Bureaucracy and Modernity:
A Comparative Qualitative Analysis of Public Administration in the West and OIC States

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ABSTRACT: *Many of the 57 Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) states have been unsuccessful at incorporating modern bureaucracy into their political systems. While much of the Islamic world, particularly the Gulf States, have vast resources and oil wealth, they have had problems properly administering benefits in a way that is fair and beneficial to their citizens. Recurring themes can be readily identified in the literature on bureaucracy in Islamic states today: corruption, nepotism, and incompetence. Each particular state has its own unique circumstances surrounding modernization and bureaucratic development. The essay looks first at the development of bureaucratic theory in the West. It then addresses the theoretical question as to the compatibility of Western bureaucracy to Islamic states. The essay's final part examines and compares a few particular Islamic states in Central and South Asia as well as the Gulf States and the Middle East and North Africa.*

Introduction

As the twentieth century progressed, it became evident that bureaucracies and public administration would be absolutely essential in the west. Following the Great Depression, Franklin Roosevelt incorporated the largest expansion of administrative power and capacities the United States had ever seen. In an effort to combat high unemployment and underdevelopment, Roosevelt implemented numerous bold programs. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and the WPA (Works Progress Administration) were all examples of organized, well-funded governmental efforts to modernize the underdeveloped infrastructure of the United States and put unemployed Americans back to work (Kennedy, 1999; Smith, 2005). At the heart of these massive, state-sponsored projects was a re-conceptualization of the role of the bureaucracy.

The Islamic world today finds itself in a similar position in which the United States found itself during the Great Depression. Islamic states today are experiencing high unemployment, economic stagnation, and increasing political strife. Inadequate implementation of modern technology, corruption, nepotism, cronyism, gender discrimination, and general incompetence on the part of unqualified and under-trained administrators are all problems with public administration in member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) (Jreisat,

2009; Ayubi, 1989; Common, 2008). Bureaucratic modernization must be at the forefront of transforming the Muslim world. This paper first looks at the development of bureaucratic theory in the west. It then addresses the theoretical question as to the compatibility of western bureaucracy to Islamic states in general. The final part of this paper will examine and compare a few particular Islamic states in South Asia, the Gulf States, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and bureaucracies in the West and Islamic States.

The Development of Bureaucratic Theory and the West: The Modern Beginnings

Perhaps the most prolific and well-known theorist on bureaucracy is the great German sociologist Max Weber. Weber (1964) argued that the future of the world would not necessarily result in global Communism, as envisioned by Marx, nor any other particular political ideology. He did argue that what was certain was that the future would be marked by expanding networks of formal rules and procedures and along with it, expanding bureaucratic institutions with greater and greater power. When considering the broader philosophical issue of where a state's authority is derived, Weber contests that authority comes from three sources. He defines these sources as traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal. As

societies become more developed, rational legal authority becomes more formalized. Weber's argument is that *the bureaucracy* is the embodiment of rational-legalistic authority. On bureaucracies and vertical hierarchical organization, Weber states:

> The principle of office hierarchy and of the successive stages of appeal requires a clearly ordered system of authority and subordination involving supervision of the lower offices by the higher ones; a system which simultaneously accords the governed the possibility of appealing, in a regulated fashion, the finding of a lower agency to the corresponding superior agency. (1964, p. 60)

Bureaucracies operate within the framework of codified written laws that can be referred to for clarification of procedures. Weber argues that a bureaucracy is a formal organization that is rule bound. Each individual has a specific function within the bureaucracy. Offices are organized hierarchically. Rules are technical; workers are separate and distinct from other officials. Administrative acts are formally written and distinguished, and issues pertaining to legal authority can be adjudicated by different agencies within the organization itself (Weber, 1964). This is to say, if one has a grievance, there is a formal procedure and body that exists for adjudicating their grievance. This also means that individuals cannot act on their own accord when deciding procedures. A well-organized bureaucracy can help with the flow of government and can cut down on violence based on resentment resulting from arbitrary enforcement of the laws. The notion of fairness is emphasized and embodied within the confines of a well-functioning bureaucracy.

