

APSA Advances Qualitative Methods Training for MENA Scholars in Morocco Workshop

DANA EL-ISSA | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, MENA WORKSHOPS AND INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

In May 2024, APSA's Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Program held a qualitative methods workshop for early-career scholars from the Arab MENA region in Tangier, Morocco. The three-day training, titled "Qualitative Methods for the Social Sciences: Causal Analysis," was held in partnership with the Tangier American Legation Museum (TALIM) and the Moroccan Institute for Policy Analysis (MIPA). This workshop marks the second methods training workshop held by APSA's MENA Program, following the launch of the MENA Methods Program Initiative in 2023. The [Inaugural Program on Quantitative Methods](#) was held at the Doha Institute of Graduate Studies in December 2023 in collaboration with the Arab Political Science Network (APSN).



Participants engage in a workshop session at the Tangier American Legation Museum (TALIM)

The three-day workshop convened 22 participants from Morocco and other MENA countries, providing intermediate-level training on understanding and applying methods of qualitative analysis in social science research. Led by Drs. Jason Brownlee (University of Texas at Austin), Matt Buehler (University of Tennessee), and Zaynab El Bernoussi (NYU Abu Dhabi), the program aimed to enhance participants' foundational knowledge of qualitative research methods and provide training on some of the specific tools of causal analysis used in high-quality qualitative research.



Dr. Zaynab El Bernoussi (NYU Abu Dhabi) leads a session on qualitative interviewing techniques



Drs. Jason Brownlee (University of Texas at Austin) and Matt Buehler (University of Tennessee) guide participants through a session on constructing casual diagrams

Co-leaders guided attendees through a series of sessions combining theory with practical applications, engaging participants in exercises to apply learned concepts to their current research projects. Sessions included discussions and exercises on developing research questions, comparative historical analysis, case selection, causal diagrams, process tracing, and qualitative interviewing techniques. The program also offered designated office hours for fellows to seek feedback and guidance on their research projects from workshop facilitators.

"I appreciated the practical side of the course, including case studies and debates among participants. Meeting scholars from the region, learning new concepts, and meeting co-leaders in person, having previously only read their works were all beneficial aspects of the program."

— Workshop Fellow



Ibtissam Ghaich (left, Mohammed V University of Rabat) and Kemi Perez Lionnel (right, University of Mohammed VI) during a session on ethnography and participant-observation in interviewing



Participants network with fellow scholars during a coffee break at the APSA MENA Methods Training Workshop in Tangier, Morocco

Upon completion, participants received a one-year membership to APSA and were encouraged to apply for the [2024 MENA Mentoring Initiative](#).

"The sessions involving hands-on exercises such as the causal diagram building and backcasting exercises particularly helped deepen my understanding of qualitative research methods."

— Workshop Fellow

Scholars are encouraged to apply with a research project in progress

APSA's MENA Methods Trainings are hosted by universities or research institutions in countries across the MENA region. Each program focuses on a different methodological approach, leveraging the varied interests and expertise of local scholars. Up to 20 graduate students and early-career scholars are invited to attend each program. Scholars

that they will discuss at the workshop. Guided by a syllabus of core readings and data tools, fellows engage in small group and full group sessions to explore nuances in research design, data availability and collection, and methodological best practices, including techniques to address the practical challenges facing researchers on the ground. Following their participation, fellows are prioritized through the MENA Mentoring Initiative to be paired with senior scholar mentors for a period of three to six months with the goal of advancing a specific scholarly output such as a journal article, book chapter, book project, or dataset.



Workshop participants gather for a group photo at TALIM's outdoor garden

Funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York, APSA's MENA Program is a multi-year effort to support political science research and networking among early-career scholars across the Arab MENA region. For program news, updates, and additional information, contact menaworkshops@apsanet.org or visit the project website: <http://web.apsanet.org/mena/>. ■

Call for Mentors — APSA Mentoring Program

APSA invites you to serve as a mentor! We welcome mentors at all career levels and across all political science subfields. APSA staff successfully matched 115 during the 2023-2024 academic year. We are now looking for more of our members to serve as a mentor during the 2024-2025 academic year. We welcome mentors who are Master's students, PhD students, junior faculty, senior faculty, retired, career experts, etc. Submit or update your mentor profile to be matched with a mentee in Fall 2024 here:

<https://www.apsanet.org/DIVERSITY/APSA-Mentoring-Program/Mentor-Application>

The [APSA Mentoring Program](#) seeks to connect undergraduate, graduate students, and junior faculty from all backgrounds to experienced and senior members of the profession for professional development support on a wide range of academic and career topics. This includes research collaboration, CV support, graduate school advice and experience, and advice on the job market. Having support and guidance is key to the success for women, people of color and first-generation scholars in the profession.

The next enrollment period for individuals seeking a mentor will be in August 2024. If you have any questions about how the mentoring program works, please contact us at mentoring@apsanet.org. ■