Utopian Speculations on Student Success Conceptualizing the Value of Mouakhat Within a Neoliberal University Education

Ahmed Abdelhakim Hachelaf and Steve Parks

Mentoring is recognized as supporting student success, is present in references to good pedagogical practices, but seems to be absent from the vast majority of Middle East/North African universities. In this article, we suggest that such

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Ahmed Abdelhakim Hachelaf is an Education Specialist in the Higher Normal School (Ecole Normale Supérieure) at Laghouat-Algeria focusing on building capacity within educational institutions and NGOs to support youth working for social change. In addition to his teaching of inclusive education and social justice, he works as a consultant evaluation specialist for U.S.-based research and capacity building institutes. He has also worked for national Algerian NGOs supervising nationwide active-citizenship programs and as a consultant for Institutes and NGOs internationally. He previously worked as a Research Fellow at his alma mater, the Maxwell School of Syracuse University. He is a frequent presenter on civic education and democratic schooling in the Middle East and North African region. In 2012, he was chosen as a Leaders for Democracy fellow and subsequently was chosen to be the delegate of Algeria in a UN event in New York, and most recently he was a Caux Scholar in Switzerland.

Steve Parks is an Associate Professor in the Writing and Rhetoric Program, Department of English, University of Virginia. He is the current Editor of *Studies in Writing and Rhetoric* (swreditor.org) and one of the founders of Syrians for Truth and Justice (stj-sy.org). His early work focused on students' right to their own language, with a particular emphasis on the need to embed the politics of such a resolution into progressive community partnerships and publications. This led to his creating New City Community Press (newcitycommunitypress.com) in Philadelphia, which links university classrooms, local communities, and publishing technologies in support of efforts to expand human rights. Currently, he is working with Syrian activists to record the human rights abuses of the current regime, ISIS, and militia active in Syria. He is author of *Class Politics: The Movement for the Students' Right to Their Own Language* (National Council of Teaching of English, 2001); *Gravyland: Writing Beyond the Curriculum in the City of Brotherly Love* (Syracuse, 2010); and coeditor of *Circulating Communities: The Tactics and Strategies of Community Publishing* (Lexington Books, 2011). His most recent work is *Writing Communities* (St. Martin's, 2016), a textbook designed to support writing classrooms become a site of community collaboration and publishing.

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an absence is due to mentoring not being adequately theorized within regional traditions; mentoring is seen as distinct from the cultures that inform our understandings of educational best practices. To address this lack of a regionally based theoretical framework, this article examines the concept of Mouakhat as a possible framework to address conceptual limitations in how a university education is framed and, in doing so, demonstrates the value of communal-based programs, such as university-based mentoring for nontraditional students. In particular, this article argues that the Mouakhat tradition of "brothering/sistering" between Mouhajirin (the new immigrants who were persecuted in Mecca) and Elansar (the inhabitants of Elmadinah) initiated an ethical responsibility of assistance and integration between new and ongoing community members, an ethic which needs to be instilled within university practices and pedagogies.

Using the case study of Algerian higher education, we argue that for many nontraditional university students, such as those from rural areas, stepping on campus is a form of immigration and the failure to provide mentoring to them contributes to their high failure rate within Algerian universities. This article begins by contextualizing the stated role of a university education in Algeria, with a focus on how such an education attempts to blend global frameworks and local community needs. The article then moves to a consideration of how students self-identified the need for institutional support to succeed in college as demonstrated by students within an international writing collaborative, The Twiza Project. Next, the article proposes how a mentoring program premised on the concept of Mouakhat might address such needs. Finally, the potential value of such a Mouakhat program for students, faculty, and universities is outlined.

