Administration, Globalization, and the Arab States

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Abstract Globalization involves risks and opportunities for the Arab world. Realistic knowledge of these possibilities is essential for adaptation of governance and reform of public administration to deal more effectively with the unfolding processes of globalization. To be participants rather than mere subjects, the Arab states have to recognize opportunities and limit potential negative consequences. Success requires good governance and professional public management. Public administration in the Arab world has to transform traditional methods of command and control and nepotism into a more collaborative management that relies on institutional capabilities and practicing managerial values of accountability, performance evaluation, transparency, and ethics.

Premises and perceptions of globalization

Globalization has been magnified, disparaged, applauded, and blamed on many grounds and for various reasons. The impact of globalization has to be defined to be verified, and has to be consistent to be notable. The subject of globalization is particularly complicated because it has many dimensions as it is worldwide. The impact also varies from country to country and from one function to another.

Different conceptions of globalization are prevalent in the Arab world, as elsewhere in developing countries, and may be grouped in three thrusts:

1. *The economic factors*. The main premise here is that globalization is promoted and directed by factors of free trade, banking, investment, labor, and transfer of capital. The economic perspective gained particular notoriety or influence since the 1980s, with the ascendancy of the prescriptions promoted by what is known

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as "neo-liberalism," or the "Washington consensus," affirmed and enhanced by policies of the IMF and the World Bank. At the same time, as Farazmand (1999:512) points out, globalization is a continuing process of capital accumulation that has been going on for centuries and only recently intensified as a result of technology. The neo-liberal economic perspective advocates public policies of "privatization, minimizing economic regulations, rolling back welfare, reducing expenditures on public goods, tightening fiscal discipline, favoring free flow of capital, strict control on organized labor, tax reductions, and unrestricted currency repatriation" (Falk 1999: 1–2). Actually, in recent years, these neo-liberal prescriptions have given globalization some of its most publicly known characteristics. Adherence to this neo-liberal school inevitably results in global competitiveness for advantages in trade, investment, and free flow of capital across borders. In the end, there are winners and losers within such a competitive environment. Multinational corporations and economies of industrial countries often seem to be the beneficiaries. Certainly, market-driven economic transformation has been a potent force in extending and deepening the relationships among nations. The economic thrust, fueled by overcoming trade and investment barriers, has been world-wide, manifesting enormous flexibility and adaptation. American companies have been doing business abroad for a long time, but never before has it been so important. By the end of 2007, for the first time, Standard & Poor's estimated the 500 companies in its benchmark stock index to generate more than half of their sales in foreign countries (Peters 2007). Even labor unions, parochial and protectionists in the past, have now become significant forces for globalization. A recent announcement in Ottawa, Canada (mid April 2007) "signaled a radical new direction for the global economy. The United Steelworkers…entered into merger negotiations with two of Britain's largest unions…to create not only the first trans-Atlantic but the first genuinely multi national trade union" (Myerson 2007: 16A). This Ottawa declaration broke new ground in labor adaptation to the globalization of capital, a transition that began in the 1990s. Other unions such as the Communications Workers of America have been negotiating with similar unions in Europe and elsewhere. As steel production has become a global enterprise, the union formed alliances with mining and manufacturing unions in Brazil, South Africa, Australia, Mexico, Germany, and Britain (Myerson 2007). In part, such alliances among unions have been prompted by the fact that their employers are global or multinational companies. Labor laws and labor migration currently is a hot issue in the West, actually challenging the commitments of some countries to globalization. This irony was illustrated recently in a headline about labor migration in *BusinessWeek* (June 4, 2007:40): "Globalization vs. Migration Reform: Can we have free flow of goods and capital without free flow of labor?" asked the US business journal. Today, many countries in Europe, the US, and the Arab world, are wrestling with this problem. "One view of the world seems to be tearing down walls that separate countries; other view builds them up," as *BusinessWeek* summed up the issue (June 4, 2007: 40).