The work of Herbert Simon looks at the decision-making process and how decisions are made in large organizations. Efficiency and practicality should be goals of any administrative decision (Simon, 1997). Chester Barnard, like Simon, argues that the way individuals make decisions should be and generally is qualitatively different from how administrative agencies make decisions. According to Barnard (1938), "the decisions that an individual makes as a member of an organization are quite distinct from his personal decisions" (p. 77). Other than the obviously different scope of personal and administrative decisions, the necessity of rationality is absolutely essential in any and every administrative decision in a way that it is not always the case in personal decisions. To give a crude but to the point example, one can decide to eat chocolate ice cream as opposed to vanilla for no particularly rational reason; maybe one had a taste for

it, or maybe it was on sale at the grocery store. Regardless of one's reason for choosing the particular flavor they did, the consequences of the decision to eat chocolate ice cream will most likely have minimal consequences or long term ramifications.

Bureaucratic decisions must always have a reason behind them. The most seemingly benign administrative decision could impact a very large number of people and could have long-lasting ramifications. Effective bureaucracies and public administrative agencies follow rational patterns of decision making. Paraphrasing Simon (1997) on page 66 of *Administrative Behavior*, rational decision-making in the administrative arena includes considerations of the following:

1. Responsibility to democratic institutions in guiding value determinations
2. Allocating resources based on relative importance of factual and ethical issues involved
3. Considering factual evidence and alternatives that could be more effective
4. Administrators being accountable for all value judgments, major or minor

The effective administrative agency or administrator is one who can keep these four broad guidelines in mind when making decisions. Opportunity costs factor into any administrative decision. Any particular choice x, will limit the possibility of enacting choice y and choice z. Utilizing such a set of protocols helps make the decision-making process more nuanced. As Simon (1997) notes, there is no one particular way to make a decision regarding often complex rules or regulations. The best way to approach the decision-making process at the organizational level is to go into the process with some type of consistent approach or basic questions that can be applied to as many decisions as possible.

Simon also addresses the question and role of authority in organizations. Simon (1997) defines authority, "not in terms of the sanctions of the superior, but in terms of the behaviors of the subordinate" (p. 183). This is a behavioral approach to understanding the exercise of authority. A way to measure one's authority is to examine the things those who are subordinate do. Greater authority means getting more people to more frequently behave in the way the superior desires. The authority of a particular individual or particular sub-agency within a larger agency has an enormous impact on the formal structure of any organization (Simon, 1997). Sometimes authority is derived directly from one's title. Being CEO or Senior Ex-

ecutive of any agency automatically carries with it some power. Authority can also be derived from charismatic sources. One's own experience within a particular organization can also be a source of authority. Effective leaders are able to get obedience from those below and support from those who are important.

The function and role of bureaucracy in the west has been well-studied by scholars for well over one hundred years. According to Wilson (1887), on the goal of the study of administration, "It is the object of administrative study to discover, first, what government can properly and successfully do, and, secondly, how it can do these proper things with the utmost possible efficiency and at the least possible cost either of money or energy" (p. 1). Wilson sought to incorporate studies of government with studies of bureaucracy and public administration. For Wilson, the two were becoming increasingly intertwined as the United States grew territorially and economically. In order to effectively administer an increasingly powerful empire, Wilson felt that political scientists needed to include bureaucracy as a part of their research program. Wilson (1887) sought to make bureaucracy function in a more business-like manner:

> This is why there should be a science of administration which shall seek to strengthen the paths of government, to make its business less unbusinesslike, to strengthen and purify its organization, and to crown its duties with dutifulness. This is one reason why there is such a science.
>
> (p. 201)

Wilson sought to shape the development of modern bureaucracy in a similar way to the functioning of an efficient large corporation.

New Models of Public Administration: the 1980s and Beyond

Over the last thirty years, there have been advances in the theorizing of public administration. *New Public Management* was perhaps the most popular model of administration for those who focused on the primacy of management in the 1980s and 1990s. In the twenty-first century, specifically following the events of 9/11, a new approach to management was introduced called Digital Era Governance (DEG).