Keywords: peer mentoring, cross cultural communication, civic engagement, literacy studies

INTRODUCTION

After immigrating to Elmadinah (modern-day Medina, Saudi Arabia), the Prophet's first act (PBUH) in the first year of Hijra (≈ 622 CE) was to implement the practice of Mouakhat (brothering) between Mouhajirin (the new immigrants who were persecuted in Mecca) and Elansar (the inhabitants of Elmadinah). As a result, all Elansar were asked to take a "brother/sister" from Mouhajirin and to help him/her succeed in the new environment. From this moment onward, Arab and Muslim cultural as well as religious practices became deeply enmeshed in providing such assistance to new community members. Indeed, the emerging goal of many Middle Eastern and North African nations to provide access to a university education might be seen as a result of such beliefs: an

attempt to support the next generation in their own journey to becoming similarly effective community members. In this way, the university's goal is not just to graduate students, but to produce graduates who care for their community members. This is certainly the case in Algeria, where access to a university education remains essentially free or of little cost and where a focus on global citizenship has become a primary goal. Yet the actual practices of a university toward nontraditional rural students have often failed to enact such communal support ("400,000 children," 2018; ESRI, 2021). Too often, nontraditional students, defined here as those rural students who often are the first to attend college in their family or come from resource-poor communities, are not provided the institutional programs required to succeed in this "new land" or to gain insights into how to blend their education with communal needs.

This article poses the following research questions: How might the concept of Mouakhat serve as a model to support new students? How might it enable them to be productive community citizens upon graduation? To explore the conceptual power of Mouakhat on university practices, we will begin by contextualizing the stated role of a university education in Algeria, with a focus on how such an education attempts to integrate global frameworks focused on neoliberal paradigms into their curricular paradigms. Next we will explore one international student writing project that grew out of the Mouakhat framework, The Twiza Project (2019), to investigate how the writing produced inadvertently demonstrated a similar Mouakhat ethic being enacted by the participating university students. At this point, we theorize how the concept of Moukhat might address these gaps through a developing mentoring program in the university. We conclude, then, by suggesting how the concept of Moukhat could enable faculty and administrators to better succeed in their common goal of ensuring not only high graduation rates for students, but high civic engagement by their graduates.

BACKGROUND: IMAGINING A GLOBAL LABOR FORCE, DENYING COLLECTIVE RIGHTS

Algeria represents an important case study for how higher education might reform to better serve the needs of its students and communities. After being a replica of the French system since independence in 1962, the Algerian state initiated a major university reform program in 2003–2004, the License, Master, Doctorat (LMD), at two pilot sites with the goal to generalize the program across all Algerian universities. In particular, the LMD objective was said to "attempt to reposition Higher Education in

terms of globalization and competitiveness" and tailor pedagogical content accordingly instead of "complying with national curricula and programs" (Azzi, 2012). In theory, the reform was an ambitious attempt to modernize Algerian universities, particularly in terms of preparing graduates for employability in the global labor markets. Invoking neoliberal reform paradigms, higher education institutions have been granted more autonomy in decision-making, and their research and teaching agendas are more customer-oriented and cost-aware (Pausits & Pellert, 2009). A secondary concern of LMD is to ethically position university graduates within the context of the neoliberal global marketplace. Which is to say that as LMD moves to ensure students are employable in the global economy, they are likely to adopt the neoliberal values associated with the current global economy (Miliani, 2012). And typical of neoliberalism, students are also expected to inhabit a volunteer ethic that defines civic responsibility as individuals working to improve local communities (see Parks & Hachelaf, 2019). In speaking of the goals of a university education, then, these goals have to be understood as preparing students not only to successfully engage in the world of work, but also to understand their individual roles in improving their communities.

While it is possible to point to significant curricular changes over the past decade, specifically as relates to fostering a global entrepreneurial focus, the system has failed to ensure the success of the vast majority of university students. According to the former Secretary General of the Ministry of Education, the failure rate of all students, be they traditional or nontraditional, in Algerian universities hovers between 60% and 70%, especially in sciences (Bensouiah, 2018). When broken down by demographics, the picture becomes more concerning. The failure rate of nontraditional rural students, for example, is exponentially higher than that of urban students, with many of the former having never left their home community or having never personally engaged with international contexts (Hamdy, 2007; Le Roux, 2017). Such failure rates run counter to the aim of enhancing quality education and realizing broad inclusion within Algerian universities as detailed in the LMD. Thus, while the Algerian university system welcomes students from across the nation at increasing numbers, that same system does not provide the institutional support necessary for these students to succeed.

