The Alchemy of the Leadership Industries in Poland and UAE: A Comparative analysis

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ABSTRACT

We draw on production of leadership theory to argue that the competitive dynamics of the leadership industries exert at least as much influence as cultural factors on the shape of leadership development practices in these two contexts. To reach this conclusion, we explore the competitive and business dynamics of the leadership development industries in two countries, Poland and United Arab Emirates. We review the literature that explores cross-cultural factors that influence perceptions of leadership, and we compare the relative influence of business dynamics vs. cultural factors in shaping leadership development practices in these two contexts. Pulling on a combination of qualitative interviews, company documents, occupational texts, and secondary literature, we argue that in both Poland and UAE leadership development professionals as well as clients struggle for professionalism as an integral component of their business performance and garner social capital in localized contexts. We find that historical contexts, religion and political systems in particular, powerfully shape industry dynamics. Furthermore, we conclude that industry dynamics shape those cultural factors as well.

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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 OPENING

The definition of leadership development may refer to any activity that enhances the quality of leadership within an individual or organization (Van Velsor, McCauley, and Ruderman 2010). The general trend in the contemporary studies on leadership development is that it approaches the literature from a 'best practices' perspective, that is, it privileges the effectiveness of leadership practices without addressing the context within which leadership occurs. Many scholars tend to prescribe remedies to the wide array of organizational problems in order to increase the efficiency of leadership practices. On the other hand, the popularity of such literature is a direct response to the broad expectation generated by contributors involved in the leadership field; that is, there is a general expectation that leadership can be measured and improved in terms of abstract indicators of efficiency. This body of literature, however, does not take sufficient account to the context within which leadership occurs. Thus, the generally assumed that leadership development maximizes efficiency, when in fact its lack of context renders it incomplete.

There have been some efforts to place leadership development in the context of studies of Cross-Cultural Leadership. One of the most influential works up to date is the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness research program (GLOBE), which studied contextual leadership effectiveness. Despite the fact that this approach has gained wide support, there have been several critiques of the fundamental assumptions of the study, which will be elaborated on later in the paper.

The demand for leadership development products and services has increased in recent years; in fact acquiring these services have become critical at the organizational level of many firms. For instance, Jones argues that leadership development programs serve provides a context for organizations and cultures to interact, thereby confronting and potentially resolving economic and social conflicts that affect society at large (Jones 2006). Therefore, many companies see this as an opportunity to enter the market and commercialize the concept of leadership. A production framework helps explain the

popularity of leadership not only as a form of influence, but also as a commercial good and cultural ideal (Guthey 2012).

We draw on the production of leadership theory to explore the competitive dynamics of the leadership development industries in two regions, namely Poland and the UAE. We review the literature that explores cross-cultural influences on perceptions of leadership, and we compare the relative influence of business dynamics vs. cultural factors in shaping leadership development practices in these two contexts. Toward this end, we investigate two regions that culturally are very different. We find that the leadership development in these two contexts exhibits more similarities than differences, which appears to contradict what one would expect from a cross-cultural perspective.

The answer to this puzzle is that the leadership industry is governed by the dynamics of differentiation and standardization. The approach we are taking in the body of the research is different in the sense that we are looking at two contextual dynamics: culture and industry. The cultural dynamics approach is the most popular and widespread course of study, while the industrial dynamics approach is the least studied approach. The reason behind the lack of focus on this area is not only because it conflicts with the cultural dynamics approach, but perhaps also because this perspective might not be beneficial for the providers in terms of profit. We find it beneficial to explore the similarities and commonalities between the two contexts, since the general approach of other studies focuses mainly on the differences.

There are several reasons why we selected the above-mentioned contexts:

1) These two regions have very little to do with each other and there are no influential connections between them in terms of history, culture, language or business.
2) Both countries are in advanced developmental stages in terms of economy.
3) They are both newly introduced to the concept of leadership.
4) The market for leadership products and services contains sufficient amount of services providers.
5) There has not been enough research done on the field of leadership practices in the contexts.

We argue that the ambiguous character of the leadership concept, opens up a market for leadership products and services due to the fact that people in these regions do not have a clear understanding of what leadership entail. As such, leadership development can be catered to the unique needs and desires of individual firms; sometimes this aptitude in defining leadership creates unnecessary ambiguity and questionable credibility. Indeed, this ambiguity has created an industry of dubious credentials that is continuously challenged to legitimize itself.

We argue that the leadership development industry is characterized by the same dynamics as other industries; that is, the products offered are of standardized characters. The providers might not be interested in delivering the best leadership development possible, as it does not correspond with their financial interest. This creates a constant struggle for the providers to find a balance between standardization and differentiation. Therefore, we argue that the differentiation in the local markets is a form of global standardization that serves the sole function of sustaining profitability. This isomorphic dynamic is confirmed by the neo-institutionalism theory, which will be described in the literature.

Finally, we argue that the competitive dynamics of the leadership industries exert at least as much influence as cultural factors on the shape of leadership development practices in these two contexts. Bearing this in mind we present our research questions.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to investigate our arguments about the ambiguity of the concept of leadership, the industry's uniform characteristics, the balance between differentiation and standardization, and the influences competitive dynamics and cultural factors exert on the leadership practices, we formulate a set of questions that tackle these arguments. Having defined the scope of our thesis, we now present the research questions, which will be answered in chapter five.

1. **To what extent do cross cultural and regional factors help explain the similarities and differences between leadership development practices in the UAE and Poland?**

2.   **To what extent do the competitive and institutional dynamics of the leadership industries help explain these same similarities and differences?**

3.   **Specifically, how do the industrial dynamics of standardization and differentiation shape and influence the nature of leadership development in these two contexts?**

While the three questions are strongly related, the split is designed to allow for an extensive investigation into the organizations providing leadership development products and services in Poland and the UAE, due to the relatively overlooked nature of the topic. In other words, we want to understand how the leadership development practices are characterized with the help of the cross cultural and regional factors. The second question tests the characters from a business dynamics point of view. The third question addresses the balance between standardization and differentiation that affects the leadership development practices in context from an industrial point of view. These questions are used as a guideline for building the structure and defining the content of this thesis. More about this will be explained in the following sections.

1.3 REFLECTION ON THE LANGUAGE

We have conducted our research in two regions, where English is not the first official language. However, the overall language used to conduct the interviews was English. The reasons are that not only did we want to avoid misunderstandings between us the researchers and the interviewees, but also because we find the vocabulary about leadership in English to be richer in terms of interpretation.

We must also underline that Arabic and Polish were used to further clarify our questions and the answers by the interviewees. Furthermore, it is appropriate for the purpose of this thesis to clarify that some of the quotes in chapter four are translated from their original languages. As we, the researchers, are native speakers of Arabic and Polish, we evaluate that there is no noticeable difference between the words "management" and "leadership" in the respective languages. Therefore, we stick to the conventional distinction between the two according the English definitions of the two. Other reflections on the meaning associated with the term "leader" or "leadership" themselves will be discussed under the findings in chapter four.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

In this section, our intention is to depict the path in this paper in order to present the structure of the study.

Chapter one introduces the frame within which the rest of this thesis is carried out, that is, an introduction to the overall topic of interest, the research questions, reflections and the language, and the structure of the thesis that will hopefully prove both relevant and helpful as we proceed. In this chapter, we present the research questions which the rest of the work is dedicated to answering. The questions discuss the cultural and regional as well as the industrial and institutional influences exerted on similarities and differences of the development and nature of leadership. Given the fact that this thesis is inspired and guided by a perspective in development, and furthermore centered in the somewhat ambiguous concept of leadership, the choices surrounding the methodological approach are significant.

Chapter two discusses the methodology, the epistemological and ontological considerations, and our approach to collecting the empirical data. This section starts with an elaboration on the critical realism, under which our study takes place. We explain the connection between the production of leadership perspective and critical realism. We elaborate on the research design and research methods that support the collection of data.

Chapter three presents and discusses the fundamental theoretical concepts that deal with the concept of leadership development. Firstly, we review the theoretical and practical concepts of the leadership development. We approach practical aspects from the 'best practices' perspective, as it holds a prominent position in the contemporary literature. We then review the production of leadership perspective, and propose that the ambiguity of the concept is used deliberately to promote the industry's products and services. This central ambiguity benefits the market of these kinds of quasi-therapeutic products, but it also creates a constant struggle for legitimacy at the center of the profession. Secondly, we discuss the production of leadership perspective as a foundation of subsequent analysis of competitive and industrial dynamics affecting leadership development practices. Thirdly, we present the theoretical body that discusses culture as

the main determinant of leadership formation, and its cross-cultural influences, and from an industrial perspective, where cultural products are produced and commercialized. Finally, we discuss the theory of neo-institutionalism and its critique that address the standardization of practices in the industry and the expectations related to them.

Chapter four presents the findings, which are divided in three sections. The first section is about the regional description of the two contexts in terms of country, culture, and leadership. The second section presents an overview of the leadership development industry and the kinds of players in the market. Furthermore, we present the companies we studied as well as the interviewees we had met with during the process of field data collection. The third section consists of the findings collected from the qualitative interviews. This part is additionally divided into two sections: 1) Contextual factors, a macro-level, and 2) Industrial factors, a micro-level. These comparisons evaluate the differences and similarities of the leadership industries in both regions to what concerns the culture and the industry, respectively. In addition, a critique of the industry was formulated by two academics in the form of interviews and academic papers review. The academics points of view serve the purpose of providing a second opinion on the leadership development concepts, products, services, and practices in Poland and the UAE.

Chapter five discusses our findings in general and in puts those in perspective to the theoretical framework provided in the third chapter. In this sense, it provides answers to our research questions, which build on the empirical findings and their comparison to the assumptions of the production of leadership perspective as well as reviewing them in the broader cultural, industrial, and institutional contexts. A conclusion of our findings and future perspectives are the summarizing notes of our comparative study.

CHAPTER TWO - METHODOLOGY

2.1 PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

In order to answer the research questions, we adapted the philosophy of perception - the critical realism (CR). According to the definition, critical realism is a *"school of philosophy that is presented as a critical application of realism which produces a stratified understanding of the world, dividing the real from the actual or empirical, and the structures and mechanisms, which produce events or phenomena, from the events themselves."* (Jeffries 2007).

Roy Bhaskar is credited with creating this stream of philosophic thought. His work currently provides the basis for the work of many other theorists. Critical Realism draws upon Kant's dualist method in order to create a more contemporary approach – dividing pure reason from empirical reality. CR affirms that empiricism is anthropocentric, combining metaphysical and metaphorical argument, with the realists' one. The purpose is to create more defined picture of the real world after the particular event. In addition, the presented picture goes beyond the experience of people observing such world (Bhaskar 2008).

CR at the same time accepts and rejects the empirical verification, denies and accepts that science can expose the real image of a "thing". Simultaneously it *"confuses the phenomena produced by the thing with the appearance of it"*, and *"asserts that the phenomena produced by a thing are at variance with the thing"* (Jeffries 2007). Bhaskar recognizes the existence of the thing, and agrees that is understandable. However, he also accepts the existence of certain "mechanisms" and "structures" which go outside the empirical reality, and are not knowable and understandable (Bhaskar 2008).

We find it fitting to adapt such philosophic approach, as it is characterized by an absolute social constructivist and positivist approach. The socially constructed nature of Critical Realism does not exclude aspects of potentially biased and limited knowledge of humans. Therefore, the philosophy of critical realism is well aligned with the scope of our research, as the leadership development is socially constructed, and relies upon human interactions.

The aim of this thesis is to recognize the factors that affect leadership development practices in Poland and the UAE. For this purpose we adapt production of culture, and production of leadership perspectives. Such an approach will reinforce in us the process of understanding how leadership practices are differentiated, and how these industries strive for the legitimacy.

2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

We decided to follow the exploratory research approach. This method allowed us to determine the best research design, data collection method and selection of subjects. Exploratory research is closely related to the philosophy of the critical realism as both examine the nature of the particular phenomenon. Such approach is widely used when the topic or issue is considerably new, and data is difficult to collect. The exploratory research allowed us to gradually gather information, identify determinants, and reflect on our framework. While reviewing the existing literature and conducting the interviews, the characteristics of leadership industries were gradually revealed. Thus, the scope of our research became clearer. Our conclusions are drawn from both the empirical data collected from thirteen interviewees, and from literature review, company's reports and frameworks.

2.3 RESEARCH METHODS

The following section of research methods consists of six sections: data type, data collection, participant selection, interview approach, data analysis, and validity & reliability.

2.3.1 DATA TYPE

We chose to focus on collecting qualitative rather than quantitative data. Qualitative research does not put forward the claims of absolute truth, thus, it is more relevant in examining the phenomenon of leadership industries. Additionally, qualitative data collection helped us to seek empirical support for our research questions, as well as allowing us multiple interpretations and explanations of the phenomenon.

In our research, we utilized both primary and secondary data. In total, we interviewed thirteen persons – eleven consultants, and two experts. The transcripts from

the interviews served as the foundation of our findings, and account for the primary data. The secondary data consisted of articles, journals and books, as well as the company's documents, various reports, and frameworks. All data gave us clear and reliable overview of leadership industries in Poland and the UAE.

2.3.2 DATA COLLECTION

While collecting the data, we relied on the Internet, various academic search engines and personal networks. The internet and personal networks served as the tools to collect the primary data. Academic search engines were utilized to gather the secondary data. Explorative research design allowed us to validate the findings obtained while investigating the research questions from various perspectives. The collection of data lasted approximately seven months.

2.3.3 PARTICIPANT SELECTION

By making use of the Internet research and personal networks, we narrowed the amount of the leadership companies that suited the scope of our research. Subsequently, we selected consultants who were willing to participate in our study. The collection of primary data had an entailment of identifying different perspectives on product offering, and targeted segments. All interviews were conducted over the period of three months. The primary data consists of interviewees with eleven consultants, and two experts. As our research focuses on two regional contexts – Poland and the UAE, all the participants were divided as following: five consultants and one expert in Poland, six consultants and one expert in the UAE. All of the consultants were professionally involved in providing leadership services divided into various mix of offerings. They were characterized by miscellaneous educational backgrounds and job experiences. Additionally, experts were not directly involved in leadership development, as they were the recognized members of the public sector. The aim of collecting data set was to obtain the clear insights into the leadership industry's activities in both contexts.

2.3.4 INTERVIEW APPROACH

During the collection of primary data, the interviewees received the information on the scope of our research, as well as the themes of the discussion. This helped them in

the preparation for the interviews. All of the interviews were conducted in the same manner, using the same framework. Such approach enabled us to obtain the standardized data that could serve as a subject for comparison.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to guide the interviews, but we also delved into new topics as the interviewees brought them forward. During the discussion we focused on open-ended rather than closed questions to encourage the participants to elaborate freely without any interruptions. The questionnaire was composed of fifty-two questions. Every interview lasted between one and four hours. All interviews were conducted in English in order to ensure the clear comparison and exchange of empirical findings between us – the authors of this thesis. All interviewees gave their permission to record the conversations. Additionally, we offered the executive summary for all of the participants.

2.3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The structure of questionnaire was constructed to obtain as many insights as possible, covering the entire scope of the interviewees' work and their interrelation with the environment, more specifically the local culture. The questionnaire was divided into six theme sections:

·   Opening
·   Provision of products
·   Positioning
·   Cultural Challenges
·   Trends in the industry
·   Leadership and management

After collecting the primary data we proceeded with creating the interviews transcripts. Each sentence of the discussion was analyzed and compared to the other cultural context. The transcripts were carefully analyzed and classified in a structured way in order to capture as much relevant information as possible. The outcome allowed us to identify eighteen contextual and industrial factors that have a connection with leadership practices: Contextual factors - gender, language, religion & values, salary, education, governmental initiatives & support, politics, nepotism, lack of role models; Leadership

industry factors - motivation, skepticism, prestige, customers, demand & future orientation, philosophy, ambiguity & struggle for legitimacy, importation of models, differentiation & standardization. Citations were discussed in accordance with the literature review, company documents, reports and frameworks. Such approach provided us with solid foundation for the empirical analysis.

2.3.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

When making any assumptions about the population that the sample is drawn from, the data set must be carefully chosen. Several factors must be considered when collecting, transcribing and analyzing the data, especially those of reliability and validity (Easterby-Smith 2008). The validity and reliability may be affected because interviewees interpret questions in their own way and respond to that interpretation (Giddens 2008). The findings in our research are based on the interpretation of respondents. Therefore, some level of personal interpretation and judgment is unavoidable. To increase the validity and reliability of the collected material, we made complete transcripts of the interviews. This allowed us to avoid the over-biased argumentation.

A sample of thirteen respondents does not allow us to acquire the full picture of leadership industries in two regional contexts. Nonetheless, we believe that all of the interviewees provided us with the sufficient insights on what extent leadership industries are affected by the cultural and competitive dynamics.

CHAPTER THREE - LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is organized into three parts. In the first part, we provide an overview of the best-practices perspective as an important trend in the contemporary research on leadership development products and services. Subsequently, we turn our attention to the production of leadership perspective. This perspective will support us in further explaining how competitive and industrial dynamics, which exist in the context, interplay with the expectations associated with the leadership theories.

In the second part, we discuss the relations between leadership development practices and culture. We elaborate on cross-cultural and production of culture theories. The cross-cultural leadership aspect pays significant attention to the cultural context in which it endorses global leadership profiles. On the counter side, the production of culture perspective looks more closely at the industrial and commercial contexts in which the leadership development is produced.

Finally, we conclude the literature review with a closer look at the theory of neo-institutionalism and its critique in order to build the theoretical backdrop for the discussion of the standardization of practices.

3.1 "Best-practices" literature

We argue that the competitive dynamics of the leadership industries exert at least as much influence as cultural factors on the shape of leadership development practices in the contexts of Poland and the UAE. In order to substantiate this assertion, we will open the literature review with the best-practices literature and production of leadership perspective.

The majority of the literature on the leadership development is written from the best practices perspective, and it does not take into account the context in which leadership development is delivered. For the most part, such literatures focus on identifying, and promoting effective leadership development. Scholars tend to provide the remedies to the wide array of problems, in order to boost the effectiveness of the leadership development programs.   We define the best-practices literature as the set of methodologies and techniques designed to address various organizational issues. Through experience and research, the nature of best-practices methodologies acquired sort of the reliability and the

results superior to those achieved with other means. In the sense of leadership development, the goal of best-practices literature is to provide most optimal ways that fix leadership matters within the organizations, as well as to provide universal leadership "templates" that can be utilized by multiply firms.

On the one hand, the best practices ideology and the efforts to medicalize the counseling profession have been increasing in recent years (J. Hansen 2006), which objective is to identify particular treatments that are optimal for treating particular disorders (McGowan, 2003, cited in J. Hansen, 2006). However, given the fact that best practices is based on a modernist epistemology that aspires to find the truth, J. Hansen criticizes this approach for having suppressive characters on alternative epistemologies, which might result in impeding diversity and innovation. This brings forward inconsistency between the values of the counseling professions and the best practices ideology itself.

On the other hand, the paradoxical reality is that leadership development industries may not be interested in delivering the absolute best leadership development possible, as it does not correspond with their financial interest. It could be too expensive to provide the absolute best leadership solution, as well as the financial return could be low. When reviewing the literature and the interview findings, it was clearly indicated that such concern is one of a dozen, and that the reasons behind the leadership industry's actions are far more complex.

The production of leadership framework helps account for this phenomenon. The work of Guthey draws attention to the often-conflicting expectations that are attached to leadership by the various participants in the field of leadership production. In "Best-practices" literature, the promotion of "technical prescriptions" plays an active role in responding to such expectations. All of the actors involved in the production of leadership do not only focus on providing efficient means to important ends – the efficiency and progress of the organization- but also to determine what kind of ends should be considered as the most important (Guthey 2012). The problem is that there are no objective measurements that can actually definitively determine what counts for these effective means and important ends. For this reason, managers are forced to behave in a rational way, and they do so by utilizing new techniques and new leadership discourses that address ever-changing social

expectations (Guthey 2012). The number of literature we went through during our research focuses mainly on the connection between organizational performance and leadership effectiveness. This coincides solely with the norms surrounding rationality and progress in the field of leadership production.

