

Abena Dadze-Arthur

Homo Subjectivo: The human factor in public management reform (in the case of Abu Dhabi)

Supervisors: [John Raine \(/schools/government-society/departments/local-government-studies/staff/profiles/raine-john.aspx\)](/schools/government-society/departments/local-government-studies/staff/profiles/raine-john.aspx) and [Karin Bottom \(/schools/government-society/departments/local-government-studies/staff/profiles/bottom-karin.aspx\)](/schools/government-society/departments/local-government-studies/staff/profiles/bottom-karin.aspx)

The study aims to develop a cognitive model of public management reform that takes account of how public administrators make sense of embedding government reform. The model is grounded in the empirical case of Abu Dhabi's customer-centric public management reform. The study's purpose is to understand how actors in government organizations come to hold in place normatively and cognitively new ways of doing things. By examining cultural schemas and collective subjectivities, this study seeks to shed light on the ways in which entrenching a new mentality and modern practices hinges on mobilizing the constraints and opportunities offered by existing local cultures and subjective realities.

The inter-disciplinary research draws on a variety of disciplines, including cognitive anthropology, neo-institutionalism, organizational studies, social psychology, sociological phenomenology, and learning theories. Espousing a hermeneutic-idealist approach, the study's methodology employs Q Methodology and a Cultural Reference Group.

The study makes several important contributions: Firstly, it aims to develop a theory with practical purchase to help embed public management reform in the hearts and minds of Abu Dhabi's public administrators. Secondly, it suggests culturally considered practices and principles for how authoritarian governments can drive the provision of responsive quality public services, even if aspirations for democratic governance models are not yet fulfilled. Thirdly, it uncovers the opportunities and limitations of looking at collective agency and inter-subjectivities in government organizations by zeroing in to the conditional connections between cultures, beliefs and change management. Fourthly, it helps to learn more about the analytical processes of locally sensitive diagnostics that generate tailored solutions for governance reform.

Profile

Abena is a senior public policy adviser with ten years of experience in researching and developing government policy across a wide range of public service areas. Abena is currently writing up her doctoral thesis in the School of Government & Society at the University of Birmingham. Abena's doctoral research seeks to develop a model that can support (non-Western) governments with a culturally more considered approach to public management reform.

Before embarking on her PhD, Abena worked for local, national and international governments, think tanks and education providers in the UK, US, Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Abena's most recent professional role was a position as an Adviser to the Crown Prince's General Secretariat of the Executive Council in Abu Dhabi. Prior to that, Abena worked in France for UNESCO, and in the UK for organizations such as the National Consumer Council, the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, the Social Justice Department at the University of Hull, and the Africa Educational Trust. The UK Parliamentary Under Secretary of State appointed Abena as the Specialist Panel Advisor to the Government on 'Transforming Public Services around Citizens' in the Beacon Excellency Awards 2008.

Abena's work has always focused on ways in which governments can deliver improved outcomes for public service users while achieving a higher social return on investment. In particular, Abena is an expert on the political, social and financial imperative to public engagement and service quality, its relation to consumer-driven markets, and on harnessing the power of the public for service improvement, reform and social innovation in government.

Qualifications

- BA (Drexel University, Philadelphia, US)
- MSc (London School of Economics, UK)
- Abitur (International Baccalaureate) – Gutenberg Gymnasium, Germany
- Level 4 Teaching Qualification (PTLLS) – East London College, UK
- Project Manager Qualification (PRINCE) - London, UK
- Certification Diploma on Balanced Scorecard - Abu Dhabi, UAE
- Monitoring & Evaluation Certificate - World Bank, UAE

Research interests

- Public Administration (non-western & western)
- Study of Subjectivity
- Situated Agency and Sensemaking
- Cultural Analysis (neo-institutionalism, cognitive anthropology, social psychology & organizational studies)
- Phenomenology and interpretivism
- Mixed Method Research

Teaching responsibilities

- Public Management and Governance, University of Birmingham, 2011/12
- Foundations of Politics, University of Birmingham, 2012/2013
- Health's role in social change, Masterclasses for CEOs, University of Leeds, 2008

Professional memberships

- Political Studies Association
- International Society for the Scientific Study of Intersubjectivity
- American Society for Public Administration
- Institute of Leadership and Management
- Institute for Learning
- Balanced Scorecard Practitioner Network

- British Federation of Women Graduates
- International Federation of University Women
- University Women of Europe

Conference papers

Abena Dadze-Arthur (2013) 'Made in the West, converted by the East: Institutionalizing customer-centric public services in Abu Dhabi Government', Paper presented at the Political Studies Association Conference 2013, Cardiff, 25 March

Abena Dadze-Arthur (2013) 'The Human Factor: Public Management Reform in Abu Dhabi Government', Paper presented the 29th Annual Q Conference 2013, Amsterdam, 6 September

Publications

Abena Dadze-Arthur (2012) 'Reflective teaching in further and adult education', Educational Research and Evaluation: An International Journal on Theory and Practice, Volume 8, Issue 8 [DOI: 10.1080/13803611.2012.718504]

Abena Dadze-Arthur (2008) 'Putting people into public services - better regulation and inspection', National Consumer Council

Abena Dadze-Arthur (2008) 'Engaging people in healthcare regulation - a route map for action', National Consumer Council

Phillip Cullum and Abena Dadze-Arthur (2007) 'Doesn't the consumer know best?' in David Walker (ed) 'Regulating right', Solace Foundation Imprint, The Guardian

Prof. Gary Craig, Abena Dadze-Arthur et. al. (2007) 'National Evaluation Report - Sure Start and Black and Minority Ethnic Populations', Department for Children Schools and Families, June 2007

Gary Craig, Abena Dadze-Arthur et.al. (2007), 'Building Capacity in Black and Minority Ethnic Organisations', Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations (CEMVO)

Gary Craig, Abena Dadze-Arthur et a., (2005) 'Examining the inclusion of people with sensory disabilities from black and minority groups in the labour market', Royal National Institute for the Blind

Abena Dadze-Arthur (2004) 'Endeavour Mainstreaming Report', Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, funded by the European Social Fund under EQUAL 1A

Abena Dadze-Arthur (2004) 'Three Menus – Yet no single recipe! Active Labour Market Policies in the UK, the Netherlands and Denmark' in Working Brief, Issue 157, p.19-21

Abena Dadze-Arthur and Natalie Branosky (2004) 'Improving Job Outcomes for Ethnic Minorities' in Working Brief, Issue 154, p.10-13

Abena Dadze-Arthur (2004) 'New Deal for Disabled People' and 'Other Welfare to Work Initiatives' in Somerville, W. and Bateman, N. (ed) The Disability & Carers Handbook p.159-169, p.205-222

Abena Dadze-Arthur (2003) 'What Works With Offenders?' in Working Brief, Issue 148, p.15-19

Contact

Email: AFD095@bham.ac.uk (<mailto:AFD095@bham.ac.uk>)

Twitter: [@abenafrimpoma](https://twitter.com/abenafrimpoma) (<https://twitter.com/abenafrimpoma>)

LinkedIn: <http://ae.linkedin.com/pub/abena-dadze-arthur/16/516/ba9> (<http://ae.linkedin.com/pub/abena-dadze-arthur/16/516/ba9>)

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