In offering this critique, we want to recognize the complexity of such a task within the Algerian higher education system. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESRS, 2019) states that the Algerian

university network comprises 106 higher education institutions spread over 48 wilayas (provinces), most of which are universities, national higher schools, and Teacher Training Colleges (Ecoles Normales Supérieures). The oversight of universities is centralized within the Ministry of Higher Education, which oversees the funding as well as the major management decisions. All universities in Algeria are basically tuition-free. As of 2010, over 1,100,000 Algerian youth attended university (Office National des Statistiques, 2019). Over 1 million attended undergraduate programs. Ministry funding, however, has been static, and, as a consequence, universities are overpopulated. The permanent teaching staff of less than 40,000 can hardly cover sufficient classes for the burgeoning student population. For the LMD system to be adequately applied, then, there would need to be a closer ratio between faculty and students to provide the tutoring and the individualized attention required. The LMD is supposed to work as a process akin to professional apprenticeship, and a lack of structures and personnel is the main hurdle to that end.

It should also be noted that recent political movements, initially framed under the term "Arab Spring" but moving beyond that framework in more recent years, have complicated how universities develop a "global understanding" through curriculum and pedagogical practices. That is, the attempt to foster an essentially neoliberal Western vision of global economic structures has simultaneously opened a discursive space which has reanimated calls for democratic reform, often inflected with local regional traditions. Within this neoliberalized environment, there is also the attendant fetishization of the entrepreneur, a move that both isolates students from each other in the name of competition as well as denies the legitimacy of the "public sphere," an essential component of democratic activism and appeals for justice. In this context, *the lack of mentorship for nontraditional students can be read as the natural conclusion of an institutional framework premised on neoliberal individual competition*. That is, the public claim to providing education for all is mitigated by a conceptual framework of "winner takes all." The public claim to support a "global" education within the classroom is mitigated by punishing student protestors calling for increased globally recognized democratic freedoms, calls that are often used to reframe students as "pawns of the West." In this way, the rhetoric of LMD providing increased pedagogical freedom for university faculty can be understood in its limitations: Faculty are expected to model a pedagogical practice that fosters a belief in individual and economic freedom, but diminishes a conception of collective freedoms

and human rights, such as unfettered free speech. (A point that will be returned to below.)

It is out of this political and educational context, we would argue, that the concept of Mouakhat can be used both to provide material support to students through mentoring programs as well as to re-animate a collective sense of responsibility to counter neoliberalism's focus on individualism and competition. For as noted above, Mouakhat encapsulates the Prophet's belief (PHUH) that accompaniment/companionship are a necessary step for the creation of a successful community, a community that integrates individuals and tribes into one common framework. In the Holy Quran, God commends Almadinah's natives for their altruism: "but those who before them, had homes (in Medina) and had adopted the Faith,—show their affection to such as came to them for refuge, and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the (latter), but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot). And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls,—they are the ones that achieve prosperity" (The Holy Quran, Al-Hashr, Surat 59 verse 9).

Thus, Mouakhat counters the feeling of estrangement (individualism), provides comfort (collective responsibility), and ensures prosperity for all (collective human rights). Indeed, by "brothering and sistering," new immigrants and long-term community members strengthen one another. It reestablishes a belief in a public sphere focused on common deliberation and responses to collective social issues. As such, scholars discuss how a tradition such as Mouakhat boosts creativity and problem-solving within communities (Ali Saleh, 2014). And, importantly, this process was not necessarily between longtime community members and immigrants. In one instance, the Prophet "brothered" between two immigrants, since one of them was very resourceful and skillful. The concept also fights restrictive formulations of community identity, such as those based on ethnic heritage (Haney, 2018). Finally, Mouakhat confronts societal stratification, as the first Mouakaht initiative by the Prophet (PHUH) was between former slaves and former slave owners (so-called nobles). This is particularly notable when we consider the highly tribalistic and stratified society the Prophet was living in (ibid.).

Here it is important to note how the prophetic tradition of Mouakhat has inspired many initiatives that base their activities on these conceptions of collective identity, the communal responsibility to transfer of skills, and empowerment outside the context of individual gain. For instance, The Mawakhat Program (the name based on another spelling of "Mouakhat")

in Pakistan is a case in point. Its main activity is the distribution of small loans and financial assistance to small businesses and individuals in an effort to make them self-dependent ("Small loans," 2021). The Urwa initiative is another case. Although it does not clearly refer to the prophetic inspiration of Mouakhat, the program invokes the concept of brothering and sistering as a base for solidarity toward orphans, kin, and the elderly (Urwa, 2021). Given the success of such programs, we argue that such an ethical communal framework could be a powerful intervention for nontraditional rural students' success. And an explicit commitment within each program is a collective commitment to each other. That is, Mouakhat contains an ethical vision of shared resources, collective responsibility, and communal benefit. As such, we would argue Moukhat provides a conceptual framework that addresses both the needs of nontraditional rural students as well as a framework through which to animate a pedagogy and curriculum that speaks to collective responsibility and communal success.