2. *The information and technology perspective*. The appeal of technological innovation, and the recent worldwide popularization of electronic tools and products, underlines the depiction of globalization as driven by recent achieve-

ments in information and communication technologies (ICT). These advancements have precipitated an "information revolution," changing relationships, and improving global interconnections. The utility and the cumulative effect of ICT are tangible as they are universal. Actually, many changes in marketing, finance, and public and private management have been attributed to ICT. Applications of information Technology (IT) in governments, particularly in managing public organizations, have resulted in shortened distances, saved time, expanded outputs, increased freedom in crossing boundaries, and have overcome cultural, political, and institutional barriers. "Information technology is changing *everything* about the world in which we live with impacts that are both deep and diverse" (Rahm 1999:75). The Internet, e-mail, web page, fax machines, printers, videoconferencing, and numerous other tools profoundly changed information dissemination and transmission, and notably enhanced the global communication. A particularly noteworthy effect is "the shift to a knowledge economy, much deeper global integration, and a transformation in humanity's relationship to the environment" (Michalski et al. 2001:7). Clearly, the role of IT in modern organization management is crucial. Whereas public administration has been emphasizing performance, benchmarking, and measurement of results, there is increasing reliance on information sources as an element of discovery and realization of the organization's strategic goals. Coordination and institutionalizing information systems, however, compel organizations to also confront specific 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. In the Arab world, significant progress has been made by states willing to invest in information technology for the purpose of diversification of their economies as well as improving their organizational and managerial competence. According to a report by the *World Economic Forum*, in cooperation with other business establishments, several Arab states made important advancement during the last couple years. Under the theme "Fostering Innovation through Networked Readiness," a comprehensive and authoritative international assessment was published (April 2008) ranking 127 countries. This assessment reports on the impact of information-communication technology (ICT) on the development process and covers a wide range of variables. Among such variables are: market factors, political and regulatory environment, technology infrastructure, Internet bandwidth, the cost of mobile calls, and the quality of higher education. In this Report (2007/2008), the Arab states ranked the highest among 127 countries are: UAE (29), Qatar (32), Tunisia (35), Jordan (47), Saudi Arabia (48), and Egypt (63). Each of these countries advanced in ranking from the previous year, Egypt rose from 77 in 2007 to 63 in 2008; Jordan advanced from 57 in 2007 to 47 in 2008. At the lower end, however, is: Morocco, Algeria, Libya, and Syria—all ranked between 74 and 110 among the 127 countries.[1]

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[1] World Economic Forum. 2008. The Global Information Technology Report 2007–2008

3. *A Comprehensive View of* globalization applies wide-angle lenses to picture a panoramic view of globalization processes, continually stimulating "the thickening of interdependence" (Keohane and Nye 2000:21). Although this growing interdependence is enhanced by electronic innovation, and the ensuing information revolution, certainly it is not invented or created by these processes. In this analysis, globalization is more than economics or technology. Issues of environment, human rights, education, security, and ethics, to mention only a few policies, seem to transcend distances, cultures, and borders as well. Also, globalization has very ancient roots (Farazmand 1999). The British empire, for example, on which "the sun never set" by domination of others, crumbled amid the devastation of World War II, and the irresistible struggle for independence by the colonies. Today, effective globalization trends mostly rely on international cooperation rather than on unilateral coercive or imperial powers.

In conclusion, economic factors are significant in shaping the emerging globalization thrust, and in being a major stimulus for increasing connectedness of the world. But globalization entails far more than economic variables. The same for technology, its impact is dramatic, but it is an entirely different deduction to consider technology the primary mover or the main cause of globalization. Thus, globalization is influenced by many factors. Evidence of a continually widening and deepening global integration is the growing number of international and regional structures and organizations in existence. The United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) are only the most familiar. In addition, the development of international law of human rights and the crafting of various normative frameworks in trade, health, ethics, and the environment represent some limits on the absolute sovereignty and territorial supremacy of the state. All these global processes re-emphasize the fact that the Arab world is facing the broad, overall effects as well as particular consequences of the unfolding globalizations processes; and, public administration is confronting this new reality without the needed change for dealing with it, responsibly.