New Public Management (NPM) has sought to emphasize improvements in service quality, and employee empowerment (Kaboolian, 1998; Jriesat, 1999). The

thrust of NPM is that deregulation is the best route to improve administration. It also seeks to increase competition amongst bureaucratic agencies by breaking them down into smaller competing parts. The argument is that competition between agencies will improve overall productivity. The peak of this theory about management occurred during the 1980s and 1990s when deregulation was popular amongst reformers of government agencies. Many proponents of NPM support neo-liberal market values and come from business schools.

Following catastrophic security failures, such as 9/11, and regulatory failures of financial markets, some theorists argue that NPM theories need to be reconsidered (Bastow, Dunleavy, Margetts, & Tinkler, 2006). They have been replaced by a new approach called *digital era governance*. These theorists contest that NPM theories insistence on fragmented, competing agencies has led to breakdown in communication amongst agencies and has facilitated in making corruption easier and accountability more difficult. The approaches towards management of DEG focus on reintegrating government integration and maximizing digitization (Bastow et al., 2006). Modern information technologies are critical to DEG approaches to government agency reform and improvement. This newest model also places new emphasis on the emerging field of cyber security. Administrative agencies must be alert and responsive to cyber terrorism and the theft of confidential information. Islamic states should consider both of these theoretical developments in public administration theory when improving their own bureaucracies.

Bureaucracy and Islam

At least in principle, the west has been effective at the implementation of bureaucracy and formal procedures. Despite all of the internal problems with large scale bureaucracies like the TVA, such bureaucratic programs did manage to modernize the vastly underdeveloped southeastern part of the United States. Before getting to the specific individual cases, one must first address the larger theoretical question about the compatibility of Islam with bureaucratic procedures. Can Islamic states have modern bureaucratic apparatuses and still be Islamic? Is bureaucracy a necessarily secular phenomenon? Evidence shows that Islam and bureaucracy are by no means mutually exclusive.

Islamic states absolutely must consider the importance of a well-developed and functioning bureaucracy.

Scholars who study public administration in Arab States recognize the need for administrative reform in these regions. There is a relation between economic prosperity and effective administration. According to Jamil Jreisat (1999), "Links between economic growth and administrative reform are universally acknowledged" (p. 20). He goes on to argue that competent decision making and professional public service are prerequisites to any significant progress in regards to development and modernization.

The Iranian Revolution was a major blow to modern bureaucratic development in Islamic states. Despite the political and economic corruption under Shah Palavhi, efforts to develop modern bureaucratic procedures and administration in Iran were all but destroyed following the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Imam Khomeini (1970) was quite hostile to the concept of bureaucracy when he crafted his model of the state. In his words, "In addition, superfluous bureaucracies and the system of file-keeping and paper-shuffling that is enforced in them, all of which are totally alien to Islam, impose further expenditures on our national budget not less in quantity than the illicit expenditures of the first category" (Khomeini, 1970, p. 31). He goes on to say, "These superfluous formalities, which cause our people nothing but expense, trouble, and delay, have no place in Islam" (Khomeini, 1970, p. 31). For Khomeini, bureaucracy was a product of westernization and was not to be a part of his new model of an Islamic state. This meant that a very select few wielded a great deal of power and influence in Khomeini's system. As the late dissident cleric, Ayatollah Montazeri (2000) later argues, these particular jurists, while being well-read in religious law, were not qualified to handle bureaucratic matters.

Despite Khomeini's rhetoric, bureaucracy has had a long history within the Islamic framework. The keeping of records and written documentation of law is critical in any functioning state. Imam Khomeini's contestation that bureaucracies and their superfluous formalities have no place in Islam is not correct, and history proves this point. The formalities that are inherent in an effective functioning bureaucracy are quite compatible with an Islamic framework. According to historian Albert Hourani (1991), bureaucracy was integral to the functioning of the Ottoman Empire. "The Empire was a bureaucratic state, holding different regions within a single administrative and fiscal system" (Hourani, 1991, p. 207). He goes on to argue that Turkish was established as the specific administrative vernacular. Many of the administrators were converts from all over the empire. Not only did the bureaucracy link the economic and political elements of the empire, but it also connected the people of varying tribes and cultural backgrounds.