NEW DATA: LISTENING TO STUDENTS, REVISING CLASSROOMS AND INSTITUTIONS

One of the central tenets of neoliberalism (and perhaps capitalism more generally) is the belief that self-interest is the driving motivation of individuals. Such motivation explains the logic of the profit motive, freeing up individuals to compete, and limiting regulations intended to secure a "common good" (see Harvey, 2007; Brown, 2019) And it can be extrapolated that much of recent university reform (in the West and MENA region) has been motivated by such a conception of "students" whose individual career motivations and drive for success trump their collective responsibility. It was a questioning of such a definition of our students that over the past five years led us to create The Twiza Project. The goal of this project was to create a virtual environment where university students in North America and the MENA region could discuss, debate, and define the meaning of key terms such as human rights, democracy, and freedom. These dialogues occurred through a series of prompts, through which students responded to each other on a message board. Where specific topics emerged out of these dialogues, unique spaces for continued discussion were created.

In the particular iteration of The Twiza Project in forming this article, Steve Parks was teaching an entry-level required writing course at the University of Virginia (UVA), in Charlottesville, Virginia. Ahmed Abdelhakim Hachelaf was teaching an advanced pedagogy course for future

grade school teachers at the Higher Normal School at Laghouat, Algeria (Ecole Normale Supérieure/ENS). Here it is important to note the differences between the two institutions. Founded in 1819, the University of Virginia is ranked one of the top public institutions of higher education in the United States. It has a total student population of over 23,000 from all 50 U.S. states and over 50 countries internationally. It has a total of over 17,000 faculty and staff. Historically, UVA's population has drawn from elite schools and communities. The Higher Normal School (ENS) at Laghouat, Algeria, was established in 2011, approximately eight years after the LMD neoliberal paradigm was introduced into the Algerian university system. It is one of the eleven Normal Schools that prepare teachers at different primary, middle, and secondary levels in disciplines such as Arabic literature, English, French, natural science, physics, math, and history. The students study for either three, four, or five years for a professional teaching diploma, or they pursue graduate level studies, mostly in the arts and sciences. The current student population is slightly over 2,800. Most of the students hail from several provinces of the Steppic and the desert regions in Algeria.

While the student populations at the two universities might appear to be contextually disparate, each student population was in the midst of a transition (into college, into teaching careers), which posed fundamental questions about the educational, civic, and ethical values students would bring into these new contexts. And within the specific dynamics of the UVA course partnered with Twiza discussed in this article, over 50% of the class claimed a working-class, rural, or nontraditional background (in terms of race/ethnicity) at UVA. The ENS students self-identified as predominantly rural, first-generation college students. According to the neoliberal paradigm, these would seem to be the students most motivated by the self-interest for economic success and individual freedoms. It was in this combined community and aligned distance from traditional university structures, then, that students engaged in dialogues on interrelated issues of education, civic society, and human rights. (Notably, these conversations were then published in English/Arabic and circulated globally, such as in the case of the book *Equality and Justice* (Chehade et al., 2019.) What emerged from these robust and highly engaged conversations was a latent value system aligned with Mouakhat and, out of which, an alternative sense of communal responsibility among students might be developed into programmatic interventions, such as a mentoring program.