Broad globalization impact

Globalization is not a constant movement in a linear path or a producer of equal or similar benefits to all countries. Reversals and setbacks of the trend can be frequent and formidable. Serious reversals occur when one state is able to accumulate enough power to dictate rather than to cooperate globally. Unilateralist policies and responses whether by isolationists, protectionists, or hegemonists—even if brief—can diminish globalization trends (Jreisat 2004; Keohane and Nye 2000:5).

Despite the rhetoric of benevolence and claims of liberation, democratizing others, or defending human rights, unilateralism and the use of military force are often redolent of historical systems of colonial expansion and domination. Inescapably, such international conduct supports the premise that despite claims that the world is "flat" or interconnected, such condition remains more a contested ideal than an observable reality (Friman 2007:2). One result of domination is creating or perpetuating inequity and injustice as well as instigating new concerns

for human rights and for the ability to reconcile rules of efficiency with rules of fairness.

Increasingly the Arab states, as most developing countries, have to enforce laws and play by rules that they have little input in their enactments such as international labor laws, environment regulations, child labor, and health standards. The Arab states are large importers and exporters in the labor market. High percentages of workers in the Arab states of the Persian Gulf region are classified as foreign labor. In Kuwait, for example, recent estimates put the non-Kuwaiti workers at over 76% of the total Kuwaiti labor market (public and private sectors).[2] The Arab states are also exporters of labor to Europe and other places, particularly from the Arab states in North Africa. Developing countries regard reshaping globalization effects in favors of rich countries and corporations as detriment to the poor, minimizes the role of the United Nations, undermines multilateral institutions, promotes unilateralism and consecrates the market and will of the powerful to decide the future of the world.

Still, the consequences of globalization, however defined, are vital, enduring, and far-reaching. Globalization created new conditions, new ideals, and, yes, new problems. Among most relevant for the Arab states are the following:

1. The economic impact that has been heightened by global economic integration, free market systems, cross-boundary financial investment, the digital revolution, and expansion of activities of the multinational corporations did not lift standards of living for all. In recent years, the gap in wealth and economic growth between North and South countries has not been reduced; in many cases the gap has increased. Based on a review of developments in countries of the Middle East and South Asia Jabbra and Dwivedi (2004: 1101) point out "that to serve the transformative process, leading to good governance and democratic development, globalization has to take account of important indigenous value systems."

Income statistics from the US and the UN Development Program, for example, indicate that the combined income of the 400 richest persons in the US is more than the combined national income of 20 African states totaling over 300 million people or more than the total national income of over 146 million (now over 165 million) people of Pakistan, according to Weissman (2003:9).[3] He continues to say: "There is something profoundly wrong with a world [in which such] global inequalities persist at a staggering levels."

2. Lacking effective systems of governance with essential administrative capabilities, Arab states have been unable to enact or enforce adequate safeguards and regulations to protect their environments, regulate the corporate sector, and look after the health and the interests of their own citizens and workers as the industrial countries have done (Jreisat 2002:8). In this situation, it is not surprising that globalism is regarded as serving the interests of multinational

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[2] The estimate is based on actual numbers for 2000, quoted in a study on planning of human resources in Kuwait, by A. El-Enezi, in Arabic, published 2002, the *Egyptian Journal for Commercial Studies*. Vol. 26 (No. 1):369.

[3] The author cites Internal Revenue Service, Statistics of Income Bulletin, spring 2003, Pub. 1136 (revised 6-03); UN Development Program, *Human Development Report 2003* (pp. 250–253; 278–281).

corporations and the big industrial nations in their search for new markets. At the same time, developed and powerful countries, irrespective of global agreements and conventions, are able, unilaterally and at will, to restrict freedom of travel, trade, migration, and exchange of information.