The importance of bureaucracy in the Islamic world even pre-dates the Ottoman Empire. Ibn Khaldun wrote nearly two hundred years prior to the Ottoman Empire at a time when the vast majority of the people were illiterate. In regard to the *positions of the pen,* Ibn Khaldun (2205) states:

> Each of the instruments through which help may be given has many different subdivisions. "The pen' has such subdivisions, for instance, as 'the pen of letters and correspondence', 'the pen of diplomas and fiefs'', and 'the pen of bookkeeping,' which means the offices of chief of tax collections and allowance and of minister of the army.
>
> (p. 189)

The need for written records has always been important. In reality, what is the Qur'an other than a written account of the decrees and commands of God? Ibn Khaldun (2005) argues throughout *The Muqaddimah*, written in 1377, that when an empire begins to enter into a stage of decline, often the bureaucracy becomes corrupt. The ruler becomes increasingly despotic, arrogant, and less just (Khaldun, 2005). This leads to a centralization of power and increased nepotism and corruption. Once formal procedures are regularly ignored, this represents the beginning of the end.

As mentioned, the religious framework of Islam is also dominated by such formalities. The rule of Islam is hierarchically organized, much like an effective bureaucracy. In Islam, the Qur'an and *Sunnah* are primary sources of legislation, followed by the *hadeeth*, followed by conventional wisdom. A well-organized modern bureaucracy in practice should also have a well-defined vertical hierarchy of organization, in which each position has a specific, well-defined task for which that position is responsible (Moe, 1984). Such organization makes accountability easier, and allows one to more easily fix the broken cog in the wheel; this allows for greater fairness and helps minimize excess and waste (Moe, 1984). Well-defined bureaucracies can also allow for a standard of evaluation that the people can use when evaluating the efficiency of a particular bureaucracy's leadership structure. Are the leaders adhering to the codified legal codes, or are they arbitrarily exercising power? Questions like these can be addressed with a codified set of procedures and laws.

Islam as a religion is not the obstacle to modernization; rather the obstacles can be found in the deeply embedded cultural values of individual states. As mentioned,

the prevalence of nepotism and cronyism has been a major hindrance to the development of modern bureaucratic institutions in OIC states (Jreisat 1999; Common 2008). The *Sunnah* of the Prophet Mohammed is explicit in articulating that no individual is above the law. The laws must apply equally to all citizens within Islamic society. Indeed then, it appears that bureaucracy is not only compatible to Islamic political institutions, rather it is fundamental. According to Hai and Nawi (2007), the concept of *al-Shura* (the council) is one of the core principles of organizing an Islamic state. This concept of a consultative council that assists in the process of decision-making dates all the way back to the very beginnings of Islam. The key elements of *al-Shura* that most scholars today agree upon are the following:

- Meeting or consultation that follows the teachings of Islam.
- Consultation following the guidelines of the Qur'an and *Sunnah.*
- There is a leader elected among them to head the meeting.
- The discussion should be based on *mushawarah* (consensus) and *mudhakarah* (remembrance of the Sunnah and Hadith).
- All the members are given fair opportunity to voice out their opinions.
- The issue should be of *maslahah ammah* (public interest).
- The voices of the majority are accepted, provided that it does not violate with the teachings of the Qur'an or *Sunnah.*   (Hai, & Nawi, 2007)

These basic ground rules for *al-Shura* can easily all be applied to the way bureaucracies operate in an Islamic state. The rules, if properly observed, could easily transform the way decision-making and public administration are handled throughout the OIC states.

In the *hadeeth* of both Bukhari and Sahih Muslim in regard to the judge:

> Amr bin al-As heard Allah's messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) as saying, when a judge gives his decision, having tried his best to decide correctly and is right, there are two rewards for him; and if he gave judgment after having tried his best (to arrive at a correct decision) but erred, there is only one reward for him.
>   (Ramadan, 2006, p. 20)

The issue of justice is obviously quite important in Islam. This problem of arbitrary enforcement of laws is at the core of the corruption that plagues the Islamic world.