While the dialogues might have been expected to foster competition and democratic conceptions invested with entrepreneurial values, the opposite occurred. What emerged was a common recognition and collective concern dismissed under neoliberal paradigms: Students often felt adrift during this transition into their respective universities, isolated, and unsure of how to navigate their new contexts successfully. The Twiza dialogues, in fact, became a place of mutual support and guidance between students. In this sense, our work provided a context to solidify the values that might inform students' educational/professional trajectory toward civic engagement, collective concern, and communal commitments, the very values that were at odds with their own educational paradigms. And yet as previously mentioned, a cursory look at the data regarding nontraditional student success in Algerian universities should have alerted us to this concern. Here the conceptual/ethical value of Mouakhat becomes evident: To be able to fully understand the lived experiences of our students and their actual needs, an ethical communal framework is necessary, which begins with a collective responsibility to each other. For if we had imagined our students as immigrants to a new land (the university), we would have realized how little "brothering and sistering" was occurring to ensure that they survive, let alone thrive, at their respective universities. We would, in effect, have our ethical commitments to students called into question. We would be called to build within our own universities structures that would support student success out of a sense of collective commitment to those new to our communities. Students should not have had to develop such supports among themselves. Students should not have to create their own mentoring systems.

Beyond a sense of communal support for each other's trajectory through the university, a larger sense of communal obligation emerged. The Twiza dialogues also demonstrated a conception of public commitment that transcended individual volunteerism or individual freedoms. As was evident from the level and depth of engagement of the students involved in the Twiza Project (see, e.g., Chehade et. al, 2019; Parks & Hachelaf, 2019), students approached the dialogues with a sense of ownership for leadership and commitment to systemic change within their contexts in addition to a global collective citizenship spirit through which they perceived justice, rights, and democracy. They spoke using a common collective framework and demonstrated eagerness to exchange tools and techniques to enact change, each theorizing or sharing experimental knowledge on what works and what does not in their contexts. The plights of injustice that were

narrated showed sobering moments the students were experiencing on both sides and seemed to lead to a deeper understanding of ramification and fathoming unexpected commonalities and differences of power relations of their specific contexts. In essence, the Twiza provided an enriching multicultural virtual class, to echo hooks (1994), showing transnational activist solidarity. This solidarity is deemed necessary in that it sends student activists a message that they are not alone.

This articulation of the need for systemic change in a society, for a re-animated public sphere of deliberation and decision-making, was particularly important for the Algerian university students who were training to be grade school teachers. As we have discussed in a previous article (Parks and Hachelaf, 2019), the Algerian grade school curriculum supported by the Ministry of Education is premised on developing citizens, "with this term often being proceeded by terms such as good, active, decent, responsible, effective, and global" (Hachelaf, 2020).[1] In particular, we cite *The Orientation Law of 2008*, which defines the "good citizen" within global contexts.

> Since the end of the last millennium, Algeria has undergone rapid transformations at both the political and economic levels: democracy, citizenship, human rights, individual and collective freedoms (which have gradually become concepts in our daily lives), market opening, globalization of the economy, internationalization of information and communication are no longer mere slogans but concrete facts. The task of the school in the face of these developments is essential. In addition to its traditional task of transmitting knowledge, the child should be taught how to become a responsible citizen, able to understand and contribute to the changes in the society in which he/[she] lives.

Here the "good citizen" is defined as the individual who aligns his values with the neoliberal, where collective freedoms refers to open markets. Within such a context, the "good citizen" becomes the individual who further aligns an understanding of political rights with the neoliberal paradigm of market openings and the globalization of the economy. As we noted in Parks and Hachelaf (2019), such a focus on the individual, not communal identity, dissipates the importance of collective action for economic/political change (Brown, 2019). Indeed, the Algerian grade school curriculum directly teaches students to value leaders who can dictate policies over collective decision-making. For instance, consider a lesson where students are asked to write an article for an imagined campaign for mayor, with the goal of reforming corruption (see Figure 1). The suggested pathways illustrated imagine a "leader who can dictate solutions, a leader who