The fact remains, when a state enters into international agreements, it is exercising its sovereignty, not abdicating it. For the Arab states, the effectiveness of governance largely determines the extent of state benefits from entering into such global frameworks. Activities, ideas, and products regularly and growingly cross national boundaries, and contemporary states are more and more concerned about the capacity of their institutions to shoulder the new responsibilities and to ensure fair dealings within the global structure (Jreisat 2004:1007).

3. The critics find more credibility to their arguments in recent US behavior on the international level. It is a fact that globalism today "is America-centric, in that most of the impetus for the information revolution comes from the United States, and a large part of the content of global information networks is created in the United States" (Keohane and Nye 2000:8). At the same time, the US policies are blamed for undermining international cooperation, opposing development of an effective international court system, impeding setting global standards for protecting the environment, and continually diminishing the UN itself. For the Arab people, such conduct is reminiscent of a long tradition of geopolitical incursions by the powerful into their region through the use of humanitarian rhetoric, but actually hides the all-too-familiar "colonial paradigm".

4. The Arab world is familiar with the inequitable application of international rules and resolutions in settling disputes or providing a framework of fair rules that are subscribed to, and implemented by all. The global system has to uphold the rule of law on the strong and the weak alike" (UNDP 2004:22). Recent international events illustrate the need to create more effective instruments of conflict resolution and arbitration that can buttress the UN not substitution for it. Many UN resolutions have been ignored when opposed by one or two nations, despite overwhelming support by the rest of the world community as illustrated by experience in various parts of the Middle East.

Finally, globalization had the effect of fostering monopolies and hiding ill-motives of domination and manipulation. Mass media in the West is a good example of how smaller nations can be at a serious disadvantage. Corporate control of American mass media illustrates how and what manipulation of capital and politics can produce. An example is offered by Barrett McCormick (2007:119) who points out that "Globalization is also capable of contingent ironies, such as those posed by media magnate Rupert Murdoch. Contrary to the expectation that globalization promotes the rule of law, "Murdoch has an extraordinary talent to obtain personal favors and promotes politicians who deal in patrimonial study." Rather than promoting democracy, McCormick (2007:119) concludes that "Murdoch's media have favored entertainment and incivility over information and deliberation."

Clearly, globalization has generated problems, tensions, and challenges as well as opportunities for human development. Globalization is a triumph for capital investment and for multinational corporate production and marketing. It is an

illustration of the magnificent achievements of technology and the ensuing information revolution. And, it is the only way for cooperation in resisting dangerous global threats to the environment, health, and security of all communities. Yet, all the real and potential benefits of globalization, and a spectacularly connected universe, are not realizable for the Middle East countries, if not appropriately enabled, organized, and managed. Moreover, working within the global order to develop mutually beneficial relationships promotes a sense of national confidence to take bold actions in the pursuit of freedom from fear and freedom from want.

Arab public administration in the global context

The Arab States are at the initial step of mobilizing to face globalization processes as they continue to debate the consequences of intersections of local and global dynamics. It is normal for any developing nation to deliberate, and seek to understand, the remarkable discrepancy between the ideal and the real of the fast-changing global context. Thus, to manage global links, countries need to consider the opportunities and the problems so they can "enhance their gains and minimize their pains," to use a figure of speech. And, yes, there will be pains.

During the past few decades, the Arab world achieved "substantial progress" in human development, as the *Arab Human Development Report 2002* (UNDP 2002: III) points out. Life expectancy has increased, children mortality rates have dramatically declined, and women's literacy has trebled, to mention only a few examples. The Arab countries, however, remain in a very troubling phase of their development in many other areas, including reducing poverty, maintaining national security, building administrative capacity, and fighting corruption and mismanagement of resources.