Many states in the Islamic world do not have well-defined bureaucracies that treat individuals equally. The adjudication of disputes must be handled in a fair and even-handed manner. This is also something that is inherent within the original framework outlined by the Prophet Mohammed. Well-defined bureaucratic procedures can mitigate civilian anger at perceived unfairness.

Bureaucracy: Afghanistan and South Asia

The situations surrounding political participation and bureaucratic development differ between OIC member states. Central and South Asia compared to the Middle East have many differences in the way their bureaucracies are theoretically conceived and functionally operate. It is generally accepted that South Asia is more democratic than the Middle East, especially the Gulf States. According to Muqtedar Khan (2006), "Secular Muslim's hold power in most of the Muslim world except Iran, South Asia is more democratic than the Middle East" (p. 153). Khan argues that the role females play in the political systems of Bangladesh and Pakistan are evidence of greater political access for the population of these nations as opposed to Gulf States.

In 1973, Prime Minister Bhutto revamped the Pakistani system of public administration banning castes. Bhutto also made efforts to limit wanton corruption that marked administration in Pakistan during the colonial era. While females have greater influence in the realm of public administration in Pakistan than in the Gulf States, they still are underrepresented and not treated equally by western standards. According to Nasir Islam (2005) women rarely reach the highest echelons of the pay scale in public administration, "Compared to some 800 men [in Pakistan] in the BPS scales 20 and above, there are only 19 women holding posts in these grades" (p. 167). It is also noted that cultural norms in Pakistan, like the Gulf States, limit women's social mobility, especially within the realm of public administration. "Gender differentiation of roles assigns women to domestic roles and encourages an early marriage, having a family and take care of children and domestic work" (Islam, 2005, p. 167). Many husbands actively discourage their wives from working outside the house, regardless of household income. Men in Pakistan would rather be poorer and have more control of their spouse than to have greater wealth and less control. While this may be far less common in the west, it is very common throughout the Muslim world (Almaney, 1981; Islam, 2005). This also means that many highly qualified

women are leaving their posts after marriage and are being replaced by less qualified males.

Pakistan, much like the Arab states, is a much more collectivist rather than individualistic society (Islam, 2005; Jreisat, 1999). Family connections and relations dominate most aspects of daily life. Similar patterns of nepotism and cronyism seen in the Gulf States are also present in Pakistan (Islam, 2005). The situation in Pakistan has deteriorated significantly over the past 15 years. Pakistan went from being ranked 53rd in overall corruption by the transparency international rankings down to 92nd by 2003 (Islam, 2005). Things have continued to spiral out of control from 2003 until 2010. As of 2010, Pakistan was ranked 143rd out of 178 (*Transparency International Corruption Index Rankings*, 2010).

The situation in Afghanistan surrounding bureaucracy is perhaps the direst in the entire Muslim world. As corrupt as Pakistan is, Afghanistan ranked an egregious 176th out of 178 in the corruption standings in 2010; tied with Myanmar and only ahead of Somalia (*Transparency International Corruption Index Rankings*, 2010). Afghanistan is by most metrics a nation state only by definition. Benedict Anderson (1983) in his classic work exploring the phenomenon of nationalism, *Imagined Communities*, argues that an accompanying element of the modern nation state and modern forms of public administration was an ebbing of religiosity. "Yet for all the grandeur and power of the great religiously imagined communities, their *unselfconsciousness coherence* waned steadily after the middle ages" (Anderson, 1983, p. 16). Anderson contests that in Western Europe, the eighteenth century marks not only the dawn of the age of nationalism, but the dusk of religious modes of thought. This led Europe to modernize and develop bureaucratic institutions. Religious modes of thought simply have not eroded away in Afghanistan. If anything, religiosity has become even stronger in recent years following the Soviet and American invasions. I would not argue that Islam is why bureaucracy is underdeveloped in Afghanistan, but its particular interpretation and implementation in places like Afghanistan, along with other cultural and even geographical considerations, has most certainly had some impact on why, from an administrative perspective, things are the way they are.