To address this issue, Guthey advocates that the various approaches to leadership concepts do appeal to norms of formal substantive rationality. In this sense, they are expected to address the efficiency and effectiveness, and also appeal to the deeply-held values and beliefs. He further explains that at times, leadership development practitioners seek to appeal to the norms of affective rationality - to fill organizational and personal functions as well as emotional and spiritual fulfillment. For instance, leadership development can function as "motivational therapy" or "self-help" (Guthey 2012). These conflicting expectations might answer why leadership and leadership development are such ambiguous concepts that can be defined and promoted as an efficient approach to develop leadership. Additionally, the tension among the various demands attached to leadership further contributes to the shape of the leadership industries. As the number of participants in the field of leadership production increases, differentiating and legitimizing one's approach to leadership development is becoming in favor of these participants. In order to further explore a wide array of industrial dynamics that shape leadership development practices in these two regions, we decided to build our research on the production of leadership framework.

3.3 Production of leadership

By drawing upon the discussion on the production of celebrity, Guthey, Clark and Jackson proposed a new approach that underscores the importance to understand leadership as "a product of the many organizational, promotional, and discursive practices that characterize the leadership industries" (E. Guthey, Clark, and Jackson 2009). They argue that various actions of all the actors involved in the field of leadership all contribute to the production of leadership itself. Such a proposition provides us with the framework for further, more detailed analysis and helps us ascertain what kind of factors and institutional dynamics shape the market for leadership products and services. Since throughout this thesis we leverage cultural and regional factors on the one hand,

and institutional dynamics on the other, this framework encourages us to consider a wider spectrum of diverse but yet, interrelated sub-industries and institutions.

In the context of our analysis, the leadership production serves us as a forum to debate about the nature and goals of all of these social and institutional participants that are the subject of our research. From the "competitive" and "industrial" standpoint of view, we will assess how these participants balance formally rational concerns related to efficiency and effectiveness with substantively rational concerns placed in the sense of the community and values (Guthey 2012). Moreover, a production framework will be helpful in understanding how institutional pressures, financial considerations, and market demands shape the leadership goods and services which these leadership industries provide, and how they all affect the leadership concept itself. We will therefore contribute to the production of leadership framework by providing a close grasp of all the developmental, promotional, and organizational practices exercised by many actors in two regional contexts. We will describe the relationships that occur between these practices and the general understanding of the leadership they produce.

The production of leadership perspective is based on the interrelated connections between expectations associated with leadership theories, and competitive dynamics that exist in particular contexts where these theories are exhibited (Guthey 2012). While pursuing for-profit interests, most of the participants in the field of leadership production fuel with "taken-for-granted" characteristics of leadership to an extent where these various interests become no longer visible. In this sense, our job is to examine under which circumstances all of these theories, beliefs, and myths about leadership get promoted and why. The production of leadership not only encourages a variety of scholars to explore what is behind the promotion of various theories and beliefs, but also to investigate the interconnections that occur between the leadership construct and the conditions under which these theories are produced (Guthey 2012).

In his article "Fashion, Trends, and the Production of Leadership", Guthey advocates that the leadership concepts not only exhibit a form of influence, but also as a commercial good and a cultural ideal. These forms are further propagated by the leadership industries (Guthey 2012). According to this perspective, the leadership

concepts play the role of cultural objects that need to be interpreted and clarified, on one hand, while commercialized on the other. Firstly, these processes occur inside the theoretical scope of leadership production, only to be later displayed by the leadership industries itself (Guthey 2012). According to Guthey:

"The cultural field of leadership production consists of all of those actors and organizations that participate in struggles to define and interpret the concept of leadership by appealing to norms and expectations of formal, substantive, and affective rationality [...]. The leadership industries consist of those participants within this field that generate revenue by responding to and further promoting demand for leadership concepts, products and services."

The cultural field of leadership production consists of many various actors characterized by the same or distinct interests. Therefore, they contribute to the legitimacy and the cultural sensitivity of the leadership concept (Guthey 2012). Additionally, as suggested in the article, the production of leadership can aid the amount of over individualized and psychologized research on leadership by providing an alternative view (Fairhurst 2007). Also, the perspective can contribute to the popular debate on the function and objectives of organizational efforts as well as to provide a framework of how these initiatives should be administered and how to achieve a balance between effectiveness, values and overall well-being of society (Guthey 2012).

As explained earlier, promotion of leadership concepts, products and services is carried out by leadership industries. These industries are represented by the variety of mostly unrelated actors having very different origins and functions. The dissimilar characters and aspirations of these players contribute to the vagueness of the leadership concept. In order to clarify and reduce this ambiguity, these entities tend to seek legitimacy by re-defining and implementing leadership concepts in their own unique way (Guthey 2012). Gradually expanding the reach of leadership industries makes it difficult to apply regulatory standards or norms that could make this industry more institutionalized. It is confirmed later in our thesis, that both in Poland and UAE, anybody can proclaim himself as a provider of leadership services. In this sense, ambiguity of leadership concept may be helpful in establishing the specific market niche for these

actors. Nevertheless, the lack of "institutionalized code of practice" and a "clear occupational identity" will never aid leadership industries in gaining institutionalized legitimacy (Guthey 2012). In other words, the ambiguity of the leadership concept leads to the point in which all of these leadership providers differentiate themselves from one another. In this sense, participants "struggle" to leverage and prioritize the expectations of formal and substantive rationality. These struggles serve providers in many different ways: as a form of competition, as a mechanism for product differentiation and brand recognition, and finally in a way for building authority and recognizable expertise.

Furthermore, the uniqueness of leadership concepts may not only offer different alternatives, but can be utilized and attributed by these actors in a way to define and promote their own "best" and "true" leadership concept. Therefore, many of top industry actors reinforce their own resources to offer the full amplitude of products and services that are offered within every country they operate (Guthey 2012). Additionally, the lack of a general understanding of what distinguishes leadership, management and organizational development, only encourages the leadership industries to incorporate miscellaneous approaches to leadership development. In conclusion, these leadership development actors take part in a continuous struggle over legitimacy, dissemblance and advantage in the field of leadership production. This is particularly visible when providers in the field target audience by carefully scaling down leadership know-how to very handy list of character traits, habits, or catch-phrases. As it will be reflected and explained in our findings later, situations similar to these-- in which many different providers claim to have "the best" approach to the leadership practices on the market or promote the very unique way of delivering such products take place in the regional contexts we investigate.

Since its rise, leadership industries have gradually spread across new regional markets, and in some cases, the language spoken in these new markets has no equivalent for the word "leadership" (Guthey 2012). In the regions of Poland and the UAE this comes as an additional consideration that needs to be taken into account before analyzing the factual data. Both in Poland as well as in the UAE, leadership concept is relatively new, and the word "leadership" does not translate directly to the languages, or in a form that is misinterpreted. As a consequence this can have an effect on the understanding and

interpretation of western leadership concepts in these two regional contexts. Such considerations will be further investigated in the discussion part.

The manners in which leadership products are organized correspond to the production of other cultural goods and services. This is affirmed by the variety of distinct actors in the field of leadership production, and proves that leadership in different contexts is in fact composed of very different cultural and symbolic products and services. Therefore, the production of culture provides us with a framework for investigating the promotion of leadership concepts via these leadership industries.

We will turn now to the cultural perspectives on leadership development to collect insights on the strategies that are used to legitimize and differentiate the practices of leadership development across the culturally different regions.

3.2 CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We argue that the competitive dynamics of the leadership industries exert at least as much influence as cultural factors on the shape of leadership development practices in the contexts of Poland and the UAE. In order to explore the former, we turn our attention to the cross-cultural perspectives on leadership development, and then we review the production of culture and leadership to understand the processes of production, leadership development undergoes.

Even though people find culture pervasive and all-encompassing, and are constantly interacting with it on both an active and passive basis, this question about defining one's culture is rarely fully answered, evoking rather a moment of contemplation and an (often dubious) answer. Similar to leadership, the term culture, to an extent, takes many shapes and lacks a precise definition. For this reason, discussing culture from the perspective of the concept of leadership may not add clarification to its definition, but hopefully helps defining its scope. As mentioned earlier, the word and concept of culture take many shapes. We wish therefore to take a close look at the cultural aspect of leadership development in order to better understand the contexts we are dealing with. We discuss culture from two different points of view; firstly from a cross-cultural leadership perspective, and secondly from a production of culture perspective. The former has a national and regional approach to

culture, while the latter has an industrial approach to culture in which it is connected to the production of leadership.

3.2.1 CROSS CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ON LEADERSHIP

There is ample evidence that cultures of the world are getting more and more connected (R. House, Javidan, and Dorfman 2001). Today business and enterprise seamlessly traverse national and cultural boundaries. Cross-cultural psychology attempts to understand how individuals of different cultures interact with each other (Abbe et al, 2007). In exploring the dynamics of two very different, geographically distant countries such as Poland and Emirates, we find it crucial to investigate the field of cross-cultural leadership. This perspective approaches leadership as being fundamentally dependent on how leadership is perceived in context and how it relates to other cultures. In this section, we will elaborate on the most influential contributions on cross-cultural leadership. First, we provide a general introduction, and connect the relevance of cross-cultural leadership to our contexts through the findings of the GLOBE study. Hereafter, we review some of the contemporary critiques of what can be termed the conventional view of cross-cultural leadership.

1) Project GLOBE

We chose the GLOBE study instead of Hofstede's framework, as the GLOBE study contextualizes leadership effectiveness and addresses the issue of the universal application of leadership behaviors versus culturally endorsed leadership attributes. Also, it is more complex, large scale, and statistically more valid than Hofstede's framework. The Global leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness research program (from here we refer to it as the GLOBE study) is unquestionably the single most ambitious study ever conducted to date on the area of culture and leadership. Deliberately executed in this sense to overcome the potential bias in the American-dominated field of leadership research, the study examined 62 cultures across 3 industries (Financial Services, Food Processing and Telecommunications), and uniting the efforts of 170 investigators (R. J. House 2004). They have studied 17,300 managers in 951 organizations to develop an empirically based theory in attempt to describe how culture relates to societal, organizational and leadership effectiveness. Moreover, they tested 27 hypotheses over a

five year time span from 1992 to 1997, generating the most extensive study to date in the field. It serves not only to introduce a contextualize perspective of culture for this study, but also to form the base for the discussion of universal applicability of leadership.

As a result of complementary interviews and group discussions, the GLOBE study defines culture as "shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations of meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members collectives that are transmitted across generations" (R. J. House 2004). Moreover, the Globe Study examined leadership from the followers' point of view and built on Hofstede's original four dimensions (1980), albeit renamed, and added five new cultural dimensions (for a total of nine), and six global leadership behaviors.

The identified cultural dimensions in the GLOBE study are: Future Orientation; Gender Egalitarianism; Assertiveness; Humane Orientation; In-Group Collectivism; Institutional Collectivism; Performance Orientation; Power Concentration vs. Decentralization; and Uncertainty Avoidance. Collectively, the core GLOBE study's cultural dimensions reflect not only the dimensions of Hofstede's and Trandis's value-belief theories but also McClelland's theory of human motivation and economic development (McClelland 1985 cited in R. J. House 2004).

In view of the fact that we are embracing two different countries in our study, the table below exhibits and compares the scores of both the Eastern Europe cluster and Middle East cluster. Inconveniently, the UAE was not studied in the GLOBE study, and we therefore extrapolate and submit the scores provided in the table from the neighboring countries due to their strong historical, cultural, geographical and geopolitical proximity. The Middle East cluster includes Kuwait and Qatar (both pertain to GCC), Morocco, Turkey, and Egypt.

EASTERN EUROPE   **MIDDLE EAST**
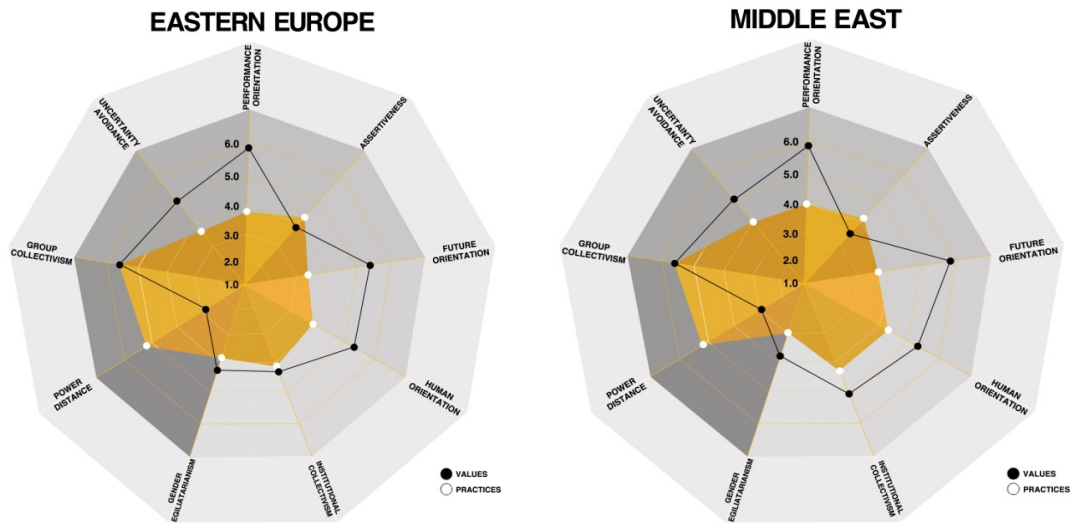
The GLOBE study measures both cultural practices and values, that is, respectively, the way things actually are, and the way things should be from the point of view of the interviewees. The measurements are at the organizational and societal levels of analysis (R. J. House 2004, p.29). As indicated above in the figure, the solid line draws connections between the scores of the cultural practices, and the yellow area draws connections between the scores for the cultural values. In general, a glance at the figures presented reveals a degree of similarity in the scores for both cultural practices and values of the dimensions in both clusters. A closer look reveals that, on the one hand, the society practices' scores in Eastern Europe (in particular, Poland) are lower on future orientation, institutional collectivism, and human orientation, while it is significantly higher on Gender Egalitarianism[1]. On the other hand, society values' scores in the same cluster (Poland) are only lower on Future Orientation, and yet higher on Gender Egalitarianism. The other dimensions' scores to a certain degree are comparable among the two clusters.

The GLOBE study examined these dimensions in order to uncover the extent to which these are linked to the universally endorsed leadership qualities and actions that contribute to effective leadership. In the following section, a cross-cultural perspective on leadership will be reviewed.

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[1] The empirical findings of GLOBE study of each country are categorized in 3-5 bands that collect the countries which share

2) Cross cultural leadership.

Although the concept of leadership is contingent and the views of its importance vary across cultures, the GLOBE study as mentioned earlier, determined six major global leadership dimensions, which were measured through a questionnaire containing 112 leadership items (R. J. House 2004, p. 39). The study attempts to empirically establish the so called culturally endorsed implicit leadership theories (CLT) based on the implicit theory of leadership (ILT) to stress the fact that there are shared conceptions based on culture, i.e. members of given cultures share common observations and values concerning what constitutes effective and ineffective leadership. Hence, under the first GLOBE research conference where over 50 researchers from different countries met to develop a collective understanding of the project, the GLOBE accomplished in consensus to apply a working definition of leadership as "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members" (R. J. House 2004).

The six CLT leadership dimensions are:
a) Charismatic/Value-based Leadership,
b) Team-Oriented Leadership,
c) Participative Leadership,
d) Human Oriented Leadership,
e) Autonomous Leadership,
f) Self-Protective Leadership.

In general, the GLOBE study found that the first four dimensions are reported to contribute to outstanding leadership, while the remaining two dimensions are reported to impede outstanding leadership. However, the challenge facing the academics is to develop a consensus regarding the definition and conceptualization of leadership. In contrast, most individuals have their own ideas about the nature of leaders and leadership and have little trouble indicating who they believe are leaders in business, government, or other domains and why (R. J. House 2004). Hanges, et al. assert that by knowing the content of an individual's leadership belief system, one could predict whether an individual would perceive another individual as an effective or ineffective leader, or even

a moral or immoral leader. This is exactly the problem that faces these regions, as the perception of leadership development's effectiveness is yet not fully understood or proven. Consequently, the legitimacy of the industry overall is put into question.

Poland is classified into the Eastern Europe cluster, while we assume that the UAE would have enough similar characteristics to be compared to the Middle East cluster. According to the scores noted in the findings of the project, the Eastern Europe cluster, which includes Poland, has Charismatic/Value based and Team Oriented CLT Leadership dimensions which are reported to be the most important dimensions for effective leadership. Participative- and Human-Oriented Leadership are viewed positively, but not as important as the first two CLT dimensions. Autonomous Leadership is viewed in a neutral to slightly positive manner, making the Eastern Europe cluster the highest ranking of all clusters for Autonomous leadership. Self-Protective leadership is reported to be slightly negative (R. J. House 2004, p. 684). The most noteworthy result is that in comparison to other clusters' absolute scores, the Eastern Europe cluster is ranked as one of lowest clusters for Participative leadership, and one of the highest clusters for Self-protective leadership. The latter proclaims that the Eastern European countries carry a profile supporting leaders who are somewhat Charismatic/Value-Based, Team-Oriented, Humane-Oriented (but is her or his own person), who does not particularly believe in the effectiveness of Participative leadership, and is not reluctant to engage in Self-Protective behaviors if necessary.

On the other hand, the Middle East cluster is found to contain a number of striking differences in comparison to other clusters. It is noted that although the CLT leadership dimensions are viewed as contributing to outstanding leadership including Charismatic/Value-Based and Team Oriented leadership, these above mentioned dimensions have the lowest scores and ranks. Participative leadership is viewed positively but again scores low. Human-Oriented leadership is perceived positively but only about equally to other clusters. Self-Protective is viewed as an almost neutral factor; however, it has the second-highest score and rank. Again, the results and ranks are in comparison with all the other clusters. Moreover, the researchers administering a version of the research in that region contained additional leadership attributes not found in the final GLOBE-administered questionnaire (Dastmalchian, Javidan, and Alam 2001). These

leadership dimensions were labeled Familial, Humble, and Faithful (R. J. House 2004, p.696) which most likely were defused from the Islamic religion on how to understand the world and leadership (Hagan, 1995, cited in House 2004). The latter proclaims that the Middle East countries carry culturally-unique elements of a more traditional leadership profile that endorses leadership attributes such as familial, humble, faithful, self-protective, and considerate.

A review of the literature reveals that there has been much written on the topics of Leadership and Culture but there is not enough interaction of the topics and a lot of the literature is embedded a Western Perspective. More needs to be written from the prospective of the Arab and Polish, and also the industry.

Guthey and Jackson in their article "Cross Cultural Leadership Revisited" expressed a rather sophisticated criticism of what can be termed the conventional cross-cultural model, which has most extensively been developed and promoted by Geert Hofstede. The authors stress an important point, which previous handbook chapters and literature failed to notice, that cross-cultural leadership has become a contradiction in terms. In other words, the central idea in the vast majority of cross-cultural research- the idea of culture and its determining influence – is at odds with the notion of leadership itself (Guthey & Jackson, Bryman et al. 2011). The basic rationale behind this reasoning is that any notion of leadership is meant to exert some form of influence on followers, which is in accordance with the earlier depicted definition of leadership in Project GLOBE's, while culture has come to indicate that it constrains and influences leadership beyond its power or range. They assert that "The near-exclusive focus in cross-cultural research on leadership is the manner in which leaders are […] shaped and molded […] by the constraints of the (surrounding) cultural context" (Guthey & Jackson, Bryman et al. 2011). The constraints are not only culture, but also laws, regulations, governance structures, social norms, organizational politics and procedures. Another issue criticized is the sampling from multicultural countries and the decision of which sample to acknowledge as country representing. For instance, the cultural diversity in the UAE context can be an issue in term of sampling, as over 80% of the country's population is represented by an expatriate workforce from a wide range of countries. Given that Poland is considered to have a homogeneous culture, the concern of subcultures is almost nonexistent and

therefore can be neglected in this. Furthermore, it seems that the Poles are actively involved in the process of reshaping the ideas, images, and attitudes through which they understand their world in order to detach from the former soviet influence that governed the country, the same way as the American business leaders' endeavors to discredit new liberalism and undercut the legitimacy of organized labor (Fones-Wolf 1994).