In economic terms, the record is mixed. According to the Global Competitiveness Report 2006–2007, within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the Gulf States continue to perform quite well in the overall rankings of the Global Competitiveness Index. Actually, few states made the list of the highest fifty: Tunisia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar**,** Kuwait, and Bahrain ranked between 30 and 50. Massive trade linked to oil prices have boosted growth rates and reinforced already high levels of confidence in the business community, resulting from ongoing institutional changes and improvements in macroeconomic management. Yet, in many of the resource-rich countries, according to this GCR, the availability of public finance appears not to have translated into improvements in human capital, which would play an important role in helping the economies that are highly dependent on oil to diversify their economic base.

As noted in the Arab Human Development Report 2003 (p. 136): "Healthy competition still eludes Arab economies where entrenched monopolies dominate several sectors." Other deficiencies are attributed to lack of competitiveness such as poor accountability, marginal productivity, and maintenance of traditional means of operation. One of the great ironies of today's conditions in the Arab world is the "limited inter-Arab cooperation" that narrowed their markets, restricted their productive capacities, and diminished their international political weight. Arab governments continue to face the world individually. "The most striking evidence of

the lack of economic integration among Arab countries is the fact that inter-Arab trade accounts for no more than 7 percent to 10 percent of total Arab foreign trade" (UNDP 2002:126).

Efficacy of governance Public administration of the Arab state is organically connected to the system of governance that incorporates institutions involved in formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluating public policy. Governance is the exercise of public authority at all levels of government, including delegated powers to non-state institutions (Jreisat 2004; Michalski et al. 2001:7). The growing recognition of the profound effects of governance on contemporary societies has inspired a worldwide resurgence of interest in the theory and the practice of contemporary governance (Ahrens 2002; Hyden 2002). One cannot overstate the importance of governance for modern states. Ineffective and corrupt governance has been blamed for conditions of poverty, economic stagnation, lack of political stability, confused priorities, mismanagement, and violation of citizens' rights. As Rosell (1999) points out: "In no small measure, the ability of a society to prosper in a world of rapid change will depend on its ability to develop [more participatory and more effective] governance systems."

Recognizing the importance of governance, the Arab states sought help from the UNDP, which with the Regional Bureau for Arab States, launched the Program on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR) in early 2000, at the request of Arab governments to address their national needs and concerns.[4] The Program activities, as described by these agencies, focus on three main concepts: participation, rule of law, and transparency and accountability (UNDP, POGAR 2000).

Within the current globalizing world, the first line of self-protection for the Arab states, in order to share in the benefits and to guard against real and potential negative effects, is by *improving the effectiveness of Arab governance systems*. Transforming governance largely hinges on reform initiatives that advance the primary objectives of restructuring the political authority system to be more representative of its citizens; and, equally important, is creating professional, effective, performance-based public administration institutions.

Good governance matters for its own sake. It is central for human development. It is means and ends at the same time, concludes the Arab Human Development Report (UNDP 2002:1). Competent and ethical public administration is the "cutting edge" of good governance. This is why the administrative aspect of Arab governance, in recent years, has acquired an absorbing demand for improvement. The Arab administrative systems in general have not developed adequate or effective capacities to operate within a complex international environment that often evokes contradictory agendas, pressures, and standards—even some predatory practices.

As a core component of governance, public administration in the Arab world has always been a focus of reform projects over the past many years. Whereas

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[4] The Program is "dedicated to the promotion and development of good governance practices and related reforms in the Arab states. It works in partnership with key governance institutions including legislatures, judiciaries, and civil society organizations." Activities include rendering policy advice, engaging in institutional capacity building, and testing policy options through pilot projects.

globalization sheds new lights on the Arab public administration systems, it brings about an additional dimension of responsibilities. To effectively interact and react to the new global reality, it is important that Arab institutions, intellectuals, mass media, and citizens at large develop *accurate knowledge* of their global context that is often perceived differently or incorrectly:

Diverse images of globalization A wide-ranging perception of globalization is based on suspicion and preconceived views that regard globalization as a new ploy for domination by the West. This picture or caricature, simplistically, explains away the subject of globalization as another name for a new type of imperialism and domination. Thus, globalization is reduced to a scheme to conceal or legitimize American invasion and ransacking of countries that do not tow the American line, for example. To be sure, some recent international behavior may lend support to this uni-dimensional view. But, globalism should not be confused with unilateralism.