The rapid increase in literacy and the development of administrative vernaculars during the sixteenth century in Europe has yet to happen in Afghanistan. Prior to the sixteenth century in Europe, the church leaders who spoke Latin controlled daily political affairs. Few people could speak it, and even fewer could read it. The development of administrative vernaculars created one national administrative language that everyone could speak and understand, hence giving more power to the people and weakening the strength of the church. "The birth of administrative vernaculars predated both print and the religious upheaval of the sixteenth century, and must therefore be regarded as an independent factor in the erosion of the sacred imagined community" (Anderson, 1983, p. 41). The spread of literacy in Europe allowed for the development of more centrally administered states with extensive bureaucratic apparatuses. Afghanistan in many ways is similar to pre-sixteenth century Europe in this regard.

Afghanistan never experienced this mass advancement in literacy or an administrative vernacular which translated into western styled administration and bureaucracy. At the very least, in the other Islamic countries there is one clearly dominant language and this same dominant language is also the language of administration. Despite the official language used by the Afghan government being Dari, a dialect of Persian, not everyone in Afghanistan can read it or speak it. Numerous local languages are spoken throughout Afghanistan including Persian dialects, Pashto, Uzbek, Turkmen and approximately 30 other minority languages. Afghanistan has a 34% literacy rate according to a 2008 Ministry of Education report. The male literacy rate was 50% while the female literacy rate was a staggering 18% (Afghan Ministry of Education Report, 2008). With such low literacy rates, it is no surprise that Afghanistan never developed modern administrative bureaucratic procedures. There were never enough literate people in any one language to manage complicated paperwork and keep effective records.

Bureaucracy: the Middle East and Gulf States

While Afghanistan is perhaps the least developed particular *state* in terms of bureaucratic development in the Islamic world, the most backwards Islamic *region* in terms of bureaucratic development are the oil-rich Gulf States. In the Gulf States, bureaucracy and public administration during the last century has been ineffective to say the least. They have been the worst at following the Weberian model in the Muslim world. While some of these states operate under charismatic or traditional leadership, they have yet to truly enter into the formalized rational-legal realm (Kamrava, 2005; Peterson, 2005). Written formal procedures have not taken shape in the Gulf States the way they have in the west, nor have roles been as clearly

defined between officials and those holding positions of power. Very few women have roles of any significance within the sphere of public administration in Gulf States (Khan, 2006).

The recent Middle Eastern uprisings have occurred not because of bureaucratic quagmires, such as long lines at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles or people angered at filling out extensive paperwork to receive tax benefits. Rather, these uprisings and government overthrows have occurred due to the arbitrary enforcement of the rules, especially on those who are in power or are closely connected to it. According to Jabbra and Jabbra (2005), "Furthermore, there are no appropriate safeguards and proper checks and balances to protect the Arab public from bureaucratic abuses" (p. 135). While bureaucracies in western popular culture are loathed, the reality is that society cannot function adequately without them (Olsen, 2005). Human beings have limited attention spans and, by nature, like to follow routines and patterns (Rockman, 2000). These routines and patterns are essential for stability in any regime. When the routines and patterns of public officials are not transparent or just, people start to take notice, and the legitimacy of the government comes into question, especially in this age of *Twitter* and *Facebook*. There is little doubt this has been the case in Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Yemen, Libya, and now possibly Jordan and Syria.

Some scholars go as far as to argue that Arabic is not conducive to formalized written regulations and procedures. According to A.J. Almaney (1980), "The intrinsic characteristics of Arabic (musicality, resonance, and elegance), coupled with the Arabs' infatuation with sounds and form rather than content, serve as impediments to clear communication" (p. 12). Despite the impediments to communication that Arabic may present due to its intrinsic form, this does not mean Arabic cannot be an effective language of commerce and governance. While Arabic may have unique morphological and phonetic components, this does not mean Arabic-speaking states cannot make a better effort to incorporate modern methods of filing and record keeping. Without turning this into a discussion on linguistics, one can simply look at Italian as an example of a language that possesses a rich variety of morphological and phonetic elements. Nonetheless, it was the language of opera and commerce in the Mediterranean during the renaissance.