Guthey and Jackson noted that the cross-cultural research has generally overlooked how the dynamics of leadership shape and determine the cultures which supposedly shape and influence leadership. Hence, they argue that leadership plays in enabling, constraining and changing culture, in other words, leadership influences culture factors right back (Guthey & Jackson, Bryman et al. 2011). Also, they argue that the notion of creolization, where cultures inevitably mix and mingle creating new, unexpected and hybrid cultural forms, artifacts, and identities, might have inhibiting characters on determining the cultural influences on the effectiveness of leadership. We evaluate this argument as a valid observation to our scope of research. As researchers, we accept this critique and agree upon the fact that leadership and culture have a reciprocal influence on each other.

Ailon-Souday and Kunda assert that ethnographic studies of global organizations suggest that members should be viewed as active constructors of their global reality; national identity is one way through which they exert their agency (Ailon-Souday and Kunda 2003). In Ailon's book "Global ambitions and local identities", she explores a new methodological realm that shifts away from the fixation on the cultural dimensions and contributes a new way to understand the complexity of the relationship between leadership and culture (Ailon 2007). By means of an intensive ethnographic study on the merger of two High-Tech companies, she concludes that national identity is best understood as "a symbolic resource that is actively and creatively constructed by organizational members to serve social struggles which are triggered by globalization" (Ailon-Souday and Kunda 2003). However, Ailon's research problematizes the conventional cross-cultural paradigm, because the cultural dimensions would not be reliable as independent variables for the comparison of cultural influences on leaders and leadership, if organizational members are able to influence and shape the construction of the dimensions of culture according to their needs. Toward this end, this perspective

indicates that national culture and identities do not consist of some core stable values that can be measured and predicted.

In sum, the cross-cultural perspective defines the local culture as the main determinant of the leadership. In the critique, we saw that there are different opinions that oppose the cross-cultural philosophy. We brought up this discussion in order to form the theoretical base for our argument about the fact that the practices of the leadership industries are similar despite any cultural differences.

3.2.2 DEFINING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AS A CULTURAL OBJECT

In this section, we discuss the industrial approach to culture, where cultural products are commercialized. Griswold highlights that any discussion of culture must begin with a definition (Griswold 2008). Since our approach is neither evaluative nor expansive, but restricted to the substantive, we use the working definition of culture defined by Griswold in her book *Cultures and societies in a changing world* in order to identify the leadership development as a cultural object:

"Culture refers to the expressive side of human life—in other words, to behavior, objects, and ideas that appear to express, or to stand for, something else. This is the case whether we are talking about explicit or implicit culture."

In her book, Griswold discusses the link between culture and society, and distinguishes between the community's culture and its social structure, emphasizing the interconnection between the two, not only for analysis purposes, but also to conceptualize how culture and the social world create meaning (Griswold 2008). According to her, a cultural object may be defined as shared significance embodied in a socially meaningful expression that is audible, visible, tangible, or that can be articulated. By this, we are capable of separating some part of the complex system of culture (the cultural object) in an attempt to comprehend it better. For the purpose of understanding leadership development as a part of a broader cultural system, we focus on leadership development in specific contexts and therefore identify leadership development as the cultural object which has a particular interest in the culture, that in our case are Poland and the UAE.

We find it relevant to understand what Griswold describes as the "Cultural diamond" model, which serves as an accounting device intended to encourage a fuller understanding of any cultural object's relationship to the social world (Griswold 2008).
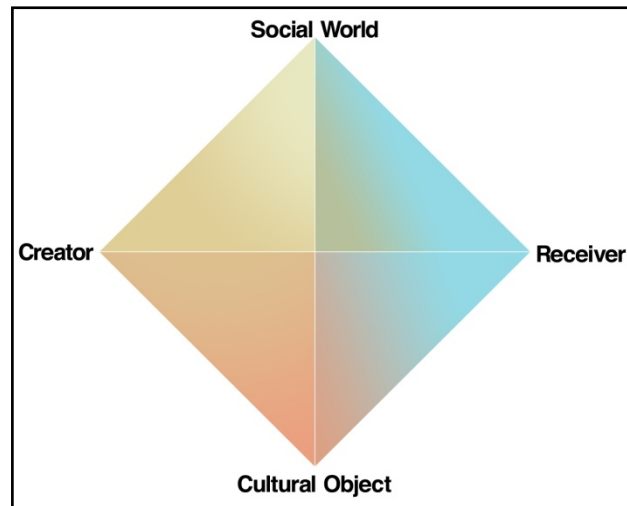
However, the model does not explain what the relationship between any of the points should be, but only that there is a relationship and the texture of that relationship lies as much in links as in the four points. Griswold distinguishes culture from nature based on various definitions of culture as made by human and constitutes the fact intrinsic in the various definitions. Therefore, the creator element in the cultural diamond corresponds to the creative scholars of leadership development theory. Since humans for practical and/or spiritual purposes create the cultural object, we use the cultural diamond to identify our area of study and thus we can identify the leadership development as a cultural object, which is consumed by an audience. This audience (or receivers) represents not only the participants, but also the organizations who deliver leadership development products and services by transforming the creators' work into vendible packages, which allows them the role of being active meaning makers (Griswold 2008). The above-mentioned elements are vigorously tied to political, social, economic and cultural patterns in a specific context, which can be identified as the social world. From this model, we are now able to separate leadership development as a socially constructed cultural object from the context (the Polish and Emirati), which will facilitate a better understanding of the culture as a whole.

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The discussion and elaboration on the concept of leadership as a socially constructed cultural object opens up the door to discuss institutionalization in a general term. In this sense, this leads us to the next step where we review the literature on the production of culture perspective.

3.2.3 The production of culture

This perspective tracks how the symbolic elements of culture are shaped within the system which they are created, distributed, evaluated, taught, and preserved. This implies that from a production perspective, the commercial, organizational, and institutional dynamics take center stage (Peterson and Anand 2004). Hirsch advocates that the cultural industries are collectively established from a network of organizations that spans from creators to brokers, through the cultural products' producers and media outlets (Hirsch 2000). Moreover, most of the research that covers cultural products was brought out around areas such as art, music, cinema and literature. Guthey maintains that the leadership development providers commercialize leadership development as a cultural commodity (Guthey 2012). Therefore, the providers form a part of the culture industry. We review the production of culture perspective in order to understand how elements of culture are produced and shaped.

The argument that culture is not only commercially produced, but it is also heavily influenced by the process in which it is produced, was shared in Peterson's and Hirsch's work on the production of culture (Peterson and Anand 2004). Using this rationale, authors such as Peterson and Hirsch have developed a model that serves to apprehend how elements of culture are produced and shaped in a set of industries. In the search for the relation between culture and social structure, Peterson identifies three analytically distinctive perspectives (Peterson 1976):

1) Culture and society are autonomous systems which evolve independently according to quite different rules.
2) Social structure creates culture.
3) Culture creates social structure.

The first perspective was generally embraced by researchers who studied fashion, styles of art, and collective behavior, while the second is perceived as a materialistic view due to the primacy of political and economic factors in defining the social structure, which in return is reflected in the analysis of culture. The third is perceived as "ideal" position starting from the premise that "in the beginning there was a word" (Peterson 1976), in other words, a set of monolithic abstract values determines the shape of social structures (Peterson and Anand 2004). Interestingly, Peterson advocates that it is more strategic to investigate what characteristics are shared by the three contending perspectives, rather than polarizing around the differences (Peterson 1976). As such, he asserts that the production of culture perspective examines the processes by which elements of culture are produced in the social context, where symbol-system production is most self-consciously the center of activity, confirming the fact that both culture and social structure are in constant change.

However, Peterson and Anand reviewed a number of studies that appeared after Peterson's initial work, which together illustrate the emerging production of culture perspective insofar as they a) focus on the expressive aspects of culture rather than normative components, b) they explore the processes of symbolic production, c) they use the tools of analysis developed in the study of organization, and d) they make possible comparisons across the diverse sites of culture creation (Peterson and Anand 2004). Based on the former, which assesses the success of the initial formulations provided in *The Production of Culture: A Prolegomenon*, Peterson and Anand introduced a six-facet model of production. The facets of the model are Technology, Law and Regulation, Industry Structure, Organizational Structure, occupational Careers, and Market. As this model helped Peterson to better understand how Rock music became the dominant form of U.S. popular music (Peterson and Anand 2004), we intend to utilize the model to understand how the leadership development industry dynamics are shaped. This might help us to distinguish between the industrial setups in the regional contexts we are studying in this paper.

Toward this end, the production of culture perspective is notable for treating cultural products as highly ambiguous, which implies that the interpretation of their meaning is essential for their consumption (Hirsch 1972, cited in Guthey 2012). As a

matter of fact, not everybody shares the same interpretation; a variety of often-contrasting meanings are often attached to cultural products, thereby creating business opportunities in the production of culture fields, like the leadership industry.

3.2.4 Non cultural influences

As mentioned, the conduct and formation of leadership is a complex process. Therefore, we may acknowledge the fact that culture is not the sole element that influences the shaping of leadership. There are many other non-cultural factors that may affect leaders' behavior, for instance geopolitical factors, military situation, political pressure, demography, climate, international competition, level of technology, regulation, and future orientation. Hence, the existence of these factors can cause bias in our research. However, although the inclusion of these would bring the understanding of the concept of leadership in our regional contexts to a higher end, it is worthy to stress that this widespread bundle of factors is neither easy to measure nor the scope of our research.

Toward this end, we turn now our focus to the neo-institutionalism and its critique.

3.4 NEO-INSTITUTIONALISM

We argue that in the contexts of Poland and the UAE the competitive dynamics of the leadership industries exert at least as much influence as cultural factors on the shape of leadership development practices. Hence, we introduce the concepts of neo-institutionalism and isomorphism in order to build the theoretical backdrop for the discussion of the standardization of practices. We find it necessary to acknowledge neo-institutionalism as a valid perspective, since the critique profoundly refers to the production of leadership, and therefore to the scope of our research. However, we do not intend to describe the neo-institutionalism in its entirety as the amount of research on this topic is very vast, not relevant and beyond the field of our analysis. However, we will shortly review the key features of neo-institutionalism.

Neo-institutionalism is a theory that focuses on developing a sociological view of institutions. More precisely, neo-institutionalism investigates how institutions interact with each other, and how this interaction affects the society in general. This theory explains why and how institutions emerge in a certain way within a given context. One of the features of the neo-institutionalism argues that institutions develop to become isomorphic (similar) across organizations (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Furthermore, organizations are highly dependent and embedded in social and political environments. Thus, their practices are a reflection or response to rules, beliefs, and the conventions that exist within the wider environment (Powell 2007).

Neo-institutional theory is based on the premise that companies in order to survive and succeed must establish legitimacy within the specific sector. Paradoxically, as these organizations strive to change and legitimize themselves, isomorphic forces drive organizations to become more similar (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Organizations converge on similar practices and behaviors appear similar over time. The appearance of change toward homogeneity is explored through the isomorphic change theory, which identifies three forces: coercive, normative and mimetic. These forces explain how behaviors and practices become isomorphically accepted in the organizational field. Coercive isomorphism derives from the political influence and organizational legitimacy, often conveyed through laws, regulations, and accreditation processes. Normative isomorphism is associated with professional values. Finally, mimetic isomorphism is copying or mimicking behaviors that are the result of organizational response to uncertainty (DiMaggio and Powell 1983).

While researching the leadership development providers in both regional contexts, we note that the attitudes toward standardization of practices confirm the premises of neo-institutionalism and isomorphic forces that drive organizations to become more similar. Unfortunately, according the critique of neo-institutionalism, these premises fail to account for the broader perspective.

3.4.1 Critique of neo-institutionalism

While reviewing the recent literature on the neo-institutionalism, we called our attention to the critiques of certain aspects of this theory that relate to the scope of our research.

The foundation of the institutional theory says that organizations adopt processes and structures for their productive value. This view was criticized by Suddaby, who pointed out that organizations adapt such processes for their meaning rather than productive value (Suddaby 2010). Furthermore, he affirms that institutional theory failed to focus on understanding in what way organizations attach meaning to the elements of their own environment (Suddaby 2010). Institutional theory concentrated on the productive values, even though, the notions of the culture and meaning encouraged institutional theorists in the first place (Suddaby et al. 2010). The notion of meaning, or as named by Scott (1994), the *ideational* aspects of organizations - rationalized myths and legitimacy, were considerably outweighed by the structural implications of isomorphism (Suddaby 2010). Suddaby underscores the importance of the context. Geographical environment and the type of organization explain how institutional pressure itself can influence the organizations, and that the context is far away from being a passive variable. Instead, he explains that the context is shaped by the "local institutionalized patterns" that all the participants can utilize for their own interests. In sum, Suddaby encourages future researchers to deconstruct "taken-for-granted" assumptions about organizations and revaluate these constructs in the context of the fresh perspective in understanding organizations as "interpretive systems through which we interpret values, symbols, and meanings that exist at broader level" (Suddaby 2010).

There is a need for research on understanding why institutional structures are made to emerge as legitimate, and how social environment can appear inside organizations. The research focused on the "symbolic", "cultural", and "value-based elements" of an organizational environment could evidently contribute to the studies on institutionalism. By referring to the institutional tradition, Suddaby explains that

organizations are the product of "common understandings" and "shared interpretations" which norms are of the collective activity.

Furthermore, the critique to neo-institutionalism has its direct relation to the production of leadership framework described earlier in this chapter. In his latest article "Leadership Fashions and Trends", Guthey induces to consider a wider perspective of the social environment. He explains that neo-institutional approach to the creation of leadership concepts isolates the norms and expectations as the main criteria for constituting the legitimacy of leadership myths. However, the neo-institutional approach fails to address the very different nature of these expectations, which lead a generation of new leadership concepts. In this sense, the norms of rationality cannot entirely account for to the various expectations attached to leadership.

As confirmed and asserted by Guthey, the emphasis on the formal rationality is very significant in the contemporary studies on leadership. Instead, he points out that various approaches to leadership can appeal to the norms of substantive and affective rationality in the current academic works on institutionalism (Guthey work in progress 2013). Formal rationality refers to the calculation and adoption of the most efficient means to specified ends. Such an over-concern for efficient achievement of the outcomes relates to the performance orientation. Substantive rationality turns attention to the purpose and meaning, and judges the means and actions taken according to their congruence with a system of values. Finally, affective rationality addresses the emotions and feelings while validating social actions (Guthey work in progress 2013). It is important to highlight that all the above mentioned rationalities generate expectations that are connected to leadership. These manifestations take the form of the very specific beliefs or anticipations that the certain actions will take place. In addition to what has been elaborated earlier in this chapter, norms of formal rationality generate the expectations about the ability of leadership to improve performance, and deliver results. Norms of substantive rationality generate expectations that are linked to the delivery of "moral order", "collective purpose" and "alignment between means, ends, and deeply held values and beliefs". And finally, norms of affective rationality generate expectations related to reshaping bureaucratic practices and structures by appealing to "psychological", "emotional", and "spiritual" needs (Guthey work in progress 2013).

Such expectations meet the supply from the various leadership participants. By taking the shape of technical, social, moral, and effective prescriptions, all of them directly address various expectations. This highlights the very distinct nature of the expectations that later shape new approaches to leadership development.

In his approach, Guthey presented a framework that aims to "correct the formally rational bias of institutional theory." As continual interaction between the norms of rationality generates expectations that shape the demand for new leadership concepts, such an alteration toward norms of substantive and affective rationality could depict that processes of institutionalism achieve taken-for-granted legitimacy not only through technical procedures and bureaucratic structures, but also cultural discourses, higher order beliefs and values, even emotional and spiritual ideals (Guthey work in progress 2013). As a result, current research on leadership would turn its focus on the culture, meaning, and values in the studies of institutionalism.

It is important to highlight that various expectations and norms attached to leadership do not always support and reinforce themselves, sometimes to the extent when they can appear contradictory to each other even within the same leadership context. The reasoning behind such an argument is the gradually increasing amount of the distinct participants in the field of leadership production, who wrestle in a continuous battle to produce, promote and sell leadership concepts. This further contributes to the ambiguity of leadership concept itself.

The "extended" view on leadership has been confirmed by the GLOBE studies. The variation of different leadership attributes addressed by the GLOBE indicates countless expectations all around the world. Furthermore, the outcome of these studies demonstrated the approval for the importance of "ethical considerations" and characteristics for efficient leadership in cross-cultural environments. Many participants in the field of leadership production expect leadership to ensure that the "imperatives to boost productivity are counterbalanced by moral imperatives", and that the "ethical values and principles are not considered secondary to efficiency, organizational performance, or economic growth" (Guthey work in progress 2013). These various attributes and the behaviors which were addressed by GLOBE have been explained as the manifestation of the most important societal norms, and created by the group of cultural dimension in order to shape leadership concepts in different contexts.

The critique to this rational and the overused neo-institutionalism approach can clearly contribute to contextualizing and directing our research agenda. It can help us better determine the objectives of the theories and techniques utilized by the leadership industries, as well as to better understand the contextual factors that drive the popularity of certain leadership concepts. In the broader perspective, Guthey's article underlines that leadership development is not entirely about performance, but also about providing meaning. The social influence of leadership is not only goal-oriented, but should be understood as a cultural product. In fact, a large part of the leadership industries already promote leadership as a "moral imperative" and "personal ideal". In other words, the key to explain the various leadership industry dynamics and its constant flow of the new approaches and techniques lies in understanding the social, institutional, and commercial factors.

The critique of neo-institutionalism opens up for a further discussion on the motivations behind the leadership practices in both contexts. These will be further presented in the discussion chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR - EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

We argue that the competitive dynamics of the leadership industries exert at least as much influence as cultural factors on the shape of leadership development practices in the contexts of Poland and the UAE. Having discussed the theoretical foundations of this study, this chapter presents the empirical findings. Our thesis aims to compare and contrast the leadership development practices, and the manner in which they are organized commercially in Poland and the UAE. In order to analyze and investigate whether these factors make the practices similar or different, we need to identify and interpret them. This will create the framework for a broader discussion on the topic of leadership practices, through which we will draw conclusions.

The initial part of the chapter is organized into three sections. In the first part, we provide a description of the two countries, Poland and the UAE. Additionally, we focus our attention on the cultural aspects of the country and leadership industry. The extensive description provides with a general knowledge about the cultural and industrial characters of these regions, and reinforces us with a solid foundation for further analysis of the findings.

In the second part, we categorize all actors that contribute to the legitimacy of the concept of leadership in Poland, and the UAE. More precisely, we separate them into four main groups: one-person coaching firms, local leadership development firms, multinational enterprises, and institutions. In the subsequent part, we recognize and differentiate all of our interviewees and the companies they represent. This in particular should give us a solid overview, and a glimpse at the state of leadership industry in Poland and the UAE.

The third part of the chapter consists of empirical findings, collected during the interviews with eleven consultants, representing ten companies, and two scholars in both Poland and the UAE. We conducted the extensive interviews with each of the consultants, covering the entire scope of their work and interrelation with the environment, more specifically the local culture. This allowed us to identify eighteen factors that influence the leadership development practices in these regions. The explanation of the factors fully

describes the nature of the influence, including exact statements of the interviewees, and our interpretation incorporating how these factors may affect leadership practices. Furthermore, some issues required more of our attention and clarification. For this purpose, we included external data into our analysis: company documents, reports, and frameworks. Such approach gave us clear overview of the factors, and confidence in the reliability of the collected material.