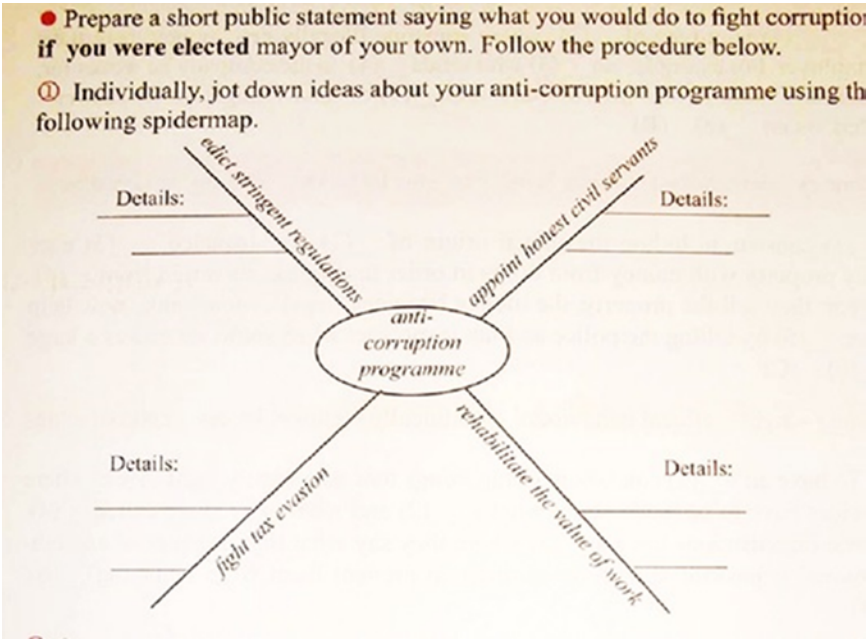

Figure 1. Teaching Political Engagement Through Algerian Textbooks.

does not also consider the larger economy of laws/regulations that foster an inequity that works in concert with limited access to networks of power" (Parks and Hachelaf, 2019).

What does such a lesson imply about the ability of a community to develop collective solutions to public problems, to work collectively toward communal equity, when the "public" is replaced with a "dictator."

And here we see the public value of Mouakhat as a pedagogical strategy for future teachers. Mouakhat demands an ethic of obligation to maintenance of a robust caring public sphere. Such anti-democratic and anti-neoliberal leanings would not be possible within a Mouakhat infused-classroom. And we would add that if university classrooms (in Algeria and globally) would listen to students' desires to have a caring, communal institution, they would create classrooms with a similar sensibility. Which is to say that the discovery of such a sensibility within the Algerian students in The Twiza Project demonstrated the ability of the project to "pay forward" a reform agenda that exceeds the university and moves outward toward the greater student population and public sphere—that is, if we listen and reimagine the aspirations of our students.

NEW POSSIBILITIES: SPECULATIONS ON THE VALUE OF A MOUAKHAT MENTORING PROGRAM

At the outset of this article, we argued the Algerian university system was existing within a contradiction, a contradiction dictated by the logic of neoliberalism: Universities were committed to educating all students; the university had no obligation to provide the supports for all students to succeed. Individual freedom trumped collective responsibility. We are asking, what if we listened to our students? Or more exactly, what if we imagined our students as invested in an ethics of communal obligation, not entrepreneurial individualism. What if the ethics of Mouakhat framed our obligations to our students' success, particularly that of nontraditional rural students in the case of Algeria?

We believe one way to understand its impact is to take the Mouakhat-infused student mentoring that marked The Twiza Project as a possible way to build a systemic support for nontraditional students. We could imagine that such a program, where a more skilled or experienced student is paired with a lesser skilled/experienced student, as informed by agreed-upon goals (Murray 1991). For our specific focus of Algeria, we would focus this mentoring on providing support and advice for nontraditional rural students who do not understand the cultural expectations of professors, the rigor of college work, the benefits of academic advising, and the network of resources/possibilities a college might offer beyond graduation (Pleschová & McAlpine, 2015; Skaniakos & Piirainen, 2019). We would focus on what we believe our students require, that is, a space where they can gain the skills required to navigate university spaces not just as sites of learning, but also as spaces with policies and cultural practices which are not often self-evident.

And while we acknowledge that our speculations on the potential value of Mouakhat to reform Algerian education lack the "data" that an extended study might require—a study which would first require funds to develop, build, then assess such a program—we are not simply gesturing toward an unachievable utopia. We would argue that while differences in contexts between the United States and Algeria exist, sufficient commonality of experience by untraditional universities exists to draw from lessons offered by North American–based research. For, unlike in the Algerian context, U.S. universities have been implementing different forms and types of mentoring in an effort to include historically marginalized segments in student bodies. When exploring the role of mentorship among U.S.

college students from under-resourced backgrounds, scholarly research has demonstrated the importance of such individual mentoring programs for students facing difficulties entering and succeeding in university culture (Huizing, 2012). As importantly, such research has also indicated that personal mentoring also enables students to navigate the resources available at a university to ensure they gain the full benefit of their education (see Brown, 2020). Finally, significant research has also demonstrated that providing students with civic engagement connections, such as The Twiza Project, greatly improves retention and graduation rates at universities and colleges (see Adler-Kassner et al., 1997).