Another widely accepted opinion in the Arab world equates globalism with economic interests, mainly trade, banking, and capital flow across state boundaries. A field study of perception of globalization by 100 public managers in Kuwait (Al-Enezi 2005) found that, despite diverse views, most managers equate globalization with economic matters such as banking, world markets, and trade. Other Arabic publications and surveys also confirm similar perceptions.

The annual conference of the *Arab Thought Forum* in Amman, Jordan, 2006, attracted a considerable number of Arab academicians and influential public officials. Several papers presented at the conference by academicians from universities in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen, directly or indirectly, cited global developments in negative or cautionary terms. Views expressed linked globalization to a range of factors including capital and corporate interests and technological advancements. Invariably, however, globalization was regarded as tied to, or aiming at, perpetuating domination by Western powers. One presenter described the situation this way: "I can say that Arab intellectuals, who are nationalistically inclined, oppose globalization in general and consider it a new form of hegemony and imperialism" (Madhi 2006). The presenter also pointed out that there are some Arab intellectuals who recognize positive and negative aspects of globalization, but "rarely, we find any Arab intellectual who supports or defends globalization."

Actually, overall Arab perceptions of globalization are compatible with those of most people in developing countries.[5] Despite recent interest in globalization, the Arab countries have no leading operating centers of globalization research, teaching the subject remains marginal, and related public policies appear largely understated or poorly articulated. Whereas knowledge is the foundation of comprehensive development in any society, knowledge has to develop first and foremost from within and then through acquisition and links with knowledge sources worldwide. Certainly, many individual articles, books, or presentations at conferences are available in Arabic. But, even among the highly educated groups, understanding of

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[5] In an interview on American Public Television (end of June 2007) a former prime minister of Tanzania reported that 80% of the people in his country have negative views of globalization. Similarly, a public official from Argentina reported that about 70% of the people have negative views.

globalization remains incomplete or deficient. Sustained and systematic research on the subject is the exception. In the end, without a strong and growing knowledge base of their own, Arab countries will be drawn into international knowledge society as passive consumers (UNDP 2003:163). With a sound foundation of knowledge, Arab states are in better positions to reconsider their existing policies and laws, manage global relations not only in trade and finance, but, also, in areas of culture, education, environment, human rights, information, technology, and ethics.

Inescapably, managing globalization is a shared responsibility of the political leadership and public administration institutions. Preparing the public administrators for these responsibilities requires intensifying relevant education and training, and devising developmental policies for human resources that focus on continuing professionalizing public services. These are some needed capabilities:

1. *Collaborative management*: To effectively manage the diverse tasks imposed by this new context, Arab administrative systems have to adapt their traditional command and control structures and processes to allow for collaborative management essential for serving the new mandates and policies. "A public manager may be simultaneously involved in managing across governmental boundaries, across organizational and sectoral boundaries, and through formal contractual obligations" (McGuire 2006:35).

Collaborative public management is a problem-solving approach that reaches beyond one organizational boundary or even one government boundary. To serve its purpose, successfully, collaborative management requires flexible, less hierarchical organizational structures, and, most importantly, is "implemented within a framework of participatory governance" (O'Leary et al. 2006:6). Also, public managers do better in meeting their collaborative responsibilities in a context of institutional empowerment that allows for freedom to act, acquire new knowledge, and utilize participation of employees and citizens in the decision making process. Practicing and applying these administrative values and choices is not possible in a rigid, centralized, hierarchical political-administrative order.