4.1 COUNTRY DESCRIPTION

Here, we provide a country description over Poland and the UAE in order to introduce the contexts from several perspectives.

4.1.1 COUNTRY OVERVIEW OF POLAND

Poland, officially the Republic of Poland (Polish: Rzeczpospolita Polska) is a country located in Central Europe. Republic of Poland has a population of 38.5 million people, which makes it 34th the most populous country in the world and 1st the most populous post-communistic member of the European Union. Polish "Solidarity" revolt in 1980 led to the breakup of the Soviet Union, and subsequently, to the gain of independence by all the former satellite countries in 1991. Poland became a republic and multi-party democracy, taking the first steps to transform its economy towards a free market and western world model by introducing many reforming policies. This in particular, helped it to advance from agriculture-based economy into a modern, industrialized country that currently faces challenges of the service and information economies. In 2004 Poland joined the European Union, then in 2007 abolished passport and immigration control and became a part of Schengen area, safeguarding the longest border of the European Union on the east.

The collapse of communistic ideology caused a wide enthusiasm in Poland, as well as contributed to the replacement of all social institutions. Slow development of new institutions created a gap between people's expectation and wish of stability, and the surrounding environment. Emergence of privately held companies, and abandonment of principles such as guaranteed labor and full employment, have greatly influenced staff management, strategies and organizational forms (Zinovieva, Horn, and Roe 1993). As the

result of this transition process, some social and business practices seem to be very different from those in western societies and this will be further discussed in next sections.

After the collapse of the USSR, the power of newly introduced reforms and political restructuring paid off nearly twenty years later. When EU member countries fell into a global recession that began in 2008, only Poland's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) kept growing. Evidently, economic growth slowed down, but even at the lowest point, Polish economy was still expanding. According to Ernst & Young, its 2012 European attractiveness survey claimed that "although many countries remain in economic difficulty, Poland, by contrast, is enjoying dynamic growth". As reported by Rafal Szajkowski, team lead for the services section at Poland's Foreign Investment Department, there are three reasons for this economic success: large amounts of EU funds aimed to improve infrastructure and other projects, a high level of internal consumption during the crisis, and high amounts of foreign investment looking for savings in Poland as a more affordable alternative.

4.1.2 CULTURAL ASPECTS OF POLAND

As a result of the Holocaust, and post-World War II conflict and expulsion of German and Ukrainian populations, Poland has become intensely Roman Catholic. In 2007, 88.4% of the population[2] belonged to the Catholic Church. Poland currently remains the most devoutly religious country in Europe. Throughout the years, the influence of the Catholic Church affected many essential characteristics of Polish culture: high power distance, collective values, uncertainty avoidance, and the hierarchical-paternalist-authority-principled leadership style. The influence of religion on Polish culture and the production of leadership will be described more precisely in the discussion part.

According to Smith, Dugan, and Trompenaars, just after the dissolution of USSR, there was a major dividing line in approaches to management between eastern and western Europe. While western Europeans preferred loyal involvement and equality represented by egalitarian commitment, eastern counterparts favored autonomy

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[2] „Concise statistical yearbook of Poland 2009"

represented by utilitarian involvement and conservative hierarchies respectively (Smith, Dugan, and Trompenaars 1996). Interestingly, former Soviet countries were identified as having: centralized leadership and communist domination; dual ethical standard (honesty in personal life, deception in professional life); and nepotism (Luthans, Patrick, and Luthans 1995). In summary, eastern European cluster is highly group oriented, and dominated by hierarchical practices. On the one hand, managers put high value on local societies becoming more performance oriented, and less hierarchical and male-dominated, while on the other hand, they wish to keep high group collectivism. It is worth mentioning that there is a strong desire to decrease power distance and uncertainty, amplify future orientation, and elevate performance orientation.

Culture of Poland has been identified as particularistic, specific, non-achievement oriented, polychromic, medium to high individualistic and outer directed (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 2000). Drawing on the perspective of all the post-Soviet satellite countries, leadership styles in Poland were the least rigid and autocratic, and managerial decision-making was the least centralized and bureaucratic (Balaton 1993). Workforce in Poland, was "the most difficult to handle" and "caused the most problems" (Markóczy 1993). Additionally, Markoczy's survey of western investors identified four problematic areas among companies in Poland: communication, decision-making processes, task definition and some forms of personnel policies.

According to GLOBE project data, Polish culture is characterized by high uncertainty avoidance, institutional collectivism, gender egalitarianism, and low future orientation. This will be further discussed in the discussion part, as GLOBE research provided us with a large amount of insights on Polish culture

It is important to note that the period of communist rule has left a large mark on Polish people's mentality and culture, visible even now. Moreover, this post-Soviet cultural relic and following transformation and adaptation of western values, created a sort of "double social mentality" – people who lived through communism and a new, pro-western generation that knows it only from the books. This cultural form is under the process of change, and creates great challenges to managers in all the industries. The

post-socialist society with new market policies and flourishing economy creates new managerial roles to be fulfilled, as well as creates new demands for the leadership.

4.1.3 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY IN POLAND

There has been not much research done in the area of developing leadership skills in Poland, as well as not much research on the current structure and character of leadership industry in Poland. However, we discovered a considerable lack of role models in both the private, and public sector that was frequently reported in our interviews. According to DDI report (Boatman, Wellins, and Beym 2011), Polish organizations invested significantly less in leadership development processes in comparison to organizations around the world in 2011. However, they planned to increase spending on these processes in 2012 and 2013 to about the same rate as their global equivalents. Increased spending on leadership development gives us an idea about the lack of leadership competencies in Poland, and ascending demand for such services. The emergence of companies offering leadership development services has been very noticeable since Poland joined the European Union. Mostly because of the substantial amount of finances, transferred from European Social and Regional Development funds to support employment and raise economic well-being in almost every sector. Financial resources have been distributed among prospective companies aiming to provide leadership development services, and the companies that already provided such services. Due to this fact, leadership industry grew significantly and became a very competitive market.

It is worth mentioning, that very often, leadership development practices appear under the jargon name of "coaching", more specifically, "business coaching" - a widely recognized term. This misconception creates a lack of understanding of what in fact constitutes leadership practices.

4.1.4 COUNTRY OVERVIEW OF THE UAE

The United Arab Emirates, UAE (in Arabic الإمارات العربية المتحدة) is a federation of seven states formed in 1971 by the then Trucial States after independence from Britain. Although each state maintains a large degree of independence, the UAE is governed by the Supreme Council of Rulers made up of the seven emirs, who appoint the prime minister and the cabinet[3]. The UAE's per capita GDP is on par with those of leading West European nations. Its high oil revenues and its moderate foreign policy stance have allowed the UAE to play a vital role in the affairs of the region and thus it became an appealing market for foreign labor, creating one of most diverse cosmopolitan countries in the world. For more than three decades, oil and global finance drove the UAE's economy. However, in 2008-09, the confluence of falling oil prices, collapsing real estate prices, and the international banking crisis hit the UAE especially hard[4].

The government is authoritarian and all emirates have their own secular and Islamic law for civil, criminal, and high courts. Islam is the official state religion and the largest of the UAE. Despite the fact that the government follows a policy of tolerance toward other religions and rarely interferes in the activities of non-Muslims (Department Of State. 2010)[5], the social life is very much influenced by the values of the official religion and many Islamic laws are mandatory and must be followed by all residents, no matter one's beliefs; for instance, mandatory fasting from sunrise to sunset during the holy month of Ramadan, and refraining from showing affection in public places. Failure to comply with these laws may result in imprisonment.

4.1.5 CULTURAL ASPECTS OF THE UAE

The UAE foreign affairs ministry has published "*Managing People in The United Arab Emirates*", a short description of the country and a guidance report for the newcomers. In its introduction, it is stated: "Since you have reached for this guide, it probably means that you are interested in understanding how to manage people in the UAE as you are about to handle this challenging task soon." According to the report, investigations about how work values influence the decision styles of both local and

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[3] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14703998
[4] https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ae.html
[5] http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2010/148850.htm

expatriate managers working in the UAE show that trust, personal relationships and social networks are key values to be successful in business activities. Some of the skills such as strong willingness to go overseas, specific knowledge about the culture, strong communication skills and the ability to understand cultural dynamics (Barhem, Younies, and Smith 2011) are important skills for global managers. Interestingly, the report explicitly states that foreign managers have to get rid of their perception of conducting business in their home countries, because those techniques and way of doing business cannot be automatically applied in the UAE.

To describe the country, the UAE foreign affairs ministry used Hofstede's cultural dimensions to define its organizational boundaries. The country is presented as having a large power distance, collective society, masculine country, having a low level of tolerance to uncertainty, and long-term oriented.

Being a collective society, Arabs place a high emphasis on not losing face; they are less egalitarian and more confrontational and direct (Bogdan et al. 2012). In a business context, there is a clear line between managers and subordinates in Arab cultures and Arab superiors are perceived like fathers to their subordinates. In other words, Arabs are used to the directive and paternalistic management style. What is more, the report addresses a serious issue about the lack of employees' initiatives due to the Father-Son like type of relationship established between the managers and subordinates, where the father commands, requires respect, and looks after the children. Employees are doing exactly what they are told to, as both doing less and more would be to disobey their boss.

The social, political, and financial sphere is strongly influenced by the tribal values which are imposed by Islam and family heritage. The values and beliefs are mainly derived from the family background, gender, and religion. In such a male-oriented culture, women often find themselves in a second position when it comes to work and business careers. In fact, given the modern infrastructure and life qualities comparable to the west, research shows that very few women in the UAE had an opportunity to develop leadership competences in their childhood (Madsen 2010).

4.1.6 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY IN THE UAE

For all of these reasons, there has been not much research done in the area of developing leadership skills in the UAE, and less among Arab women leadership (Ministry report, Bogdan et al. 2012). From the opening statement mentioned earlier, the recruitment of the western managers reflects the shortage of talents that is essential for boosting organizational performance. This by itself gives us an idea about the vagueness or perhaps the lack of leadership competences in the UAE, hence opening a very attractive market to leadership development initiatives and solutions. Indeed, many leadership development companies seized this opportunity. Thus the emergence of leadership services in the UAE has been remarkable in the last decade. A very typical problem is that the majority of these companies conducted their programs based on a variety of imported models which effectiveness was put into question due to the social and cultural differences. We will present and further discuss more about these issues later in this chapter.

4.2 INDUSTRY DESCRIPTION

We argue that the competitive dynamics of the leadership industries exert at least as much influence as cultural factors on the shape of leadership development practices in the contexts of Poland and the UAE. In order to better understand the leadership practices, we need to take a look at the entire leadership industry and all of the co-actors that form it.

We draw on Guthey's article "Fashions, Trends, and the Production of Leadership" to create a framework, and further distinguish all the actors that contribute to the production of leadership. From the viewpoint of the production perspective, we agree that cultural field of leadership production consist of all the individuals, and enterprises that participate in the process to define, interpret, and implement the leadership notion. In this section, we will present the macro perspective of leadership industries in Poland and the UAE, respectively. We distinguish them into four groups: one-person coaching firms, local companies, multinational enterprises, and institutions.

4.2.1 ONE-PERSON COACHING FIRMS

Business coaching firms are the part of a very fashionable trend that emerged within the field leadership development companies. This trend has been triggered by the financial aid dedicated to skill development. The "coaching" term is variously interpreted by different players within the industry. Among small companies, almost all of the programs with a goal to develop employees' skills are interpreted as a part of the coaching industry.

Large amounts of coaching services are provided by one one-person firms. Due to the absence of regulatory laws licensing access to this profession, anybody can offer coaching services. Therefore, they are characterized by short life cycles, and high variance in revenues. One-person coaching firms tend to differentiate themselves by offering various coaching services, and occupying market niches that are not targeted by larger leadership companies. The multitude of the coaching services contributes to the ambiguity of leadership concept. Additionally, one-person coaching firms have the

tendency to obtain miscellaneous certifications. The purpose is to increase the credibility, as well as to legitimize themselves as the proven company.

4.2.2 Local leadership development firms

In both Poland and the UAE, an array of small local firms offers a variety of leadership products and services. Such companies are usually small in terms of employees and number of the offices. The product offering varies highly, and usually includes coaching, keynotes, team building, performance development, leadership products, and custom-made leadership programs. Interestingly, we detected that a portion of local companies distinguish themselves by providing 'unique' services – one of its kind. This, again, contributes to the ambiguity of leadership concept, as many providers define the notion in their own 'exclusive' way. Such practices aim for differentiation from other companies, as well as to help target the specific market niche. Noteworthy, local leadership firms utilize the standardized frameworks by adapting them from multinational enterprises. Our study proves that these frameworks are adjusted to the local context. During our research, we discovered the inter-exchange of human resources that occurs between local companies and one-person coaching firms. The movement of human assets takes place in accordance to the current workload, and the prospective contracts, and is apparent in loosely connected networks between the providers. The distinguishing factor in both cases is a local operation field, and the offering of leadership services.

4.2.3 MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES

The multinational enterprises are the companies that originated outside the territory of Poland and the UAE. Such entities consist of large amount of employees, spread around many offices in different countries. In comparison to local companies, the service offering looks similar. Occasionally, the exception appears in a more specialized approach to leadership development, when organizations place greater emphasis upon the concentration on the specific method of leadership development, e.g. succession planning. Multinational enterprises implement frameworks that are standardized and

utilized across the globe. Frequently, frameworks are subject to certain cultural modifications to meet the local needs,. Drawing on its reputation and network, these entities usually target large enterprises. The distinguishing factor in both cases was between local and foreign operations, and the offering of leadership services.

4.2.4 INSTITUTIONS

In this paragraph, we separated all the actors that contribute to the development and promotion of the leadership concept. The distinguishing factor was a non-profit business model (except higher education and press). These include associations, educational institutions, researchers, journalists, and professional experts. The development of the leadership field takes place within the area of professional publications, scientific research, summits, conferences, and study programs. Interestingly, part of the study programs is designed, and implemented in the cooperation with leadership development companies.

4.2.5 INTERVIEWEES

In the following section, we take a closer look at all the interviewees that were involved in our research. Moreover, we will describe the companies they represent.

Interview participant	Occupation	Background	Areas of expertise
Krzysztof Nowakowski	Korn & Ferry Warsaw Office Managing Director	- MA in Business Administration at University of Minnesota & Warsaw School of Economics - MA in philosophy at University of Warsaw2 - Director in BNP Paribas - Consultant at Booz Allen & Hamilton - Parliament assistant to the minister of local government reform	- Emerging markets - Emerging leaders - Talent and leadership study of central and Eastern Europe
Maciej Kotowicz	Heidrick & Struggles Warsaw Partner	- MSc in Economics at Warsaw School of Economics - HR director at Ahold - HR director at Rieber & Son - General manager Tate & Lyle Poland - Consultant at ABB & Bossard	- Leadership Consulting & Advisory - Executive search advisory
Amy Barnes	Scherer Leadership International Cracow Co-director	- MBA from Warwick Business School - HR manager at Hilton Hotels - VP of Organizational Effectiveness for a biopharmaceutical company - Independent consultant for British Airways, Motorola, O2, AmRest	- Leadership Consultancy - Executive coaching - Change facilitation
Dr John Scherer	Scherer Leadership International Cracow Co-director	- Co-founder of Scherer Leadership International - Writer - Lutheran Chaplain at Cornell University - Co-creator of Graduate School - Combat Officer on a US Navy destroyer - Independent Consultant for companies such as: Boeing, Exxon, Ford, Mariott, Microsoft, Siemens, DHL, The government of Canada	- Leadership Consultancy - Executive coaching - Change facilitation - Publishing
Peter Strupp	AchieveGlobal & Human Synergistics Warsaw Partner	- MBA at Harvard Business School - Entrepreneur - Advisor to the president of BRE Bank - Board member of many enterprises	- Leadership Development - Corporate Culture Change - Sales & Service Leadership
Professor Zbigniew Pelczynski	School of Leaders Warsaw Founder	- Professor at University of Cambridge & University of Oxford - Political advisor - Co-founder of "Stefan Batory Foundation" - Founder of the "School of Leaders"	- Public Leadership Development - Governmental Consultancy
Hala Alturki	Altaat Abu Dhabi Partner & Senior Leadership Trainer	- Masters, Organization Development & Change at Texas A&M University - Executive Education, Marketing & Finance at Harvard Business School - Bachelor of Science in Marketing & Communication at University of Phoenix - Director, People & Change Advisory at KPMG	- Leadership development - Management consulting - Strategy - Change management - Organizational development
Sahar Aloumi	Benaa Character Center Dubai Founder & CEO	- Bachelor's degree in Administration Science, Public Administration - Positive Acorns - Senior Manager; Marketing Communications at Burj Khalifa - Senior Manager, Membership development at Young Arab Leaders - Executive Office Manager for HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Al Saud at Kingdom Holding Company	- Business development - Team building - Organizational development - Strategic planning
Wendy Shaw	NLP Dubai Trainer & Coach	- Exeter College - Certified Trainer of NLP, Hypnosis & Timeline Therapy and NLP Coach. - Area Training Manager UAE & Qatar at InterContinental Hotels Group	- Executive coaching - Leadership development - NLP - Employee training
Gary Hazel	Injazat Institute Abu Dhabi Head of Learning & Development	- BSc in IT & Computing - Training Manager at Electronic Data Systems - Learning & Development Manager at Smith Knight Fay - Senior Instructor GIS/Terrain Analysis at HM Forces	- Talent management - Strategic planning - Leadership development - Organizational development - Staff Development
Sammi Bazzi	Injazat Data Systems Abu Dhabi Senior Learning & Development Specialist	- Bachelor of Applied Science at C&E American University Institute - Bachelor of science at MIS at Fujitsu-Siemens Computers - Bachelor of science at MIS at Fujitsu-Siemens Computers - Training & Operations Team Leader at New Horizons Learning Centre	- Training - Talent management - Leadership - Succession planning
Dr. Khalid Al-Yahya	Accenture Dubai Managing Director	- Post-Doctoral, Development and Governance at Harvard University - Ph.D. in Comparative Development Policy & Management, with distinction - Dubai Land Department, - Prime Ministers Office - UAE, Dubai School of Government	- Public policy - Leadership development - Strategic Thinking - Knowledge management - Corporate Governance
Jonathan Holmes	Korn/Ferry Dubai Managing Director	- University of Greenwich, B.Sc Geology Representative Director, Korea - Senior Client Partner Singapore Managing Director, India	- Leadership development - Talent development - Emerging markets - Emerging leaders

4.2.6 COMPANIES IN POLAND AND THE UAE

Korn & Ferry International

Founded: 1969 in Los Angeles, CA,

Korn/Ferry International is the world's largest executive search firm, with offices in 76 countries in North America, Asia/Pacific, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa. In 2011, Korn/Ferry had 2400 employees. The company provides a wide range of leadership and talent consulting services that range from executive recruitment to leadership development programs, enterprise learning, succession planning, and recruitment outsourcing.

Product offering: Executive recruitment, Board & CEO services, Leadership and Talent consulting, leadership products (Lominger™), and recruitment solutions (Futurestep™).

Hedrick & Struggles International, Inc.

Founded: 1953 in Chicaco, IL

Heidrick & Struggles is a global executive search firm, with 53 offices in the world. In 2010, the company had 1506 employees. The company provides services to a wide spectrum of industries, and focuses mainly on identifying, evaluating, and recommending candidates for senior level executive positions. Heidrick & Struggles claims to be the first leadership advisory company in the world.

Product offering: Executive search, leadership consulting.

Achieve Global, Inc.

