaching in Turkey	Developing a new generation of public policy analysts will promote administrative competence, including in cultural awareness
10	Tarek Hatem	Egypt Exploring Management in the Middle East	The focus of most management research in Egypt has been primarily the public sector and large-scale enterprises	The purpose of the research is to find avenues through research that would improve management structures in Egypt and the Middle East in general
11	Dina Wafa	Capacity-Building for the Transformation of Public Service: A Case of Managerial-level Public Servants in Egypt	Examines institutional challenges to capacity building in Egypt since the civil society uprisings of "the Arab Spring"	Political will and government endorsement of transformational reform, as well as favorable perceptions of managers toward training and intra-organizational support for inclusive training, are key to public sector transformation
12	Eugenie A. Samier	Designing Public Administration Curriculum for the United Arab Emirates: Principle for Graduate Programs for a Modernizing Arab Islamic State	Explores guidelines and major themes for PA curriculum development	Curricula should reflect Arab history and sovereignty as context for students' culturally competent creation of responsive public policy and programs
13	Adriana Alberti and Fatma Sayed	Challenges and Priorities in reforming Governance and Public Administration in the Middle East, Northern Africa, Western Balkans	Highlights the governance challenges that the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of the Mediterranean region have been facing in recent years	Priorities related to the MENA are: decentralize public administration; emphasize human resource development including training for more participation, inclusion, and diversity
14	Jennifer Bremer and Laila El Baradei	Developing Public Administration and Public Policy Master's Programs in Egypt	Egypt confronts challenges in the area of skills and capabilities due to increase in global interactions and internal reforms within government and society	Training in critical thinking skills and managerial analysis should be targeted
15	Nicholas Weimer and Aziza Zemrani	Assessing the Level of Cultural Competencies in Public Organizations	A call for more training and assessment for evaluating the level of cultural competency for better service delivery	Program evaluation is a key tool for developing and sustaining culturally appropriate public programs
16	Soraya Ziaei, Mohammad Reza Amiri, Hadi Sharif Moghadam, Bibi Marjan Fayyazi	Identifying Dimensions and Components of Competent Organizational Culture of Public Libraries in Iran	Employee productivity levels in public libraries in Iran.	The organizational cultural characteristics of an effective library have a positive effect on its governance

and a similarly small number of reports about cultural diversity training in PA, neither of which is atypical across the globe. Yet, such training and practice are strongly indicated by rapidly diversifying populations and societies due to accelerations in migration resulting from climate change and political instability, globalization of communication technology, and expanded transportation and trade. This closing section offers an agenda for future collaborative research informed by the foregoing analysis and its limitations.

Following from the evolutionary theory of change and case analysis, future research and curriculum development should explore the dimensions of cultural diversity training and policy grounded in Islam and the other Middle Eastern religions. This grounding includes sensitivity to historic, colonial suppression of religious and tribal traditions that divided, exploited, and excluded people. Research should explore how to craft programs that recognize the often hybrid nature of Middle Eastern identity, local customs, along with the need to foster national unity and to avoid reflexively continuing or adopting neoliberalist socioeconomic development approaches. Such programs will require more self-awareness of conscious and unconscious biases and fostering of cultural humility among students, scholars, and practitioners. In the classroom, at the street level, and conducting fieldwork, these experiences will benefit individuals, communities, and society.

Testing the evolutionary change theory should be part of the future research agenda, reinforced using the process-tools of stakeholder mapping and inclusive program design, monitoring, and evaluation. For example, in the context of human security, there is some evidence that listening to engage with and understand the "collective honor" dynamic amid crowds of Middle Eastern protestors may strengthen law enforcement officers' capacity to resolve conflict with them.[50]

As an exploratory work on a rapidly changing societal issue, the present study has several limitations. It is confined to a literature review in English only. It is not a primary search of curricula on cultural competency across the MENA; instead it relies on published case studies of the need for and implementation of such curricula as related to good governance. To at least partly address these limitations, future research can include a survey of literature, catalog courses, and syllabi at universities and training institutes in Arabic, Farsi, Turkish, Kurdish, French, and other languages of the region.

The program evaluation process – aided by multi-stakeholder public-private partnering on curriculum and training – can provide the monitoring and student/employee participation and feedback necessary for responsive cultural competency programming and overall organizational cultural competence.

ASPA is most likely to help bridge the gap between theory and practice and have a more "pracademic" perspective. Practitioners and academics need to have open forums on the issue or topic under exploration and training workshops. For example, the Section on Organizational and Professional Development (SPOD) offered a workshop during the 2016 conference in Seattle facilitated by Drs. Chris Cartwright and Aziza Zemrani. (Dr. Cartwright is the Director of the Institute of Intercultural Communication, Portland, Oregon.) Another possibility is a conference among members of SESAME, other ASPA chapters and sections such as the International Chapter, the Section on International and Comparative Administration, and SPOD, AMEPPA and NASPAA. A special journal issue could follow.

There should be joint efforts by ASPA, AMEPPA and NASPAA in raising awareness of cultural competence, service delivery, and good governance, especially in emerging countries of the MENA region. NASPAA, with its new direction as a global network, can work with ASPA to develop some programs or certifications to be aligned with the leadership courses offered in public affairs curricula.

More effective cultural competency assessment and training in the Ferguson, Missouri police force might have prevented the slaying of young Michael Brown and the ensuing civil unrest.[51] In the MENA, awareness among civil and military officers of subnational power dynamics and corruptive practices might have de-escalated the violent communication

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50   Winston Sieck et al, "Violent and Peace Crowd Reactions in the Middle East: Cultural Experiences and Expectations," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, 5, Issue 1: 20-44 (2011), https://doi.org/10.1080/19434472.2011.616668

51   Weimer and Zemrani.

that fed civil strife and regional conflict in the last decade.[52] In the United States and MENA countries, assessment and diversity training – that recognize the wide variety of indigenous religious traditions and political institutions as well as exogenous cultural influences – strengthen management of borders, refugee assistance, and immigration services for short-term security and long-run social equity. Strengthening the evidence base will increase political will of government leaders to fund cultural competency assessment and training in the MENA. In the pursuit of better governance, SESAME looks forward to forging local-to-global research and training partnerships across sectors and disciplines.

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52 M. Prasad et al, *Approaches to Corruption: a Synthesis of the Scholarship*, Studies in Comparative International Development (2018), https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-018-9275-0, first online 21 August 2018.

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