One can imagine a type of situation where a health epidemic such as bird flu or mad cow disease strikes the Middle East region in a big way. Health organizations and many other organizations have to collaborate in fighting the problem. They need to implement solutions that cross boundary lines. The same can be said about many other public policy issues such as environment degradation, natural disasters, and public security. Public organizations are increasingly required to foster inter-organizational collaboration, and to learn essentials of cross-cultural cooperation, in order to deal with problems beyond the competence of public administration in one organization or even one country. Teaching and training in public administration only recently began to seriously addressing such questions.

2. Developing institutional capabilities. Institutions are the building blocks of governance. Building administrative capabilities is a multi-dimensional endeavor. In the Arab world, efforts of restructuring institutions, adapting technology, reformation of managerial processes, simplification of procedures, and development of the human resources through training are some of the recipes that have been tried. Indeed, there is a growing sense of the importance of

technology for meeting future high demands for E-Government. Public organizations are little by little experimenting with the use of electronic information technologies such as internet, e-mail, computer networks, and many similar tools that have altered some of the internal managerial processes of the past.

Building managerial technical skills, however, is only a part of building administrative institutional competence. A sustainable, strategic change is concerned with developing needed institutional capacities beyond immediate managerial technical skills. To strengthen the institutional capacity, reform strategies have to focus on developing organizational learning, appropriate leadership, strategic vision, appropriate organizational culture, and ensure internalization of norms and values of professional administration. Institutional capacity is demonstrated by the independent commitment and application of administrative concepts at all levels of authority. Professional administration is a relentless commitment to values of good management: efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, accountability, and ethics. Global responsibilities of public administration are not well served by centralized authority structures and highly personalized top-down style of decision making, but by reliable, predictable institutional processes beyond the technical tools (Jabbra and Jabbra 2005; Jreisat 2006).

In conclusion, institutional capacity is essential if the Arab state is to be able to manage its relations within the global context, and to be able to competently collaborate and negotiate agreements that protect the interests of their peoples. Public institutional management also has to learn how to sidestep rigid hierarchies, go around geographical boundaries, and be better informed about alternative policies and preferences of other countries or cultures in order to serve their own.

3. *Participatory administrative and political culture*: Recently, the term democracy has been evoking conflicting messages. No country desires democratization that is externally imposed by force. Reform has to be indigenous in design and in implementation. Certainly, decisions made after a wide participation by affected citizens and employees are better decisions than those without. Also, democratic governance is unavoidable, even if slowly evolving in the Middle East countries. One may safely assume that democratic governance and participatory management are broadly accepted, supported, and expected by the Arab people, even if they remain aspirations more than a reality (Jreisat 2006).

However, there should be no illusion here, since even in democratic governments, as a recent article in *Public Administration Review* claims: "meaningful, authentic participation is rarely found, as many public managers are reluctant to include citizens in decision making" (Yang and Callahan 2007:249). At the political level, claims of citizens' representation or participation in policy making are hollow when 70% of citizens oppose the operating policy as in the case of the US invasion of Iraq. What is suggested here, therefore, is acceptance and application of democratic values of governance in the Arab countries such as a pattern of openness, transparency, and inviting and considering different views from within and from without public organizations. Democratic values emphasize clear communication and sharing information in order to facilitate public debates and discussions of major policy questions in mass media and within the confines of public organizations.

Participatory decision making accepts and implements such processes for improving results of decisions and for enhancing public acceptance and support. In contrast, existing patterns of administrative and political decision making are often centralized, impulsive, and arbitrary.

Although practices vary among the Arab states, overall, transparent and participatory management faces similar impediments. An example is recruitment policies of senior managers that rely less on merit than on patronage and nepotism. Issues of patronage and nepotism in Arab governance, and their effects on public administration, are too complex and entrenched, resisting all efforts of reform. The problem has been referred to as "patron-client relationship" (Jabbra and Jabbra 2005:145) and "*Wasta*"—mediation (Cunningham and Sarayrah 1993). A patron-client relationship is defined as a "culture of unethical and irresponsible practices in the bureaucracy... where identification with the national community and its laws is still weak, protection is sought outside the family through ties with powerful protectors or patrons" (Jabbra and Jabbra 2005:145). Consequently, accountability and poor performance of public servants escape proper management action because of such protection by individuals of power and authority who may have influenced the decision of appointing the failing employee in the first place.