Founded: 1998, as a merger of three companies: Learning International, Kaset International, and Zenger Miller

Achieve Global is a global leadership consulting company, having presence in more than 40 countries. In 2010, the company had more than 1800 employees. The company provides enterprises with learning-based solutions, including skills training, consulting services in leadership development, sales effectiveness, and customer service.

Product offering: Leadership products, custom-made leadership programs, sales programs, customer service programs.

Scherer Leadership International

Founded: 2006, Warsaw

Scherer Leadership International has representation in Poland, United Kingdom, USA, New Zealand, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France and Spain. The company consists of 2 co-directors, 17 associates, and is represented by an international network of consultants, coaches, change facilitators and leadership development specialists. The mission of the Scherer Leadership International: We equip leaders to transform their lives and organizations.

Product offering: Leadership development intensive courses, custom-designed leadership programs, organizational consulting, leadership engagement programs, keynotes.

Human Synergistics International

Founded: 1971 in Michigan

Human Synergistics International quantifies organization development concepts including leadership strategies, impact, group processes, synergy, and behavioral styles. The company provides high-quality assessments and diagnostic stimulations on organizational performance.

Product offering: Leadership development, individual development, management development, organizational development, team-building simulations

School of Leaders

Founded: 1994 in Warsaw

Founded by Zbigniew Pelczynski, is the first and only professional educational association in Poland that develops leaders for public sector. Organization focuses on constructing social capital, developing individuals, by enhancing their competencies in risk taking, vision, acting based on the long-term strategies, methods of engaging people into common activities, creating the conditions for the cooperation around common aims, and creativity.

Product offering: various educational projects for distinct individuals

Altaaat Leadership Development Institute

Founded: 2010 in Abu Dhabi

Altaat Leadership Development institute provides companies with the formulation of leadership development strategies, individual and group leadership development programs, as well as publishing historical case studies. The company targets both the public and private sectors.

Product offering: individual and group leadership development programs, publishing.

Matrix Training Solutions

Founded: 2000 in Dubai

Matrix Training Solutions is based in Dubai, and consists of 3 consultants. The company provides human performance solutions, based on interactive skills training. Matrix Training Solutions utilizes a flexible and sensitive approach for the specific requirements of the client, as well as facilitates the tools, and techniques of NLP (neuro-linguistic programming) – the foundation of all leadership development programs.

Product offering: Various NLP programs, leadership development, team building, coaching, management development.

Injazat Institute

Founded: 2005 in Abu Dhabi

Injazat training institute office is based in Abu Dhabi, and consists of 6 employees. The company is a business-oriented learning initiative that supports enterprises in improving business through learning, and consulting in learning & development disciplines. Injazat institute takes a part in Abu Dhabi 2030 Vision[6], and actively supports empowering, and retaining UAE national employees.

Product offering: Leadership development, project management, learning effectiveness, learning management systems, UAE national development.

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[6] More information on Abu Dhabi 2030 Vision is located in the section of findings.

Benaa Character Center

Founded: 2011 in Dubai

Benaa Character Center is operated in Dubai by three consultants. The company provides courses that focus on leadership, strength building and development, by helping individuals to understand their "realized and unrealized strengths". The company's products are based on the science of Applied Positive Psychology.

Product offering: leadership and leader development, coaching.

## 4.3 QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Our focus is to observe the relationship established between the service providers and the customers, and the external forces that influence the service providers. To avoid any misunderstanding, we would like to stress the fact that the findings described in this part were only from the providers' perspective. That is, we have looked at the industry and conducted our research around the service providers. We do not have any empirical data from the consumers' side, as their opinions are not the focus of this thesis.

We have distinguished six areas, in which three of them are relevant to our description of the contexts, and the remaining three are relevant to our description of the leadership industries themselves. Each area includes a set of factors that have a direct or indirect influence on leadership practices in both contexts. Through a set of prepared questions, which revolve around the dynamics of leadership industry and target various areas, we achieved plenty of feedback that answered our research objectives. The list might look rather long, but our intention is to be comprehensive and cover as many areas as possible, and therefore ensuring we do not neglect any issue elaborated. Now we turn our focus on each area and subsequently its factors.

4.3.1 Contextual Factors

We argue that the competitive dynamics of the leadership industries exert at least as much influence as cultural factors on the shape of leadership development practices in the contexts of Poland and the UAE. In order to explore the former, we present and analyze the contextual factors we identified though our research. From our qualitative interviews, we focus on three major areas that are relevant to the contexts and regional

dynamics. The purpose of this section is to evaluate the differences that characterize both contexts. The following figure illustrates the areas and the factors involved in our analysis.
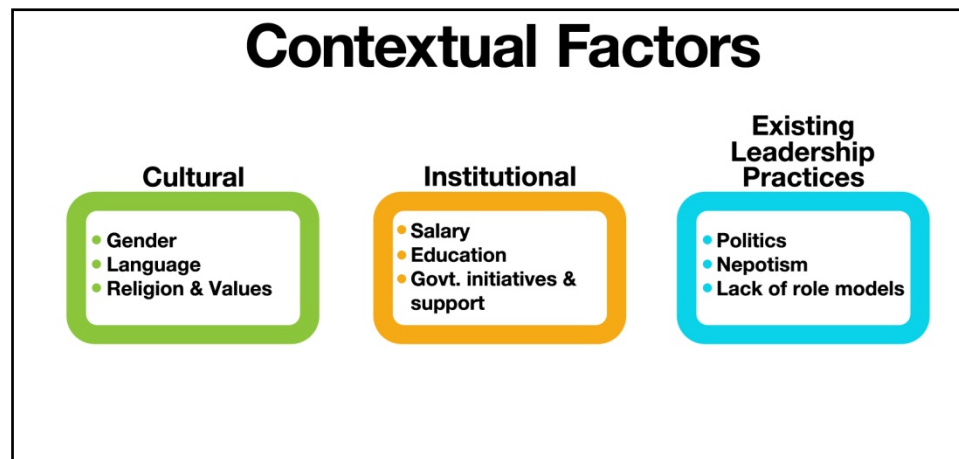
4.3.1.1 CULTURAL FACTORS

In order to explore how culture influences the production of leadership, we will in the following section support this argument by presenting the factors' findings on gender, language, and religion and values.

I)   GENDER

The issue of gender is an exception to the general comparison when looking at both contexts. While in Poland the distinction between male and female makes only a minor difference when it comes to professional or social interaction, in the UAE (or Middle East in general) it is exceptionally visible everywhere and people are aware of the distinctiveness as one has to comply to a certain way of behavior in the presence of the opposite sex. From the service providers' perspective, Sahar Aloumi asserts that women struggle with cultural norms and family, which limits their interaction in the market. Hala Alturki described the job as a female consultant and trainer to be quite a challenge. In her words, she said:

> "I used to knock the doors on CEO's & executive directors to explain what we are doing very diplomatically in a manner that does not underestimate their intelligence and threaten their ego, given that I am a women wearing an Abaya[7]!"

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[7] A Cloak, sometimes also called an *Aba*, is a simple, loose over-garment, essentially a robe-like dress, worn by some women in parts of the Muslim world, including in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.

On the other hand, currently Poland has a very strong stance toward gender equality, although there is still much room for improve in this domain as well. According to EU official report on equality in Poland, the general participation of women in the labor market equals 53.1%, in comparison to 58.5% EU-average. The representation of women in hierarchical levels presented as the proportion of women on supervisory boards equals 12%, which is below EU-average of 14%. On the positive side, there is an existing gender pay gap that equals 9.8%, which is considerably lower than EU-average of 16.9%.

We had one third of our interviewees that are females. The issue of women's leadership is gaining greater importance, especially in the regions of Middle East and North Africa (MINA), thus it became a hot topic and a novel focus group, initiating new opportunities for the industry of leadership products and services due to the high demand. This topic is young and open for exploration, and therefore we encourage further study and investigation.

II)   LANGUAGE

The vast majority of training programs are delivered in English, and since the regions are non-native English speaking, the communication level is constrained to various degrees depending on the participants' levels of proficiency. In addition, the insecurity the trainees might feel, stifles effective two-way communication and the will to express one's opinion. Moreover, too technical jargon, mispronunciation, or heavy accents might not make the situation any better. Wendy Shaw shared with us her way she found effective to deliver her companies' programs and said

> "What works in the UAE is to keep it simple! The simpler the language is, the better effect it has to the training, because it gives them a clearer understanding of the meaning behind the work."

The Injazaat team stated that delivering their trainings in English is often an issue that they struggle with, because oftentimes the participants are not fully fluent in English, which creates a barrier on a fluent two-way communication, and therefore on the learning. What concerns us is not only the understanding of the English words, but also the interpretation people have about the terms used. This issue was revealed when we for instance looked deeper into the term "Leadership" in both languages (Arabic and Polish)

and what it is associated with. The result is rather interesting. The term itself compares with terms among others like "Command, Chiefship, Colonelcy, Presidency, Control, Chairmanship, and Authority". Obviously, all of the above mentioned vocabulary have to do directly or indirectly with power and authority, which therefore makes the word "Leadership" subject to misinterpretation.

One of our interviewees - Professor Pelczynski – presented a very instructive statement on the perception created by language barriers. He said:

> "When Polish people come to the courses they look at the programs through the Polish translation of word leadership, and perceive the program essentially as having directing position. And it takes them a quite long time to realize, that this is the fault concept in their heads. They think more in terms leader - a boss."

This declaration clearly unveils the significance of the language perception. Wrong connotations with the word leadership may affect the way in which participants frame the leadership programs, and how they approach the learning process.

III)   RELIGION AND VALUES

Morris Massey has put forth a theory that value formation occurs between birth to the age of 21, which he characterizes are the imprinting, modeling, and socialization periods . In the GLOBE study, the issue of values was discussed several times and the general idea is that different regions/cultures have different values. Values are connected to the environment and often stems from the religion. The two contexts we are investigating exhibit strong religion influences throughout their history. Up to the present day, religion, although different in these contexts, plays a major role in both Polish and UAE society and therefore cannot be neglected. The Injazaat team characterized the local culture of the UAE as a conservative culture with plenty of taboos. The culture and norms of UAE society thus is largely defined by culture. Alturki refers to the local values, which descend from religion, as an important feature of society and every leader must be aware of these since people tend to praise and copy the values of their leaders. Gary Hazle, the head of Injazaat team highlighted the importance of values in a national context. He said:

> "I wish that people respected the English culture in the UK. I think it is good to have traditions and keep the traditional values."

In the context of Poland, Krzysztof Nowakowski described the connection between religion and its impact on the people's principal values and the sense of community:

> "During the communism, church kept people together [...] after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Catholicism affected behavior in terms of what's good, and what's wrong [...] church had this ability to influence social practices and social norms [...]"

Mr. Nowakowski clearly points out the significance of religion in people's life. He relates it to the sense of community created by the church in order to stand up against the common "enemy" (political system). Later he adds that wide participation of the Church in the public life contributed to the inner sense of the morally appropriate behavior. There is no doubt that religion has a major impact on people's life, which is particularly evident on Sundays (Mass), or during religious holidays. However, the presence of the Church in the Polish public life is gradually decreasing. Moreover, in business activities, religion is absent, and does not have any influence on the practices.

Since values encapsulate abstract judgments about what is important, worthwhile, and worth working towards, they have an enormous influence on people's behavior. However, the picture seems to vary from one context to another when it comes to business. In the UAE, the influence of religion on both business and personal lives has a tremendous impact and artifacts. When it comes to business in Poland, religious artifacts or influences are non-existent, but religious values are deeply rooted in people's morality, and ethics.

IV)   SUMMARY

In sum, the two contexts we are investigating are culturally different and geographically distant, and thus it is evident that people are simply different. In Poland, the distinction between genders is only a minor issue when it comes to professional or social interaction. In the UAE, the discrimination and incorporation of different roles (mother, wife, house mother, and employee) result in huge challenges in taking a leading role. This might be developed from a combination of religious and tribal norms, as the region reflects a high appreciation of local values. In Poland, people are less radical and can be said to be merely a western society, although the religious values are deeply rooted in people during their upbringing.

The interaction between the service providers and the program participants has its own challenges. Several programs in both contexts are conducted in English, and despite the fact that all participants can speak a level of English, communication barriers might bring a lower level of content comprehension. Besides, the terms "leader" or "leadership" in both are highly associated with power and authority, which can be misleading for the purpose of these programs.

4.3.1.2 INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMICS

In order to explore the formal institutional influence on the production of leadership, we will in the following section support this argument by presenting the factors' findings on salary, education, and governmental initiatives and support.

I)   SALARY

Differences in delivering salaries were also recognized as an issue that may affect leadership industries. Salaries in Poland were identified as equal in accordance to ethnic origin and gender. Furthermore, wages are distributed in line with competencies, and positions held by the employees. This is largely the result of the relatively homogenous character of Poland, both ethnically and racially. Deviations in the distribution of salaries, especially in corporate life, are very hard to ascertain. On the other hand, the distribution of salaries in the UAE implies its discriminative nature. It is an open secret that wages are delivered in accordance to the country of the origin of the particular employee, rather than his or her competencies. Wendy Shaw shared with us her impression of the country on the time she arrived to the UAE:

> "One of the biggest shocks was the huge distinction in terms of salary, accommodation, packages, and positions between for example western and sub-continentals. I told myself 'you should respect this!"

Dissimilar distributions of wages may display various attitudes towards leadership development programs. More specifically, it may condition the level of commitment to leadership programs, as well as induce a different level of engagement, and motivation in general. Underpaid employees may not exhibit as much involvement in the learning process, in comparison to their higher-paid counterparts. In effect, the dissimilar character of wages may lead to low outcomes of leadership programs, as well as to low

rate of transfer of learning to the workplaces. The other side of the argument is that the over-high wages with security of employment (for example employing nationals in the UAE) might also have a similar effect. Since these altogether are predictions, the subject is open for further studies.

II)   EDUCATION

In this section, we examine closer the issue of education. When looking at both contexts, it is noticeable that in Poland that although the level of educational background of participants is advanced, though generally speaking, the quality of Polish education is considered to be low. On the other hand, the level of educational background of the trainees in the UAE has been portrayed as mixed due to the multiplicity of ethnic origins. The vast recruitment of well-educated western managers throughout the years created a sort of disparity in the level of educational backgrounds and is highly evident between the foreigners and UAE nationals. Although there are huge efforts being made to improve the educational system in the country recently, the Injazaat team defines the young history of the country and the lack of education and experience to be major challenges in developing the locals. Additionally, investing in the professional leadership services can lower the "qualification gap" between employees in the UAE as well as raise the level of competencies in general - the Emiratization program is a great example which will be discussed in the next sub-point. This in particular may demonstrate the insufficiency of local leadership talents. Peter Strupp, gave us his opinion on Polish level of educational background:

> "Very high educated employees, they really show the best of the country while interacting with foreigners. Work ethic is very high [...] People do not know what Poland is, but when it comes to business cooperation, it just blows stereotypes away."

Maciej Kotowicz added:

> "Managers in Poland are not different that much from managers in western Europe. Polish managers are now educated, also the educational system is more homogenous, unified."

The shortage of employees with a high-quality educational background gives leadership companies an opportunity of demand. Underdeveloped employees may serve as a great

source of prospective clients. Thus, it may indicate the continual influx of financial resources as well as growing development of the leadership field.

III) GOVERNMENTAL INITIATIVES & SUPPORT

In the following section we discuss the matter of the state interventions aimed to improve the quality of leadership. We detected that when the variety of governmental initiatives in Poland are limited only to financial support coming mainly from European funds, the state's support in the UAE takes the form of various projects. For instance, the initiative of "Emiratization" is aimed to help employing Emirati citizens in the leadership positions, both in the private and public sector. In fact, the government has placed mandatory quotas for private organizations to meet, for instance 2 percent of all employees in retail companies, 4 percent in banking sector, and 5 percent in insurance sector. The employment of the Emirati citizens is mandatory if private organizations wish to sustain operations and renew their yearly license. This has in some cases caused the companies to create 'no job' positions. We encountered a real-life example of this in one of the meetings with Injazaat. A local female participated in the meeting and it quickly became obvious that she had neither a function at the firm nor the skills needed to be part of the training team. Yet another good initiative is the project "Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030", which was designed to stimulate the growth of knowledge-based industries, as well as to ensure a balanced social and regional development that leads to high-quality leadership. The outcomes of these and other initiatives are already seen in the public sector, while still gathering momentum in the private domain.

On the other hand, since 2007 Poland has received substantial financial resources from European Social and European Regional Development Funds. These funds are aimed to support employment and promote economic and social cohesion. The recipients of these resources are some of the leadership companies, as well as the firms that appear under the category of "business coaching" services. Interestingly, we noticed that in Poland, financial aid might take its toll by lowering the quality of leadership services. Peter Strupp, elaborated:

> "The problem is that we have lots of 'European Union' money coming here that completely disturbed training market causing very low level trainings."

The implementation of various governmental initiatives are meant to increase the quality of leadership overall. Leadership development companies may benefit from that by applying to take part in developmental initiatives and subsequently receive the necessary means to further expand and stay more competitive or reach other market niches. On the contrary, ineffectiveness in distributing financial aids may contribute to the emergence of new and inexperienced "leadership" companies. This can cause lower quality of leadership development programs in general.

IV)   SUMMARY

In sum, the issue of salary is rather controversial. We found that there are differences in the payment criteria. While in Poland the salaries are equal despite gender and ethnic origin, the picture is not the same in the UAE. Salary size is highly dependent on qualifications, race, gender, and connection. These we found to be of discriminative nature. We believe that the salary size has an impact on leadership itself, but the extent of which leadership is affected remains unknown. In accordance with the former, the level of education may play a role on the distinction depicted above.

We found that the governments in both contexts support the idea of improving leadership in both countries. In the UAE, the efforts are developed in the form of financial support, regulations in different sectors, governmental leadership programs, and developing talents (Emiratization). Meanwhile, the support is constrained to financial support in the Polish context. However, these efforts in both contexts do not clarify anything about the effectiveness of such initiatives. Moreover, the general opinion of the interviewees is supportive to these efforts, but at the same time, they describe them to be significant challenges.

4.3.1.3 EXISTING LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

In order to explore how the countries perceive and execute leadership in practice, we will in the following section support this argument by presenting the factors' findings on politics, nepotism, and the lack of role models and irrelevancy of case studies.

I) POLITICS

Politics seem not to have any direct connection to this industry per se, but our findings and analysis indicate that regional politics has an indirect influence on the practice of leadership. In Poland for instance, and as mentioned before, the impact of communism is traceable in society at large. In politics, it is still found that a portion of people (especially older generations), who are in charge the ranks of government, tend to view themselves and are viewed as "Bosses", despite the fact that Poland's political ideology is one of a democratic character. Peter Strupp on Polish communistic legacy says:

> "I have very bad experiences working with officials, especially in the 90's [...] Over-authoritarian bosses [...] too much centralization [...] inability to understand emotional inter-relationships and emotional intelligence as factor for success in terms of being a senior leader."

In addition, Krzysztof Nowakowski said:

> "Poles are very singular in the way they perceive their duties as managers, and in the way they take responsibility when they become managers, which is a very traditional model of a leader as a boss. Boss, who knows everything, the ultimate source of knowledge, power and the authority. This is the most single issue which we have."

The statements above confirm the authoritarian attitudes in the area of leadership practices in Poland. The roots for such a behavior are located in the previous socialistic system characterized by leaders with a high level of control, one-way downward communication, and "carrot and stick" motivational strategies.

In the UAE, politics of the United Arab Emirates takes place in a framework of a federal, presidential, absolute monarchy. In absolute monarchies, the rulers (in this case it is the Shaikh) of the state are seen as supreme leaders. Although the country has a constitution, rules and regulations, these often times are treated subjectively. That is, in the public sector and governmental authorities, decisions do not depend on the explicit law (if there are any written ones), but on the implicit opinion of the person in charge. It is not meant to say that the UAE rulers are evil dictators, but we want to emphasize the lack of democracy and distinction between the two contexts.