As such, we would propose that any Mouakhat-inspired mentoring program be premised on student-to-student dialogues, with mentors being selected who represent the diversity of heritages/regions of the students having the greatest difficulty. (Here it should be remembered that the principles of Mouakhat often resulted in pairing recent immigrants). Research has shown that as mentors acquire the general research-based skills required by the university, they will intuitively be able to translate such skills into the specific cultural context of their mentees/peers. It is this common cultural framework integrated into research-based practices, research demonstrates, that might enable nontraditional students to make the transition to a university context which is seemingly so radically different from their secondary education, inclusive of new ways of learning, new institutional structures, and new disciplinary courses (Parks and Pollard, 2010). The goal is to enable such students to succeed academically, but also to benefit from new resources and develop new social networks of support.

And here we would note, the mentoring program would do more than support student success. Such a program would model in its very nature an ethical framework that calls upon advanced students not only to consider what supports ensured their success, but to accept responsibility for ensuring such supports are available to each succeeding cohort of students. Which is to say, as with Mouakhat, community members are not allowed to dismiss the needs of new members, particularly those who enter lacking economic, cultural, or social status. In this sense, Mouakhat would embed a deeply ethical vision in the university student and, we believe, carry forward into public engagement after graduation. For the concept of Mouakhat seeds the idea that "communal responsibility" requires not just individual volunteerism, but collective responses to collective concerns. It rejects narrow neoliberal concepts of a public consisting of individuals for a public infused with collective responsibilities to group identities within its

diverse community. Which is to say, the "brothering and sistering" value system would also enhance university efforts to encourage students to feel a responsibility to their communities after graduation.

IMPLICATIONS: TO BE CONTINUED

Undoubtedly, there is much to be learned from the prophetic tradition and leadership. Putting these practices and lessons into a modern professional mold that disrupts a neoliberal educational agenda is a challenge. We acknowledge that this challenge is not fully answered in this article. We would argue, however, that before any extended campaign for social change, a strategy, a framework for action must be articulated. In this sense, Mouakhat becomes a conceptual tool to consider what initiatives will lead to the necessary changes. As we have briefly discussed, Mouakhat can already be seen to have proven its value in efforts dedicated to immigrant integration, supporting orphans, and common economic success.

To that list, we would argue Mouakhat can inform university mentoring programs that can alter university culture toward communal obligation. In addition, during a time when distance learning has become the norm due to COVID, we would argue that the personal commitment enacted by peer tutoring serves a particularly important role, not only in articulating how a nontraditional student might succeed in the university but providing a direct immediate connection to a future as represented by their mentor. At these times, we believe integrating forms of self-directed learning and peer-supported forms of pedagogy is the way to support nontraditional, indeed, all students moving forward in their education. And we might argue in a more extensive article that such mentoring, premised on Mouakhat, should become a necessary component in the integration of newly arriving members in any type of organization, be it civil, political, or economic. Building and sustaining a mentoring culture should become one of the main projects of any organization that states a commitment to its members, new and continuing. For without sounding too naive, the potential for a new form of democratic civic dialogue will emerge, a dialogue that can model a better future for all those involved, only when we recognize our responsibility toward each other. In that sense, we believe that Mouakhat allows us to understand "brothering and sistering" as a tool toward the ultimate goal of forming an inclusive, caring, and compassionate human family.

Clearly, this is research and work that is "to be continued."