Most contemporary scholars recognize that Arab states have not been quick enough in acquiring the modern technological components of bureaucratic administration. "As a consequence, there is a lack of recorded information about policy decisions. Any information tends to be unreliable and restricted as most decisions are based on the personal preferences of the most senior leaders" (Common, 1989, p. 179). The lack of recorded information and transparency can be traced back to the roots of the problem; nepotism and cronyism. Jamil Jreisat (1999) in regard to the general cronyism and nepotism that dominates in Arab States argues:

> Political regimes are deliberate in limiting the scope and directions of change. Political leaders often endorse personnel training or simplification of procedures; they also sprinkle their public statements with calls for more efficient and effective management. At the same time, these political leaders continue to promote to senior government positions unqualified relatives, cronies, and loyalists and to protect various corrupt practices in conducting the public's business. (p. 22)

Nepotism and cronyism are cancers to effective public administration. The corruption and incompetence in many ways spurs from the highly centralized, authoritarian states themselves. Authoritarian states are less transparent and critical of procedural protocol. Jreisat (1999) goes on to argue that there are some specific reasons for this backwardness of Arab bureaucracies. He cites imperialism, which kept the Arab states fragmented, as one major factor. The British during their control of the Middle East regularly did numerous things to weaken any efforts at legitimate local bureaucratic legislation, via payoffs and other underhanded deals. A second issue that plagues Gulf States in particular is centralized control of things like public utilities, banks, railways, gas, electricity, and other major aspects of public life. Without any oversight or legitimate competition, there is minimal public demand for bureaucratic transparency. A third factor Jreisat looks at is the demographic shift in Arab populations. He cites World Bank data and contests that the disproportionate number of people under thirty years of age has placed new burdens on bureaucratic performance (Jreisat, 1992, 1999, 2009). According to Nazih Ayubi (1989), Arab bureaucracies suffer from problems related to overstaffing and low productivity, partially due to the phenomenal population growth experienced by Arab societies in the last 50 years.

As mentioned, each particular Islamic state has its own unique problems that surround its bureaucratic development. Some states have been more effective than others in managing their bureaucracy. According to Common (1989), in Bahrain and Oman, the main problem is

that there is little political pluralism. He notes that political parties are banned, and this historically has resulted in greater stability in these particular regimes in comparison to other Gulf States. While the oil revenues in these particular states have been very large, the modernization of Bahrain and Oman has not yet occurred. Administrative change in Oman has been more incremental than in Bahrain. The structure of the constitutionality of the state explains this difference. According to Common, Oman has a set of basic laws which at some level underpins its decision-making process. Bahrain does not have such a set of laws. Common concludes that traditional Islamic and Bedouin values dominate the political and social landscapes of Bahrain and Oman. "In particular there is a high degree of collectivism within 'in-groups' (tribe or extended family), and high individualism with 'out-groups' (non-kin and foreign workers)" (Common, 1989, p. 183). These particular traditional values make modernizing bureaucracy quite difficult. Families in these particular countries often take care of each other, and do not even really expect any type of assistance from their governments. This obviously works well for the wealthiest and most powerful families, but those who are poor or are of foreign descent are at a major disadvantage.

In a 2009 article, Jreisat contests that all of the Arab states still need to modernize. There are new models of information systems available. Even though incorporating new information technologies can be expensive, they need to be done. Jreisat (2009) states:

> Coordination and institutionalizing information systems, however, compel organizations to also confront challenges. One is the choice of technology that is most relevant and economical to the organization. Second is the quality and relevance of data gathered and transmitted by technology. Third is the interconnectivity, cross-organizations and cross-cultures that expands the horizons of management beyond the traditional boundaries.   (p. 39)