Basing on our findings, we find a contradiction in the practice of leadership in both contexts. On the one hand, governmental initiatives and support promote the progress of leadership in the countries. But on the other hand, the structure of authority simply seems not to be supporting the idea of leadership, nor to create a proper environment for an organic evolution.

Also, the constant altering of law and regulations in Poland, resulted in dissatisfaction among our interviewees. Krzysztof Nowakowski gave us his opinion:

"The biggest concern is the law, that in the future can make our live near-impossible."

Amy Barnes added:

"In the UK, I can set up the company within two hours, here it took us three months."

Inefficient law and regulations may negatively contribute to the productivity of leadership industries. Devoting considerable amount of time to maintaining administration, taxes, and current operations, reduces the appropriate allocation of resources for actual leadership trainings and development of programs.

II) NEPOTISM

While in theory the conditions behind any kind of employment must depend on the qualifications of the applicants, the picture seems not to be clearly drawn in both contexts. Nepotism is merely a normal way of occupying vacancies in these parts of the world. Media scandals, interviewees, and our point of view (being natives with backgrounds in the investigated contexts), all only serve to confirm this phenomenon. According to Transparency International, the situation in Poland is improving. When in early 90' nepotism was of a systematic nature, currently such practices are no longer a phenomenon of "dramatic proportions". Nonetheless, there still exist numerous problems in certain spheres of the organizations. The blame for such a situation goes mainly to the Polish society, which has a lack of the potential to create favorable conditions for increasing and strengthening the transparency of public life. Polish government also bears the responsibility, as it fails to introduce a successful anti-

corruption policy, especially in terms of convincing society to comply with such regulations.

In the UAE, it is still observed that in some organizations, the managing team carries the same surname, and the culture of employing relatives remains an obstacle to improve leadership. Although it is not a large problem in the UAE, at times it is noticed that some managers tend to recommend a talent which has a familial connection to themselves, noted J. Holms of Korn&Ferry. The main purpose of practices as such is to indulge family members, increase or maintain authority and power in the workplace and only serves personal interests. These kinds of practices may result in incompetent employees at workplace, and definitely deteriorate and perhaps transform leadership to a form of dictatorship. This behavior is strongly undesired but unfortunately is still to an extent present throughout the market, whether it is in the public or private sectors.

III) LACK OF ROLE MODELS & IRRELEVANCY OF CASE STUDIES

Without any exceptions, all the interviewees have expressed a clear dissatisfaction about the fact that there are very few role models to look up for, and the case studies utilized in the trainings lean on examples that are seen inadequate to the local context. They explained that this fact was found problematic since the participants in general found it inappropriate to identify themselves with foreign figures, although the cases were illustrations of outstanding characters. Peter Strupp on the lack of Polish senior leadership models highlights:

> "It's very hard to find senior leaders here, that are very good models, you usually get them from the expats [...] there is lack of strategic competencies here on the senior level."

As such, the need for role models in these particular contexts is considered a huge necessity in order to deliver more effective trainings as at the end of the day, people desire to imitate or identify themselves with successful role models, consciously or unconsciously.

While Wendy Shaw defines leadership as being a role model, Sahar Aloumi argued that role models are needed to trigger the change and inspire the trainees. In her words

she said "We lack role models and ideals. There are no success stories we can elaborate on!".

That is, in order to bring the effectiveness of the leadership development industry to the next level, the effort of digging after role models and establish solid reputations for them in the market is an indispensable need and it can only be an asset to substitute the foreign case studies that are seen to a certain degree less relevant.

IV) SUMMARY

In sum, the political ideologies are quite distant in our contexts. The residual influences of the post-communist era still have an indirect effect on the democratic system in Poland. In contrast to the former, an absolute monarchy system as the UAE, which lacks democracy, tends to be in control of everything in the government and have little trouble over stepping the law when desirable. These examples in particular reflect a misconception of leadership creating a lack of role models for people to look up to and thereby restrain identity formation. Additionally, it drove the leadership companies in both Poland and the UAE to draw on examples and illustrations from different contexts, which are met with less credibility by the audience.

4.3.2 THE LEADERSHIP INDUSTRY DYNAMICS

We argue that the competitive dynamics of the leadership industries exert at least as much influence as cultural factors on the shape of leadership development practices in the contexts of Poland and the UAE. In order to explore the former, we deducted three major areas that are relevant to the leadership industry dynamics from our qualitative interviews. The purpose of this section is to evaluate the similarities that characterize the industry in both contexts. The following figure illustrates the areas and the factors involved in analysis.
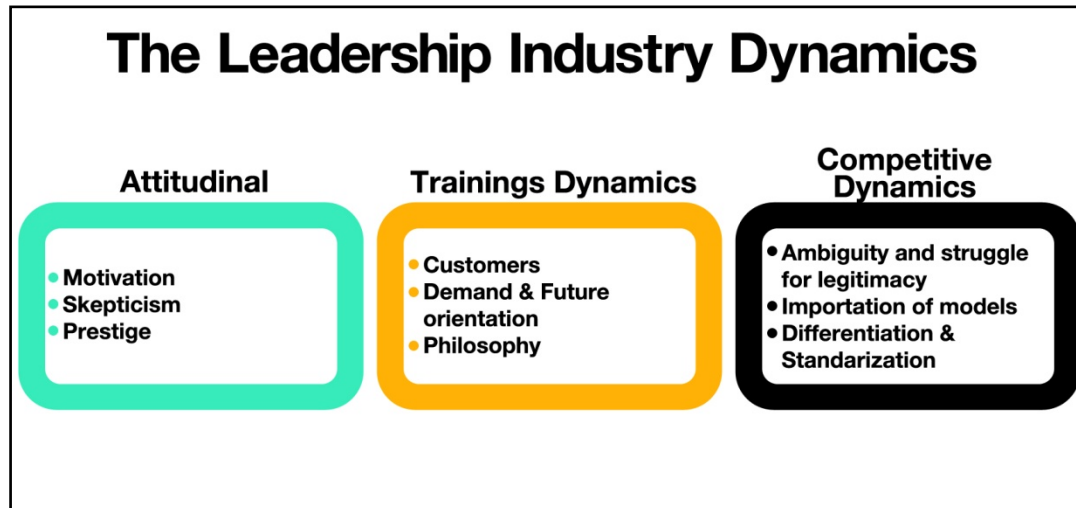
4.3.2.1 ATTITUDINAL DYNAMICS

In order to explore the former, we will in the following section support this argument by presenting the factors' findings on the customers' level of motivation, skepticism, and prestige.

I) MOTIVATION

We elaborate on the level of engagement of leadership programs' participants as observed by the providers. It is clear that in both regions commitment varies depending upon the quality of particular program, its relevance to participants' interests or job tasks, and the level of entertainment that these programs provide. In Poland for instance, the majority of participants demonstrate attentiveness. Peter Strupp gave us his opinion on the topic:

> "[...] It's either we're committed, but 20% of these, have always a strong opposition: causing problems, they disruptive, they're lowering other people's attitudes, they think they know better (imitating) it's not like that, it's not like that"

Even though Polish participants show general interest in the content, at the beginning of each program, commitment is lowered due to the lack of trust and the genuine Polish characteristic – negativity. As exposed by Peter Strupp on Polish culture:

> "[...]The negative effects are oppositional behavior: (imitating Polish people) it's all wrong, I know better, everything is bad. [...] Poles use negativity as a form of communication."

Nevertheless, at subsequent stages of the program, participants become more committed to the teaching process. In the UAE, in some programs the participants prove to be uninterested in the content. In the programs Hala Alturiki attended, she observed and pointed out the mental absence of the participants:

> "Participants seemed not interested, didn't pay attention, played with their phones, walked in & out, and simply didn't listen. What they had to do is to check off the training. They don't see the use of it, they don't understand it, but because of leaders' presence, they pretended they understood the theoretical complex content"

However, the providers hopelessly implemented fun activities in an attempt to grab the participants' attention. In every case, if the programs do not provide interesting content, the participants are far less engaged, occasionally to the extent that they display absolute ignorance. Finally, in some cases, participants view leadership programs as a way to escape daily job tasks, or as a way to spend the company budget.

The degree of the participant's involvement may have a very substantial effect on leadership development practices. It may evidence the quality of actual learning material and the degree of the knowledge acquired by the participants. Thus, it may lead to the low ratio of actual transfer of learning to the workplace. Finally, due to this dissatisfaction, companies that utilize such services may simply limit the budget, which was formerly intended for such services. Hence, it is most likely to affect the leadership companies' profits.

We conclude that the level of motivation is directly connected to the material taught in the trainings. For obvious reasons, we could not precisely measure the attitudes of participants, as we explore the leadership industries' dynamics only from the perspective of the providers.

II) Skepticism

Skepticism toward leadership programs was investigated in both contexts, however only to a smaller extent. This characteristic was recognized on the organizational level, more specifically, within the area of managers with decision-making prerogative, which decided whether the company should pursue the services of leadership companies. The premises behind the skepticism we identify mainly as a fear of

unknown, as some companies never patronize with the leadership development firms. Furthermore, negative experiences gained while making use of leadership services in the past indeed increase the awareness and heightens the demand for tangible outcomes in the future. John Scherer, on the initial reactions of the companies:

> "(imitating) and here you guys come from God knows where, and we are supposed to hire you now? To do something in a year from now? And we don't know what it is you gonna be doing? It's really scary for them. It's about trusting the relationship, or trusting that we will actually commit to them. [...] In this case, there is a mistrust."

Peter Strupp added:

> "I think it's harder to convince people here, unless there is an outside director from London or Brussels that is telling them they have to do it. That is a very often situation. [...] They're highly skeptical, in some ways they have a right to be skeptical, but in other ways not."

The participants in general terms, tend to have a tendency to appraise foreign initiatives or input, which makes the reason for such skepticism rather obvious. Companies having negative attitudes toward leadership development companies may simply limit the budget dedicated for such services, or entirely withdraw from undertaking them. Lastly, decision-making on pursuing leadership services is largely based on the recommendations from other companies patronizing leadership solutions. Thus, skepticism may imply the diminishing legitimacy of leadership industries overall.

III)   PRESTIGE

We disclose that a portion of the attendees take part in leadership programs only for the sake of prestige. The natural premise of attending leadership programs is obtaining the benefit of prestige, which can take various forms. Although acquiring new knowledge, abilities or skills seem like an obvious reason for joining the programs, in some circumstances, participants' main objective is limited to obtaining a certification to confirm additional, formalized qualifications. This is true for both contexts. According to the dictionary, the definitions of prestige as: "Reputation or influence arising from success, achievement, rank, or other favorable attributes" or "Distinction or reputation attaching to a person or thing and thus possessing a cachet for others", very well illustrate

the premises of such behavior. Hala Alturki describes a couple trends that challenge the industry:

> "There is a major challenge. The selection criteria for a number of leadership programs they base it the reputation and the name of the institute. [...] There is still this trend about choosing by name rather than by outcome. The second challenge is about accreditation. It has to be accredited program. I understand, but if the accredited program doesn't give you the outcome you need, what purpose does it serve?!"

Attitudes toward prestige may emerge on a broader, organizational level. Some organizations may seek for leadership services on the basis of the same premises: to take part in a very popular and "fashionable" trend and again, for the sake of doing them.

Krzysztof Nowakowski states:

> "It's very transactional, people would come to us, in order to buy something that will change their lives and change the way they do business. There is a very little appreciation that there is not enough to buy a service or training to get another certification in the form of MBA [...] I think that there is a strong cultural feature of Poles, that we think that education courses, training, formal delivery of educational services, will improve you and is a definitive thing you should have."

Beyond doubt, further development of this phenomenon can undermine the purposefulness of leadership industries. To make matters even worse, this phenomenon can lower the reputation of such industries and diminish its legitimacy in the eyes of current and prospective customers. Finally, such actions may indicate that a very low ratio of the skills taught in leadership seminars transfer to the workplace, therefore convincing the audience of the ineffectiveness of such programs.

IV)   SUMMARY

In sum, these factors were contested from the providers' perspective. The attitudes during the trainings display similar results with slight differences between contexts. The level of motivation is proven to have different criteria, but on basis, a successful discourse in the trainings would equally motivate the participants. However, the training is always met with skepticism, whether it is about the quality and/or the fear of the unknown, in the UAE and Poland, respectively. Nevertheless, the desire to obtain acknowledged certifications and qualifications from approved training institutes seems to fuel the desire

for obtaining prestige rather than achieving competency in terms qualifications and skills. The former is true in both regions.

4.3.2.2 TRAINING DYNAMICS

In order to explore the former and understand this comparison, in the following section we will support this argument by presenting the factors' findings on the customers, demand & and future orientation, and philosophy.

I) CUSTOMERS

In this section we describe and discuss the conditions in which the participants of the programs find themselves. Below, we investigate the characteristics of the groups who participate in the training sessions. We categorize them as the following: origins of participants, time span, and the selection of program content.

A) Origins of participants

In Poland, the participating employees are mainly locals and therefore the audience can be defined as a homogeneous with similar backgrounds and culture. Peter Strupp from Achieve Global says:

> "Poland has a very homogenous culture. You don't have a lot of minorities here. [...]"

Drawing on this statement, this demographic homogeneity may offer the providers an advantage in terms of arranging more coherent and understandable content of leadership development programs. This could create more focused attention and better understanding from participants in these programs. On the other hand, "localized" leadership programs may limit the global outlook in the future of participant's organization, and deteriorate the significance of globalization in the long-term. Additionally, Peter Strupp mentions:

> "When you go to a polish company, it's completely a polish culture. [...] I think that many times you have a very strong polish culture and it doesn't open itself up yet to the western European quality, or international. That's still the problem."

Even though a willingness to interact with other cultures in Poland exists, it may be limited to a certain extent by the strong sense of regional and cultural identity, and a fear of the unknown due to the past isolation while apart of the Soviet Bloc. This might cause a lack of participation when implementing leadership development initiatives among cross cultural teams.

The UAE the picture seems to be different. As mentioned earlier, the UAE is one of the most cosmopolitan countries in the world, and therefore corporations employ a wide range of workers originating from different countries.

> "When Dr. Robert Biswas-Diener created the program, I insisted that I want everything (in the programs) to be in an international standard because I don't want to customize people [...]. The beauty of Dubai is that it has 205 nationalities, it is open, and everybody respects everybody." Said Sahar Aloumi from Al-Benaa center.

Sahar Aloumi expressed a firm determination about her desire to establish an institute which offers services that not only suit the local diversity but also enriches the audience with global knowledge. Given the nature of the UAE (Dubai in particular) and the development the country is undergoing, Sahar Aloumi realized the urge to deliberately update the practices of personal development in the market as a first step toward globalization of the mind. Wendy Shaw supports the former and states:

> "We can have 20 people attending a program and they can be 20 different nationalities. [...] I think it gives us a very different understanding in respect to different people's models of the world. In the end of the day, they all are people and they have this in common!"

Wendy Shaw emphasizes the fact that the participants can be equally treated and taught to achieve a common goal, despite their cultural backgrounds and beliefs. In other words, looking at the former from a business perspective, the famous proverb "when it comes to money, everybody is from the same religion"[8] might be actual.

Toward this end, this might also mean that the contributions from the leadership programs to an extent have an exerting influence that affects the shape of culture.

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[8] From its original quote in French "*Quand il s'agit d'argent, tout le monde est de la même religion.*" Letter to Mme. d'Épinal, Ferney (26 December 1760) from *Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire: Correspondance* (Garnier frères, Paris, 1881).

B) Time Span

As mentioned previously, the companies provide a variety of products and services, ranging from single sessions to complete programs over a period of time. Interviewees from both contexts confirmed attitudes toward the long-term partnerships. In the UAE, Hala Altourki from Altaaat explained how the company's program is designed in such a way that the teaching takes place once a week (3 hours) over 10 weeks. Altaaat chose to teach one of the ten concepts the program contains in order to assure the proper time to digest the concepts. The Injazaat team highlighted that the team do blended trainings and meet with the individual in focus many times over a period of 1-3 years. Over this period of time, the team looks into the individuals' capabilities through psychometrics, interviews, and role-plays. They expressed:

> "We base the capabilities against the skill competencies for a role and put people in positions we think that they actually can develop in these positions."

In Poland, Amy Barnes affirmed the attitudes toward long-term partnership, as they are more effective. She says:

> "Timespan of the programs highly depends on the client and on the level of intervention [...]. Some of our programs last 3 days, but if we want to do it in the way we want to do it, it goes on for even 1 year. It takes a while for an expert to understand what is the DNA of a particular company [...]. We're very realistic in terms of what have to be done."

However, it is of a great interest for the providers to partner with the clients in the sense that they can provide their service over a longer term. The training programs are highly dependent on the time span in order to notice any effectiveness or change. Also, different concepts simply cannot be mastered without the practical application of the newly gained knowledge over a period time. From an economic point of view, it is also beneficial to maintain a customer over a longer time to secure profits, as most of these companies are for-profit firms.

C) Selection of programs' content

Additionally, we have noticed the presence of an advantageous business opportunity when the providers of leadership services encompass the role of

professionals. This manner is common in the relationship between a professional provider and an unskilled customer. For instance, we rarely argue with the dentist when she is fixing a decayed tooth, because these service providers possess the expertise to solve the problems one might have.

The majority of the leadership development offerings are fixed. Products such as leadership intensive programs (LDI), workshops, keynotes, conflict consulting are widely recognized and offered as the "package" with a fixed time span and price. Some of the leadership programs are custom-made and serve a specific need of an organization. Frequently, these programs may recognize additional issues within the organization that were not previously identified. John Scherer says:

> "[...] We do a lot of intact team development, in particular leadership team programs, that are specifically designed to suit a certain purpose in the organization [...] latest program is the most effective."

The programs are designed in this specific way to solve organizational problems which proceed an in-depth analysis of the customer. This pragmatic approach may offer an advantage of becoming better acquainted with the nature of organizational problems. Therefore, it can serve as a way to offer variant, better-suited leadership solutions.

As a part of a professional industry, the leadership development providers enjoy the advantage on deciding which product(s) and service(s) suits the need of a given client. Dr. Khalid described the context of the leadership industry as a lucrative business and affirmed that companies have a yearly budget to spend on "leadership". This type of financial guarantee allows the providers to adjust and deliver more "specific" services to fill out a given budget.

II)   Demand & Future orientation

In the following section, we focus our attention on the demand for leadership services as well as on the outlooks on the future of these industries in Poland and the UAE. While demand for leadership services seems to have flattened in the UAE mainly due to the economic recession in 2008 and quality awareness, Poland displays a growing demand for developmental services. This diverging demand between these two countries can be explained by their different stages of economic development. Furthermore, for

many local Polish companies, the concept of leadership development remains new, and many of them do not associate leadership development as an asset to sustain a long-term competitiveness.

In Poland, reflections regarding the demand and the future orientation have been formulated as the following:

> "It is important to realize and appreciate the fact that we live in accelerating times, and that demand for leadership services is growing."

Said Krzysztof Nowakowski. Also, Dr John Scherer stated:

> "There is such a huge demand in here. [...] We have colleagues in US, who almost bankrupted in this business, due to lack of demand. There is so much work in here because of polish booming economy. We think that LD in Poland is just at the edge of start."

As confirmed by the interviewees, the demand for leadership services in Poland is on the rise. Although, we could not obtain any data which indicated that the demand exceeds the actual supply of leadership services, our interpretation of the interviewees' statements leads us to the fact that high demand will create additional supply. In addition, even though the demand for leadership services from local companies is still low, there is a visible, positive trend toward change. As acknowledged by Maciej Kotowicz;

> "Year by year, we're getting much more interest from the local-based companies and industries."