4. *Performance management with emphasis on accountability and ethics*. The capacity of a governance system to act is best determined by the results of its performance. The complex interconnections and the agendas of countries will be better served and enforced when effective measurement of performance is employed and greater accountability and ethics are practiced. Performance measurement requires setting goals, developing indicators, and regularly collecting data on activities in order to gauge progress in achieving established goals.

During the post-independence years, Arab bureaucracies were called upon to maintain law and order, execute policies of their political leaders, and deliver the regular public services expected by citizens. These functions were soon expanded to include responsibilities for national socio-economic development. While these earlier responsibilities continue to be essential and significant, global developments require additional competence and further adaptation of the administrative institutions. How well the system of governance and public administration in particular, are accomplishing the myriad policies and objectives, implementing strategies, and achieving desired outcomes cannot be answered in a satisfactory manner without measurement and evaluation of outcomes.

This is particularly important where the many roles and functions of the state, particularly those of the civil service, resulted in greater concentration of powers in the hands of public managers and political leaders without equal development of accountability and ethics. Actually, experience indicates that attempts to install a performance measurement system are futile if not accompanied by clear goals, defined standards, and reliable legal and moral accountability systems.

No doubt, effective institutional performance improves the competitiveness of the Arab states in negotiating their global policies. Competent and effective performance by public administration is indispensable in the attempts to negotiate, modify, or implement global policies. The outcomes of Arab states' global policies will be substantially enhanced when Arab countries achieve better integrated agendas for

action within and without the Arab world. Consistent with the importance of quality performance and of integrated Arab policies, one should recognize that strength of a state is not always correlated with presence or absence of military power. Systems can have other types of strength derived from their reformist internal dynamics, engendered by genuine citizens' representation, application of the law, high regard for human rights, and practicing ethical and transparent decision making processes.

5. *Proficient negotiating and mediating capability*: To act and transact globally, Arab managers and leaders have to master knowledge and certain skills in negotiating with different systems, different languages, and different cultures.[6] The Arab world had endured decades of foreign domination and colonialism, thus is fully aware of its unfolding external reality. How to compete instead of being dictated to, how to safeguard against real and potential injustice, how to develop and improve institutional capacities to meet the challenges, how to apply strategic planning for a better future, and so many other compelling questions are demanding thorough responses.

In conclusion, public administration in the Arab states is in transition from traditional, centralized, and often corrupt behavior to professional, accountable, transparent, and ethical performance. The globalization processes underscore the urgency for adopting reforms that work, and for expediting the transition process. Today's public administrators have to expand their intellectual horizons, refine their operational methods, improve their communication and negotiation skills, and conform to higher standards of performance in all aspects of their responsibilities (Jreisat 2006; Jabbra and Jabbra 2005; Farazmand 1999). A major obstacle facing reform efforts in the Arab administrative systems, is the recruitment processes to senior management positions in government that continue to be governed not by considerations of merit and performance, but by superfluous factors of nepotism and patronage. Within the new context, the Arab systems of governance have a choice of adapting or losing the game.

Unless the Arab states genuinely alter or adapt their political and administrative processes of governance, they will remain disadvantaged or less benefiting by the new global realities. Being a partner in the global order rather than a mere subject has its prerequisites, not the least of which is the further development of competence and ethics in both sectors governance: the political and the administrative. The experience of the Arab states in this regard will greatly inform all developing countries as well.

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[6] It is illustrative how new global conditions created the need for new skills in the judicial branch of government in Jordan. On July 3rd, the chief of the judiciary council in Jordan met with the King to express the need of the judiciary to attract judges with international experience and knowledge of English because "Jordan is committed to agreements and conventions with many other nations in the world." *Alrai*, June 4, 2007, p. 1.

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