It is via modernization that bureaucracies are better equipped to address and confront issues related to performance. In Lebanon and Egypt, the general lack of modern technological systems, coupled with buildings that are not structurally equipped to handle such systems have been quite problematic (Jabbra & Jabbra, 2005). Jreisat (2009) is particularly disappointed with Saudi Arabia which failed to assume the leadership role that it should in modernizing the region. He contests that in spite of Saudi Arabia's almost endless oil supply and ability to generate wealth, the smaller, less influential Gulf States

actually have made greater efforts at modernization (Jreisat 2009). Bureaucratic expansion has not resulted in greater accountability in the KSA. "The new and rapid expansion of the bureaucracy did not provide an environment conducive to the internalization and development of accountability among the new Saudi public servants" (Jabbra & Jabbra, 2005, p. 141). Confusion and poorly defined roles continue to plague Saudi Arabia.

Jabbra and Jabbra (2005) go on to argue that there are six specific cultural streams that largely account for the reason Gulf States are the way they are. They argue that over-centralization, outmoded systems, administrative expansion, overstaffing, rigidity, and complex rules and salary structures are all problems endemic to Arab states (Jabbra & Jabbra, 2005). As the world becomes more technologically advanced, Arab and non-Arab Islamic states are going to have to be even more focused on developing their bureaucratic administrations if they are to remain even remotely competitive with other rising international powers in East Asia and Latin America that have made stronger efforts at modernizing their bureaucracy. Civil servants continue to need vastly improved training and education (Nakib, 1972). The days of an absolute monarch making a verbal decree and expecting that to be final are all but over.

Conclusion: Literature Gaps and the Future

The question of assimilating religious minorities is perhaps the area in which the literature on bureaucratic development in Islamic states is the weakest. While some states are almost entirely Muslim, other states, such as Egypt, have sizeable minority Christian populations. The question of accommodating for these minorities is an essential question that future literature should seek to address. Within the framework of Islamic law, Christians and other non-Muslim groups are not subject to the principles of Shari'a law. Non-Muslims have historically been permitted to behave as they wish in their own homes. According to Sherman Jackson (2005), "This applied not only to 'soft disagreements,' for example, pork consumption, but to practices deemed by Muslims to be downright morally repugnant" (p. 144). Of course, this does not mean that the issue of applying legal and administrative procedures amongst these populations has been solved. During the Middle Ages those Christians and Jews were not obligated to adhere to the Shari'a law, according to Mark Cohen (1995). Jews were allowed to adjudicate their legal matters in *Halakhic* courts (Cohen, 1995). In

recent times though, this line has been blurred. What has been termed by many as the Great Islamic Awakening of the late twentieth century will bring these issues back to prominence. Future legal decisions and scholarly literature in this area of administrative and legal policy will be critically important.

A second area of weakness in the literature and research in the area of public administration in Islamic states is that most of the top research comes from the same scholars. While public administration and bureaucracy in the west has been widely studied by a veritable army of scholars for over a century now, the scholarship on bureaucracy in the Muslim world has been studied in depth only by a handful of scholars. When conducting research, the same four or five names keep reappearing as a source in almost every article. Most of the prominent scholars reside in the United States. Based on available biographical information, most are senior faculty or are retired at this point. There is nothing inherently bad about this, but it does mean that more people, especially younger scholars, need to get involved and offer new approaches and perspectives in this particular area of bureaucracy studies.

The literature seems to show that the future is wide open still in these developing states. At the core of the recent uprisings in the Middle East is an anger at the perceived incompetence and corruption of governments led by dictators and out of touch monarchs. The leaders of Tunisia and Egypt were uprooted not simply because they were not democratic. They were uprooted because their populations were tired of the ineptitude of their leadership. Vast oil resources mean that money to modernize existing infrastructures exists in the Gulf States and Middle East. Even in Afghanistan, it is now widely believed by geologists that there is billions of dollars worth of mineral resources that are readily and easily available for mining (Risen, 2010). Modernizing government and public institution is more a question of will rather than resources in this particular area of the world. Recent uprisings in states traditionally dominated by authoritarian regimes may signal the end of the good old boys system. Demands for fairness and transparency may very well spur a renaissance in attitudes and research surrounding methods of public administration in this vital part of the world.

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