On the other hand, the character of the demand for leadership services in the UAE was described as following:

> "Probably 5 years ago, everybody was doing training and had (significant) budgets, so they wanted to get it done because it is good. But there weren't much focus on why are they doing it, what is the value, or looking more into the details. Because of the turnaround of the economy and the constrained budgets, now it is more controlled and managed (from the customers' side). [...] Back then, nobody talked about talent management or succession planning, but now these are the hot topics!" Said team Injazaat.

As we can conclude it from the above-mentioned statements, leadership industry in the UAE is more mature than in Poland. That is, the leadership industry has an already well-established market with high level of competition, indicating a higher quality of leadership services in the UAE. In contrast, growing amount of competitors in the Polish

context, will certainly contribute to improving the quality of leadership services in the near future.

Furthermore, the topic of future prospects of leadership industry was embraced with excitement and enthusiasm by the interviewees:

> "More foreign companies will come into the country, we will have more investors here, more cultural diversity [...] Poland will definitely become multicultural [...] We feel like we got lucky, we got here early, and we have this sense that we cannot waste this window of opportunity that will be closed very soon, because there is a huge market for what we do, and I am sure there will be a tremendous competition anytime soon [...] ", said John Scherer

The above-cited statement confirmed our interpretation on the demand that the competition in Polish market growth is increasing. Looking at the perspective of the UAE, the Injazaat team is anticipating a growth in the industry due to several initiatives that, according to them, will create jobs in the region. The fact that the UAE has already began to diversify into different industries, is considered to be active steps to maintain long term competitiveness as a market and as a country. The issue is that new industries require new skills, which in the Emirati case, skills and expertise are rare. Especially if the goal is to put locals in leading positions, the challenge will not be any easier. Team Injazaat put it this way:

> "In the future, the Emiratization initiatives will remain to be a challenge. [...] The aim is to be less independent on oil and gas, and therefore they want to diversify different industries. The industries they are trying to bring in are all new such as manufacturing, production, aerospace, nuclear, etc. [...] and there is a lot of work in order to train nationals to lead these industries."

Despite the fact that the above statements gave us the knowledge about the distinction in maturity and market saturation, the leadership industries are expected to develop in both contexts.

III) PHILOSOPHY

The philosophical assumption the companies bear in mind and uses as a basis in the programs is largely one that aims to reset the minds of the participants to a certain extent. That is, in order to become more effective, efficient, and skilled, the participants

are encouraged to apprentice new abilities and know the real value of themselves. Sahar Aloumi of Benaa center shared with us her initial plan for the slogan of her center:

> "Everybody have some issue. My first slogan for the center was 'Learn to Unlearn'. But my marketing peers said that nobody will get! [...] we will then call it Discover Yourself."

Due to modernization, generation shift, and cultural diversification, Sahar argues that people need to change their way of thinking and relating to the surrounding world, given in most cases the way people are brought up are on wrong ideas or simply do not correspond to today's demands. Hala Alturki exclaimed the need for new mindsets to carry the development of the region further. She said:

> "You have a real need to develop people here. You have these organizations and you need them functioning right. [...] So I wanted a program that genuinely teaches people what they actually know!"

Bearing in mind the concept of Altaaat institute, the deeper meaning of 'what they actually know' comes from the history, traditions, and religion found in the Middle East, where people, as it seems to her, have forgotten or confused them with others. Dr. Al-Yahya comments what he observes from the medium as "there is a paradigm change now and status quo is no longer accepted.".

On the polish side, Amy Barnes expressed:

> "Our work is about finding the most average person, to do the most extraordinary things. It's unleashing human spirit at work. [...] with focus on mutual support and relationships."

The above statements confirm the common philosophical premises behind leadership programs in Poland and the UAE. The general assumption is to help the participants to understand their own personalities. On the other hand, the significance of the communist legacy in Poland was brought closer by Peter Strupp. It is worth remembering that Peter was born in US, and has worked in Poland for more than a decade. Thus, his emic point of view as a foreigner is rather credible:

> "Effect of the communism on the society is still huge, it's just enormous. [...] In order to survive, Poland adapted aggressive culture in the sense of aggressive show term behaviors that is characterized by decentralized decision-making,

hierarchy, omniscient boss, clan culture. Additionally, there is no communication with the rest of organization [...]This creates difficulties, while we conduct our services."

The "communistic relic" and the stigma it left, has been brought up many times during the interviews. Beyond doubt, Polish culture as well as some of the national behaviors is still affected by the previous political system. To better understand the former, we must highlight the fact that the Polish population was under Soviet reign and the Middle East fundamentally was (and to some extent still is) governed by tribal societies. All the initiatives observed in both contexts are attempts to deviate from the antecedents. In both contexts, the process of changing the mindset is evolving relatively slowly due to the attachment to perhaps politics, religion, and local culture.

IV)   SUMMARY

In sum, in the business dynamics factors, we found that the customers have different groups of trainees. In the UAE, the trainings contain trainees with different background and nationalities, while in Poland the trainees are primarily Poles. Similar in both contexts, the business has been defined as a lucrative industry and a trend of partnering with the customers is the preferred objective.

What interests is the demand the Polish market follows a similar trend to the one of the UAE, but delayed in time as the UAE is ahead when it comes to economic growth. The future prospects of both regions promise further growth due to the local need. In both contexts, the training seems to be built on a philosophy that aims to change status quo and unlearning old habits.

4.3.2.3 COMPETITIVE DYNAMICS

In order to explore the leadership development industry and understand the comparison between the two contexts, in the following section we will support our argument by presenting the factors' findings on the importation of models, differentiation and standardization, and ambiguity & struggle for legitimacy.

I)   IMPORTATION OF MODELS

We turned our focus toward the methodologies the suppliers use in their trainings and found that most of them use imported models, which form the basis of the services they deliver. The public in both contexts seem to have a tendency to perceive the imported knowledge as more credible solutions.

In the UAE, Hala Alturki acknowledges that the west has developed good models which are advanced and useful for the concept of leadership, but disagrees about the manner of implementation of these models. She points out several facts:

> "1) most of programs are delivered by westerners, where lectures are brought from abroad, e.g. Harvard, which have no idea about the real challenges people face here, 2) Content and/or accent are too difficult for the (non-English speaker) audience to understand, 3) irrelevant case studies to us."

We understand the dilemma in the manner that foreign programs have no interests in deriving real change and the products offered are rather promotional than developmental. The former confirms the fact that plenty of firms do not intend to deliver the best solutions, but engage in delivering trainings which are 'just good enough' to sustain their clients. This clearly conflicts with the expectations that are desired from such solutions. In Poland, Peter Strupp supports the former, and says:

> "Polish people really trust American people coming with this kind of leadership programs. If it's American, it's good."

Attitudes toward exaltation of the "western" products are a common feature of Polish culture, and were confirmed by other foreign interviewees. The imported models are usually trusted, but do not fully respond and satisfy the local needs. In addition, Peter Strupp presented his own company's approach to the importation of models:

> "Imported models need some cultural modifications. The relevance of American-centred case studies, misunderstanding certain ways people learn in the US versus Poland. We have to make adaptations in the methodology [...] how people solve problems in here, and how they solve them in US. The ability to open up about the problem, it's faster in Poland [...]"

This statement corresponds to the previous statement of Hala Alturki, and confirms that even though the western frameworks and models positively serve as the basis of any

leadership program, they need to be modified in order to address the local needs. As it concerns Polish context, we can only argue whether these attempts toward any "cultural modifications" of imported models have genuine intentions or whether they are promotional rather than developmental.

The above is a reflection of the suppliers. Importing foreign models might contribute to legitimizing the industry: anything that originates from a developed country tends to be associated with "better quality" in general terms. However, we believe that this might not only be the issue. We link the popularity of the imported knowledge with the relatively young age of the overall industry. This basically displays a Copy-Paste which practices are found in both regions.

Leadership practices have to be considered as the product and the result of many expectations attached to the leadership in a specific context. Since our research focuses on two regions with distinct cultures, participants of leadership development programs might be characterized to have different expectations, thus, the content of leadership programs has to be designed according to clients' expectations.

In order to satisfy the customers, the leadership firms are forced to balance formally rational concerns with substantively rational concerns. Our research exposed that imported models cannot fully respond to the specific needs of the region. Therefore, in order to better address the customers' expectations, the providers must carefully leverage the content of their programs. That involves attention to the performance orientation, morality, deeply held values and beliefs, and emotional and spiritual needs.

II)   Differentiation & standardization

Looking at the previous sub-points, we may be able to point out that they all are attempts to either differentiate and/or standardize the suppliers. Accordingly we wonder what the dynamics behind those attempts are. When we reviewed the local companies, we found that they are more likely interested in differentiating themselves. The structure of the products consists of techniques (e.g. NLP based, Positive psychology, etc.) that are modified to the local needs. On the other hand, multinational consultancies had a different

approach, which is to provide companies with prior established frameworks that have been applied in other countries. For instance, Krzysztof Nowakowski revealed:

> "We use western-based model, and it's not changed and adjusted to cultural context in Poland. This is the foundation of Korn & Ferry and our approach, that leadership competencies and characteristics are culturally insensitive which implies that whether you're working in Poland or Peru, you probably share many of commonalities in the way you project yourself, manage people around you, and in the way how you make decisions."

The same picture was revealed when we interviewed Jonathan Holms of Korn & Ferry. He confirmed the fact that the consultancy's solutions basically are the same worldwide. Mr. Nowakowski, reaffirmed what is beyond this vision:

> "I think it's very risky to run a company in "Polish" style or "Saudi Arabian" style and beat multinational companies. If there are differences in the way the managers behave, my point would rather be - would do they do differently to be successful, what they can do to be more effective than they're today?"

A point that is worthwhile to depict here is that the local companies' main purpose in the market is to differentiate themselves as there is a limited number of players. The ironic part is that the very strategy these companies use in the local market is actually a form of a global standardization, drawing on models and techniques that everybody else uses globally in order to look professional. This may indicate the strong attitudes toward the standardization of leadership development solutions across the globe.

III)   Ambiguity and the Struggle for Legitimacy

Leadership development companies have the advantage of working with the ambiguous concept of leadership. Certainly, personal and unique definitions of the concept allow the companies to twist and fashion the concept to best match the needs of the clients best possible. Having said that, it also creates a form of struggle to legitimize themselves in order to gain more credibility and recognition. In the context of the UAE, Wendy Shaw explained how she is able to switch between different roles (from coach to trainer to mentor etc.) in order to meet the need of the client. She added that there is no one definition of the leader, but hundreds of definitions written by good leaders. This allows one shaping a personal definition and creating own personality of a great leader.

Hala Alturki is approaching her trainees on what they actually know from their environment and history, which allows her to deduct leadership traits from important figures in the region. Not surprisingly, the trainees find these illustrations relevant to their lives and work. Alturki explains that religion plays an important role in helping, relating, and driving. It is a common source that most of the locals are brought up with and can relate to. Besides, Muslims have successfully led a great civilization for centuries. As a matter of fact, in the Middle Eastern context tying religion to leadership might not only target the local needs for effective and relevant trainings, but most likely provide the service with a sense of legitimacy as well. In yet another example, Amy Barnes expressed it in this way:

> "We bring a very unique and interesting mix of perspectives [...] in our programs, we implement a very spiritual approach to unleash the human spirit at work [...] I don't think you can find it in other leadership firms in Poland [...]"

Drawing on Guthey's article "*Fashion, trends, and the production of leadership*", we confirm that identification and proposition of "the true essence of leadership" serve these companies not only in a way to distinguish themselves and target different market niches, but also in a way to claim the right for the best leadership solution available. Furthermore, to some extent, these companies tend to criticize each other, and that may serve as an indicator of growing competition in the market. Finally, due to the ambiguous character of the leadership notion, customers of leadership products tend to stimulate providers to supply them with more accurate and adequate leadership solutions.

IV)   SUMMARY

In sum, the importation of western models practiced in both regions is popular due to their level of development, and also to utilize resources which are perceived credible. This has raised the discussion about how the companies in both regions are using a strategy that differentiates them locally by adopting a form of global standardization.

The ambiguity around the concept of leadership allows the trainers to embrace different roles (trainer, coach, mentor) and claim the right to legitimize themselves by delivering the "true essence of leadership". Subsequently, it will also open up for a wider variety of developmental products.

4.3.3 CRITIQUE

Our research was primarily conducted on the practitioners in the industry on both regions. However, we felt it is necessary to get a different side's opinion on how things work in the field. Therefore, we have interviewed two scholars from each context, who had done research on the field of leadership. We met Dr. Khaled Al Yahya, Ph.D in Comparative Development Policy & Management, and Professor Zbigniew Pelczynski, Professor of political science. They work and live in the UAE and Poland, respectively.

Dr. Khalid Al Yahya in his article "*The Over-Educated, Under-Utilized Public Manager: Why Doesn't Human Capital Development Bring Desired Outcomes?*" proposed and tested a model of human capital resource utilization at the organizational level in the public sector in Saudi Arabia and Oman. Al-Yahya and his colleagues expose the fact that there is a widespread under-utilization problem in these contexts in the sense that skills and abilities of employees, although relatively and increasingly abundant, are invariably underutilized. Al-Yahya asserts that without effective utilization mechanisms, additional skill development might prove ineffective and largely irrelevant to performance and overall effectiveness of governance systems. From the interviews, Dr. Al-Yahya at first questions the time span of the courses and denounces the practice of such trainings. He puts it this way:

> "[...] In one and a half day program, what do you expect people to change?! It is good to start with them and check up with them (the participants) several times along a period of time in form of visits, observations, etc.. [...] The trainings lack to be employed in strategic and/or sustainable manners, and therefore cannot be transformative to the trainees."

About the same issue, Prof. Z. Pelczynski had a quite similar statement:

> "I do not fully appreciate business leadership development [...]These programs are too expensive and too short. [...] Three days of workshop? What is this? How you can change anything in such a period?"

It is obviously the trend that many of these training companies hold short time seminars. However, our scholars do not support the fashion of these courses. Furthermore, we present the opinions of our scholars, concerning the situation in the public sector in a 'What, Why, and How' manner.

4.3.3.1   THE UAE CONTEXT

1) What:

"I don't know why you train people for leadership, because there is no space for leaders here. There is only one leader and it goes by inheritance!" Al-Yahya explains that many companies acquire these kinds of services, but in fact, they do not know for what purpose it serves. He highlights that the providers comply with the relevance in the UAE because the industry is controlled or dominated by western disciplines, where a copy-paste fashion is the trend. He also observed that the majority of the developmental programs were developed by people who come from different environment (i.e. structure, value systems are put in place) which makes it easy to accept leadership. He compares the former to regional context:

> "The law here is not strong and in way, despite the modernization you see around, we are still a primitive society. Besides, Leadership here comes from either being powerful, intimidating for others, or having some really legal authority. "

Al-Yahya clearly criticizes the practice of leadership development and manner of copying from elsewhere and applying the knowledge to the specific context, which confirms Jones' argument about the industry having a leveling effect around the globe.

2) Why:

Al-Yahya points out two things: 1) that all companies have yearly budgets for training and basically need to spend it, 2) The strategy the firms use to promote their services is based on the element of self-aggrandizement and people have self-interest in leadership to get power. Beside these observations, asserts:

> "In the UAE there is competition in the market everywhere, so the leadership firms have built a strong association between leadership development and competitiveness [...] to the international level. [...] but there are no efforts to work on the foundations."

Al-Yahya reveals the determinants for why skills development firms exist in the region, even though there is a tendency for delivering, as Al-Yahya describes it, "useless trainings". One part of the mistake is that the leaders in organization who acquire the service did (and to some extent do) not pay attention to the outcomes of these programs

and have not required a measure of sustainability on the outcome of the programs. As we mentioned before, after the recession the customers have become more aware about their spending and the ROI.

The companies have detected what the public wants to hear and thus built the programs in a way that is "catchy" for the audience; in other words, whether it is power, authority, or competitiveness, these have been used as marketing tools to target the desire of people in the promotion of leadership.

Al-Yahya highlights the fact the region of MINA have perhaps the best engineers in world, but not the best sociologists, political scientists or psychologists, which are essential for building the foundations of what the country lacks, and establish a value system to sustain them. The fact that organizations' tendency activities in the region are dubious in general does not support the promotion of leadership.

3) How to solve:

Al-Yahya anticipates a paradigm change in the future given the major generational shift. Essential to tackling the problem is that much emphasis must be put on the environment itself, because if there is an organizational transparency and space that accommodates change, the offered trainings might actually be used properly, and real demand will appear. Moreover, he suggests that the programs must be delivered differently (sustainably) and should be very selective in terms of participant.

4.3.3.1 THE POLISH CONTEXT

While the mindset of the public sector is the same as the private one in the UAE, Pelczynski states that "In Poland there is a huge distinction between public leadership and business leadership.[...]." Pelczynski demonstrates that public officials have no interest in leadership development. He elaborates:

> "Leadership development is big business in the west, especially in US, but small in Poland. Polish public sector does not appreciate "leadership", there is no interest to apply leadership practices to real life. On the other hand, in business, especially foreign business there is an appreciation."

In order to understand what causes such a low interest in leadership development within the field of public sector, we decided to present our findings in similar way as above, using what, why, and how manner. For this purpose, we use Pelczynski's article *"Deficit of Leaders"* to support his statements.

1) What:

There is a lack of public support to develop leadership. Pelczynski asserts:

> "In many developed countries, public institutions care for people with potential leadership attributes. Unfortunately, in Poland, both the prevailing political system and the mentality of the majority of the population do not allow potential leaders to develop and use their potential to the benefit of all. Negative consequence of these limitations - the shortage of leaders, especially in the Polish political scene [...] "

He elaborates on the cause of leadership shortage, blaming both the Polish mentality which is still burdened by its communist legacy, as well as the current political system that was created by old generation.

2) Why:

> "Not a single political force has desire to help young leaders, by supporting schools and leadership courses, or by financing the scholarship national and international wide. In Poland, social initiatives are marginal, and the public funds together with foreign aid are in absolute low. [...]"

Pelczynski et al. uncover what stands behind the problems. He carefully analyzes the nature of the problem, by pointing out the lack of initiative in public sector, and the deficiency in financial funds provided for the purpose of leadership development. He adds:

> "The richest members of society did not yet fully developed an ethos of philanthropy, as well as did not focus their attention on financing the institutions, and public benefit programs. [...] Additionally, there is a substantial lack of faith that you can achieve something through your own ingenuity and hard work, not only through the connections. Finally, general public looks at the successful members of society, very suspiciously, or with envy."

This statement emphasizes the fact that the richest members of the society do not appreciate the importance of leadership development. Also, the authors identified high

skepticism toward personal growth and achievement, both from the individual and collective perspective.

3) How to solve:

In this part, Pelczynski et al. provide a complex solution to clear out all the barriers that stop young leaders from arising:

> "The solution could be a large-scale national scholarship program that would promote developing the individuals [...]"

Firstly, the authors seek solutions in financial support of talented individuals. By following this idea, Pelczynski adds:

> "Creating a national fund with an objective to support interesting and innovative projects which would reward "active citizenship". Creating such fund, would have to go along together with generating favorable legislative means especially tax changes, that would allow and encourage business community to engage in this kind of projects."

Solutions should be sought by financially encouraging individuals to start their own entrepreneurial projects. Such financial help should come along with the extensive legislative changes in order to increase amount of initiatives. Then they add:

> "The solution should be sought in the reconstruction of the education system [...] The reform of education should be to support the development of elitarian education in both the public and private sectors. It is the elite schools and universities that are hotbeds of the future community leaders."

Another solution proposed by authors is the reconstruction of the current educational system, with the focus on developing top universities. Authors conclude:

> "Finally, if to Polish politics and the rest of the public sector, would come a new generation, not only with a solid academic knowledge, but also socially shaped by the 'forge of leadership', the changes in the policy of entire system would be easier to carry [...]"

They conclude that in order to trigger the positive changes in the field of developing leaders in the country, it is necessary to change the mindset of political class. Most of the old political generation is still affected by the fifty years of communism. Finally, the article states:

"In conclusion, it is not about the replacement of the older generation by younger, but about the change of the mindset of the political class. This could be easier with the young leaders as they are less contaminated by the legacy of real socialism."