CODA: A QUICK TANGENT ON A POSSIBLE SECONDARY BENEFIT OF MOUKHAT FOR CLASSROOM AND ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Clearly, mentoring alone, however, will not address a second needed reform to support all students' success. As just noted above, classroom practices must also be changed. While LMD had the goal for a more engaged and civically committed education, recent history has shown that Algerian university faculty seem to lack models which demonstrate an intellectually engaged, mentoring-based, and civically framed classroom. Instead, the lecture-based pedagogical models that dominate Algerian universities operate to alienate already marginalized students within the university and fail to provide the type of dialogic engagement which prepares students to participate in a civic environment with increasingly global frameworks (Hachelaf, 2012). Indeed, such pedagogical models fail to provide the background skills that are necessary for college success, since they assume students' ability to navigate the knowledge and disciplinary contexts within the university, as well as to seek assistance within that university. And, we would argue, lecture-based classes too often frame intellectual success in opposition to the values and skills nontraditional students might bring into the classroom. Which is to say, within an academic lecture of sociology of rural life, for example, the knowledge of actual rural students is too often ignored or discounted.

As such, we want to suggest the value of a Mouakhat framework blended with pedagogical practices emerging out of civic engagement practices within U.S. universities. Specifically, we would point to scholarly research on "literacy" where the term connotes more than just simple reading/writing skills. Instead, here literacy comes to mean the ways in which particular communities frame, research, and create knowledge for specific purposes (Flower, 2018). Within such a literacy paradigm, the ways in which schools develop models of learning would certainly be focused upon. Equally important, however, might be the communal knowledges that students bring into class. For instance, a focus on working-class communities might draw forth the ways in which linguistic patterns, drawing from specific European heritages, also are connected to conceptions of communal loyalty or ethics. A student utilizing such ways of speaking in class would not, then, be speaking "incorrectly" as much as invoking that communal knowledge into the classroom context (Parks, 2010). Literacy studies, then, imagine the classroom as a site where different knowledges are placed into dialogue with the aim of drawing them together into new forms of knowledge.

Such classrooms position the professor not as a lecturer depositing knowledge into his passive unknowing students, but as a facilitator demonstrating the complex negotiations out of which knowledge is created—the intersection of personal, communal, academic, and public insights that blend into what we might call "common sense." Within such a classroom, all students are invited into the production of new insights, dialogue is vital, and communal responsibility to the betterment of the learning community is key. And through such intersections of knowledge, students upon their graduation necessarily learn what it means to build a "civic" community premised on equality (Freire, 2018). If the university is to represent the ideal society or at least attempt to multiply positive communal practices, then it should be a good role model for a learning community based on support and dialogue. As the old Arabic proverb goes '*Fakid Ashay' la yo'tih*': "Unless I possess something, can I ever give it?" Universities cannot preach ideals if they fail to reflect them in the microcosms they are. Which is to say, if students see the ethics and practices of an engaged community during their education, these same students will come to expect such communities in their daily lives upon graduation. Indeed, this sense of "brotherly/sisterly" commitment to the creation of an intellectually prosperous academic and civic community, we believe, speaks to the lessons learned from Mouakhat and, importantly to us, shifts the classroom into a mentoring space committed to the success of all those involved—student and teacher alike.

Here we need to be clear that in invoking U.S. models of civic education, we recognize how such models are premised on somewhat naive visions of "democracy," with citizenship often assumed for all participants. We need to recognize the through line of democracy as "civic engagement" and democracy as foreign policy. Both versions of democracy assume the righteousness of U.S. democracy without also exploring its destructive impact in the Middle East and North Africa (Abbott et al., 2020). Here again, our hope is that by embedding such engaged and civic education within communal and regional conceptions of Mouakhat, students will develop their own sense of "civic" which responds to the need of their immediate local moment in the service of a culturally/historically informed sense of their own nation.

Finally, we would want to argue that the combination of a peer-to-peer mentoring program and a literacy-infused classroom environment would begin to surface the seemingly personal, but deeply communal, causes for students' failure to succeed in the university. As mentors share their

insights with each other, common concerns/issues among their mentees will necessarily arise. As faculty share the ways in which different students are located ethically and culturally toward "academic knowledge," they will see what specific skills need to be taught across classrooms to ensure student success. As noted in the discussion of student academic presentations, if college/university administrators engage and learn from the insights of their students and faculty, perhaps an opportunity emerges to reform their institutions for the better (Parks, 2010). Or to put it another way, if administrators can come to see the skills brought to their "cities" by newly arrived "immigrants," perhaps learning can prosper in new and untold ways.

Notes

1. Note the following three paragraphs draw heavily from our 2019 article, which provided a complete argument on the Algerian education systems shift to neoliberal frameworks.

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