Socialist systems tend to discourage productiveness and innovation, as well as the creative attitudes that attract firms to leadership development. Effects of such an approach are widely noticeable among the younger generation, to some extent characterized by a low level of motivation, and no intention to work in the public sector. In sum, the transformation of the mentality is essential to overcome the reason behind the low interest in developing leaders in Poland.

The critique of the Polish social environment presented in this section is highly related to the scope of our research. It is beyond doubt that the leadership practices are affected by the characteristic of the local culture. The evident lack of role models influences the effectiveness of trainings, as the program participants follow the example and identify themselves with the successful leaders. Additionally, the communist system produced a generation of low quality role models. This contributes to the misinterpretation of what stands for the leadership, and thus, restrains identity formation. Additionally, such factors like politics and nepotism contribute as well to the ambiguity of the leadership concept. Authoritarian leaders, and incompetence among higher management are the best examples of that. The general disbelief that one can achieve something through hard work and ingenuity may contribute to the low level of motivation, as well as to the skeptical attitudes toward the leadership programs. Furthermore, low quality of the leadership exercised in both public and private sectors may create a demand for leadership development companies, thus, opening the window for the development and growth of the leadership industries.

4.3.3.3 SUMMARY

In sum, it became more clear that both academics argue that the environment in the organizations do not support developmental initiatives in the practical sense. This highly supports our argument about the standardized industry and draws a picture that shows the similarity and normality of the overall industry of leadership development. We conclude that in both contexts, the industry has uniform characteristics in the general sense despite the cultural and regional differences. Also, the ambiguity of the concept

allows the players in the market to define what they want to stand for 'leadership' as the general public does not know hold its own concept of leadership. Thus, the public is vulnerable and subject to domination by the service providers. Also, given the theoretical base for leadership development focuses on the best practices, the efforts in both markets show very little effectiveness of the commercial use of these kinds of services. In our opinion, this creates a paradox, which makes us believe that the main concern here is that the expectations of the industry are not delivered.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Throughout the thesis, we have argued that the competitive dynamics of the leadership industries exert at least as much influence as cultural factors in shaping leadership development practices in the contexts of Poland and the UAE. We present our arguments and express the motivation behind our study in chapter one. In chapter three, we review the literature on leadership development as a concept from a theoretical and practical stance and establish the fact that most literature on leadership development approaches the concept from a best practices point of view. Then we turn our attention to the production of leadership perspective, where we present the concept of ambiguity that functions as both an advantage and limitation for the service providers in the market of leadership development. Additionally, we review the literature on the cross-cultural approach to leadership which argues that leadership behavior is culturally determined and the critique of this approach. Finally, we raise neo-institutionalism theory, as it focuses on the way institutions interact and affect society in order to support our argument about the similarity of the industry in both contexts. In chapter four, we present and interpret the contextual and industrial findings. The six bundles of factors on the contexts and industries provide explanations on the differences and similarities between both contexts, which prove that the contexts are culturally different, but in terms of business dynamics, they are more similar than different.

In both contexts, the industry consists of diverse types of service providers and organizations. These companies differ in size, age, specialization, strategic focus, and market share. Although one might think that these companies only compete for a bigger market share, the truth is that they frequently collaborate, are loosely tied to each other, and use each other to some extent as a sounding board. Furthermore, they are divided on the public side (universities, colleges), and on the private side, which consists of one-person firms, local medium-size firms, and large multinational enterprises. The kinds of services these companies provide diverge in the general sense. However, all of them are engaged in the leadership production industry given the ambiguous definition of the term itself. The interviews with 13 consultants and experts from the field of leadership in both

contexts gave us a clearer understanding of the environment in which the leadership development products and services interact. We conclude on how similar the industry is between the two contexts and proceed to answer the research questions. Finally, this chapter draws up the future perspectives and possible research areas for leadership development industry.

5.1 ANSWERING THE 1ST QUESTION

[1. To what extent do cross cultural and regional factors help explain the similarities and differences between leadership development practices in the UAE and Poland?]

If we based our discussion on the assumption that Poland and the UAE are completely different or completely similar, this would be erroneous. Therefore we not only focus in our discussion around differences and similarities between both contexts, but we also focus on the influence of the cross cultural and regional factors that help explain the leadership development in the contexts.

The GLOBE study emphasizes on the importance and relativity between culture and leadership. From the study and the set of endorsed leadership qualities that measure the effectiveness of leadership, we were able to deduct profiles that presumably represent the perceived and exercised effectiveness of leaders in the in both regions. Interestingly, from the study, we were able to reveal a slight resemblance between the two regions in terms of values and practices of leadership. Moreover, the six-facet model of leadership dimensions presented by the same study differentiates profiles of leader that are rather different than similar. Rendering these profiles, however, it seems to be difficult for the leadership firms to meet the expectations from the public. The leadership development firms in both regions still are fully operational, although skepticism on the products they deliver remains present. Hanges asserted, by knowing the content of an individual belief system, it is believed that one could predict whether an individual would perceive another individual as an effective or ineffective leader. According to our research, the greatest challenge for these firms in general is to define what is determinant and what is effective for the participants in those regions in order to deliver satisfactory developmental services. Toward this end, the diverse expectations related to the outcome

of the providers' programs make it even harder to define or predict what would be most effective or efficient for among the same recipients. The reality of modern organizations and the tactical invasion made by corporations worldwide produces a mix of cultures. The fact that many of employees have different experiences and/or carry another culture in their luggage is a proof of the cultural creolization. Defining culture which is limited for one region is becoming (if not already is) an impossible task. This affirms not only the fluid characteristics of culture, but also the cross-cultural theory that leadership has an effect right back as much as it is affected by culture itself, which is presented by Guthey & Jackson.

We brought forward the factors of religion and values, lack of role models and governmental initiatives and support, and we conclude that these factors are connected to the topic of identity formation as a symbolic resource indicated by Ailon (Ailon-Souday and Kunda 2003) and thus are essential as elements of culture. While we pointed out the differences, the notion that people appreciate values and praise religion is considered as being active efforts in the formation of the local identity. The heavy influence the government puts on trainings is a form of the legal differentiation of the country and local culture. The governmental involvement in initiatives and support for the promotion of leadership and its citizens' development (specifically the locals) are constructive steps which aims are strengthening the state for the future. Gender is an exception to our comparison as there are significant differences in terms of behavior, responsibilities, and equality between the two contexts. Recent research showed a tied connection between leadership development and identity formation, in which gender aspects of identity are clearly crucial for this facet. The lack of role models in both contexts, which is expressed by the interviewees, confirms its importance on the shape and reinforcement of the local culture. Drawing on role models, whose identity is not in correspondence with the target group in terms of culture and values, it seems to be affecting the leadership development practices in the sense of their effectiveness.

In conclusion, given that the leadership development practices are quite similar in both regions, the cultural differences however imply a strong influence on the conduct of the developmental programs. The UAE expose a heavy reluctance to western or foreign values in general, which conflict with the local ones, and indeed require an elaborate

modification on the content, metaphors, and distinction used in the trainings in order to be delivered to and accepted by the audience. This is not always the actual case. We note that in the UAE, religion is tremendously and explicitly appraised, and its presence has a remarkable support by either formal or informal parties. In the polish context, the cultural modifications of the trainings seem to be present to a lesser extent, presumed the cultural and regional closeness to western societies and values.

In other words, cross-cultural and regional factors have a significant influence on the differences and similarities on leadership development practices in the sense of the desired identity formation and training effectiveness in both contexts. These challenges facing the industry might hinder leadership development practices from exerting an influence back on the culture, as we argue. Many studies have argued and embraced the idea of a one-way relationship between leadership and culture. However, we disagree with this general opinion.

5.2 ANSWERING 2ND AND 3RD RESEARCH QUESTION

[2. To what extent do the competitive and institutional dynamics of the leadership industries help explain these same similarities and differences?]

[3. Specifically, how do the industrial dynamics of standardization and differentiation shape and influence the nature of leadership development in these two contexts?]

From a production of culture perspective, Guthey advocates that the leadership development providers are part of the culture industry. As Peterson asserts that the production of culture looks into the processes by which elements of culture are produced in the social context, here we begin the discussion by elaborating on of the six-facet model of production presented by Peterson and Anand (Peterson and Anand 2004). Subsequently, we move toward discussing the idea of institutionalization related to our findings.

The six-facet model includes Technology, Law and Regulation, Industry Structure, Organizational Structure, Occupational Careers, and Market. In our discussion we highlight on several facets that intend to draw a clearer picture of how the industry of leadership

development products and services is set up. What we reveal from our research is that the leadership industry in its broader sense makes use of all sorts of technology in delivering leadership content and information. That is, making use of, for instance, e-learning assets, elaborated graphics, interactive presentations, and tablets. These assets without doubt are being used not only to provide a deeper understanding of the programs' content and to excavate the participants' potentials, but also most likely are intended to attach a sense of legitimacy to the provider's products.

When it comes to Law and Regulations, unfortunately there are no indications that leadership, as a part of the cultural industry, has clear lines of what concerns industrial requirements and limitations. This area we found rather notable, because it proves the fact that leadership developmental services exist in an open field where no "game rules" are present, thus, creating a market place with high levels of competition and easy entry-access. As Peterson and Anand explain "Once consumer tastes are reified as a market, those in the field tailor actions to create cultural goods like those that are currently most popular as represented by the accepted measurement tools."(Peterson & Anand 2004), this has been revealed as a major issue in both regions. In other words, the fact that an extensive need for organizational and societal development in those regions has already been detected, a specific picture of what exactly these consumer tastes are, seems to be falling short or not clearly defined. However, the providers use their networks and the reputation of the cast and crew involved in the production to establish trustworthiness, i.e. to refract prestige by signaling legitimacy and credibility. This, for instance, is done through utilizing Harvard lectures, and known figures.

Looking at the industry structure, we found that there are small competing companies producing a diversity of products, a few vertically integrated oligarchical firms that produce a few standardized products, and small specialty service and market development firms (Peterson & Anand 2004). Since leadership development is recognized as an industrial field, the concept of "institutionalization" presented by DiMaggio & Powell applies to the process of industry formation.

Hence, we focus our attention in this section on the competitive and institutional dynamics of the leadership industries in order to compare the similarities and differences

between the leadership development practices and how the industrial dynamics shape and influence the nature of leadership development in Poland and the UAE. On the basis of our study of the leadership development industry in two very different contexts, actually commercialized leadership development practices exert a leveling force on the way people perceive leadership, because the offerings are rather standardized, although CCL theory would claim that approaches to leadership are different in each context (R. J. House 2004). That is, since the leadership development concept is a symbolic product and it is connected to meanings and values, it would make a lot of sense for the leadership development to be different. If culture is about meanings and values and culture is different in different contexts as demonstrated in cross-cultural theory by the GLOBE study, it continues to make sense for the leadership development practices to be different. Ironically, we have not found this, but instead found the symbols, discourses, and values used in the industrial context to be very similar. This can also be interpreted as culture does not solely determine leadership, but leadership also determines the way culture is. This is demonstrated by our findings from both contexts.

For this, it is important to bring closer the concepts of ambiguity, importation of models, differentiation, and standardization. These four factors explicitly illustrate the picture of the industrial practices in both contexts and are linked to the production of leadership perspective proposed by Guthey. As Peterson affirms in his model that once the consumer tastes are reified as a market, those in the field tailor their actions to create cultural goods like those that are most currently popular (Peterson and Anand 2004), our research exposed that the ambiguous character of the leadership concept allows leadership companies to manipulate and shape the content of programs in order to meet the needs of the clients. These findings correspond with the production of leadership perspective, as they confirm that the multitude of leadership actors and activities magnify the ambiguity of leadership concept (Guthey 2012). Furthermore, the co-creators of the leadership field attempt to lessen this ambiguity by defining the concept in their own, unique way. Frequently, some companies claim the right for inventing the "genuine" leadership solution - in other words, they claim to discover the true essence of leadership (Guthey 2012). This approach enables companies to present themselves in an exclusive way, and to introduce their offerings as more legitimate (Guthey 2012).

Norms of formal, substantive, and affective rationality engender many different expectations attached to the leadership concepts. These were confirmed by the GLOBE studies that identified countless expectations attached to the leadership all around the world. In order to satisfy the needs of the clients, leadership industries are forced to address these various expectations. By providing the forms of many technical, effective, social, and moral prescriptions leadership companies tend to fill as much demand gaps as possible. Most of the companies that we interviewed offered highly diversified product portfolios. Whether it was an "orthodox", spiritual or sophisticated leadership program, they were all designed for the purpose of satisfying the specific customer segment, and thus, gaining as much financial return as it is possible. The ever-increasing influx of the new expectations attached to the leadership theories further contributes to the ambiguity of the leadership concept. The reason for this is that these expectations do not always support or reinforce themselves, occasionally to the extent that they are contradictory to each other. Moreover, the rapid increase in the amount of the participants in the field of leadership production that later promote, produce, and sell various leadership products and services may again distort and contribute to the ambiguity of leadership concepts.

The continual struggle for legitimacy and the tendency to leverage and prioritize the expectations of formal, substantive and affective rationality have one important objective which is to have more credibility and recognition in the eyes of the prospective customers. Such proclivity is remarkably noticeable in our findings, and also very evident from the perspective of the providers. It is understandable that amongst the multitude of leadership development providers, it is reasonable to create a value-added advantage. Furthermore, struggle for legitimacy serves as the means to achieve certain status, authority, reputation, expertise, and brand recognition. It is a continuous process of innovation that contributes to the reproduction of more leadership concepts, practices and theories (Guthey 2012). The ongoing struggle for legitimacy entails that companies differentiate themselves and sometimes to the point that they occasionally tend to criticize each other's approach to leadership development (Guthey 2012). Attempts toward differentiation were reflected in our findings in the sense that some companies implement very unique techniques in their offerings. Moreover, such differentiations were extensively exposed and emphasized, whether we visited the company's website or talked to the interviewees.

The frameworks and strategies, which companies implement in these two regions as we note, are in fact a form of global standardization. Leadership industries draw on the models and techniques that are utilized globally by other leadership development companies. The extensive importation of models, which content is modified and adapted to the local context, is one of the best examples of the standardization of practices. The reason behind such an endeavor is a tendency to exhibit more professional approach, as well as to make use of credible and proven solutions. Additionally, multinational consultancies provide companies with only prior established frameworks that are applied in many different countries. The motive behind this standardized approach is the belief that the world is becoming more globalized. Consultancies consider that nowadays companies operate globally, and are becoming more heterogeneous in terms of the cultural diversity within, and outside the organizational boundaries. Thus, in order to stay competitive, it is necessary to make use of globally standardized frameworks of leadership programs.

The idea of the standardization is closely related to the anthropological view of leadership development, proposed by Jones. He advocates that leadership development programs serve as the context for organizations and cultures to interact, confront and resolve economic and social conflicts that affect the larger society (Jones 2006). Our research clearly indicated such interaction, particularly visible during the conduction of programs, where participants were involved in interrelated exchange of backgrounds, experiences and cultures. In this light, standardization can be a result of the continuous evolution of leadership services, as the standardized leadership programs are naturalized to the cultural schema of a particular context (Jones 2006). The paradox of the concurrent development of localization and standardization is an outcome of the world becoming more homogenous in which people exhibit their cultural distinctiveness (Jones 2006). From this perspective, people do not oppose the process of modernization, but rather indigenize this modernity as a part of their own cultural space in globalized world (Jones 2006).

The viewpoint of Jones implies the isomorphic character of organizations - which they are under the continuous process of development to become similar, even though they evolved in different ways. The attitudes toward standardization of practices of leadership practices confirm the premises of neo-institutional theory. Neo-institutional theory is based on the premise that companies in order to survive and succeed, must establish legitimacy

within the specific sector. This in particular has a very clear reference to the results of our research. Companies in both contexts seek for legitimacy, by offering localized, and standardized frameworks. Paradoxically, as these organizations strive to change and legitimize themselves, isomorphic forces drive organizations to become more similar (DiMaggio and Powell 1983).

In the context of our research, the isomorphic view of the organizations is valid and explanative. Nevertheless, according to the critique of current studies on the neo-institutionalism, organizations adopt processes and structures for their meaning, rather than productive value (Suddaby 2010). Also, by focusing more on the norms of substantive and affective rationality in the current studies on the neo-institutionalism, it could help explain that processes of institutionalization achieve legitimacy through cultural discourses, beliefs and values, rather than bureaucratic structures and productivity (Guthey work in progress 2013).

By drawing on this critical perspective of over-concern towards productivity and efficiency in the studies of neo-institutionalism, we can find the linkage to the results of our research. Our research revealed that the leadership programs are not only oriented toward performance orientation, but are the subject to many contextual patterns that influence its shape. This is confirmed by Guthey's critique of neo-institutionalism, who suggests that the key to various approaches and techniques utilized by the leadership industries lies in understanding the social, institutional and commercial factors. In our contexts, firms may operate for reasons other than effectiveness and efficiency. They operate for cultural and professional ends that are continuously reconstructed by the context in which these companies exist. Companies may not have a financial interest in providing effective and state-of-the-art programs, as they may not deliver a satisfactory economic return. Instead they are interested in delivering products that only meet customer needs sufficiently, and meet clients' expectations to the extent when they are still willing to participate. Theories and techniques utilized by the leadership industries are designed to address various expectations attached to the leadership. Some contextual factors shape the nature of these many social expectations only to further influence the leadership development practices. This creates a struggle for the providers to find a balance between standardization and differentiation.

The similarities of the competitive dynamics in these two culturally different regions confirm the similar character of the leadership industries. Companies operating in these regions exhibit similar strategies to achieve their own ends, despite the cultural differences. The ambiguous character of the leadership concept allows leadership industries to shape the content of the programs in order to differentiate themselves in the market and meet the customer needs. By the same token, leadership firms are not interested in providing the most efficient leadership solutions, but to offer the optimal services that meet the customers' needs in an acceptable way. The cultural factors influence leadership practices only up to an extent, when the imported models are modified and adjusted to the regional needs.

As previously explained, the differentiation in the local markets is a form of global standardization. In this sense, standardization and differentiation shape and influence the nature of the leadership development to the point, in which these two contexts exhibit a similar approach to the leadership practices.

Given the fact that cultural differences are evident between these two contexts, we conclude that the competitive dynamics of the leadership industries exerts at least as much influence as cultural factors on the shape of leadership development practices in these two regions.

5.3 FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Since our thesis opens up for debate an aspect which shows that two very different regions still have the same industrial pattern and leadership practices,, we encourage further studies to investigate and re-think the cross cultural theory and look for global similarities rather than differences. Also, it is indicated that the area of demand needs to be better understood in order to provide proper, context determined solutions, instead of building on the ambiguity of the concept of leadership itself.

Throughout the thesis, we do not deny the fact that both contexts are different from each other. Therefore, we identify an opportunity for further investigation in the area of creating local models that involve value national traits. The Altaaat institute for instance has initiated an initiative called Taqasum (sharing) which is about sharing context effective models for MINA region's leadership development providers.

The presence of class differences in our studies contexts made us wonder about the relation between equality and leadership. We may refer part of the blame of the malfunction of the leadership concept in both contexts to the complex relation between wealth and humanity. Further studies might be able to answer our doubts.

Lastly, recent generations have become diverse and the creolization concept is setting a noticeable footprint around the globe. As we, the authors, have met several interviewees who - seemed to have similar patterns as ours - being brought up in different contexts different than our mixed cultural backgrounds and parents' countries of origin - it is becoming harder to properly articulate what national culture is mostly representing oneself. Thus, we believe that the aspect of creolization is gaining more importance and should not be neglected in future studies and investigations.

We genuinely hope that our conclusions in this paper will assist in bringing the leadership concept to the higher levels of comprehension.

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