



University systems in the Arab East: Publish globally and perish locally vs publish locally and perish globally

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Abstract

This article attempts to demonstrate how the university system and the system of social knowledge production greatly influence elite formation in the Arab East (in Egypt, Syria, the Palestinian territory, Jordan and Lebanon) by focusing on three intertwined factors: compartmentalization of scholarly activities, the demise of the university as a public sphere and the criteria for publication that count towards promotion. Universities have often produced compartmentalized elites inside each nation-state and they don't communicate with one another: they are either elite that publish globally and perish locally or elite that publish locally and perish globally. The article pays special attention to elite universities.

Keywords

elite formation, internationalization of research, promotion system, publication, universities in Arab world

Since the seminal work of Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus* (1984), many authors have been interested in the role of higher education and university systems in elite formation, as the modern higher education system has been a major site of struggle over the production of culture as well as social inequalities (Ringer, 1991; Sabour, 1988). In the Arab world, there are different types of universities (public, selective and commercial) that produce different types of elite with weak or strong links to the societies surrounding them.

In this article, I do not delve into the new elites emerging in the Arab East, but rather I attempt to demonstrate how the university system and the system of social-scientific

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knowledge production greatly influence elite formation. Many elements are at play, namely the admission system, new processes such as accreditation, curriculum updating, administrative tasks, community services and fundraising skills, but also publication that allows scholars to compete for academic and institutional promotion. For the purpose of this article, I address three factors associated with the university system: compartmentalization of scholarly activities, the demise of the university as a public sphere and the criteria for publication that count towards promotion. This last factor is the main focus of this article. Publication is indeed the central communication tool of scientific activity; it entails the diffusion of knowledge, training and the peer assessment of scholars. It has been widely studied from an evaluative perspective (by the productivity of scientists and laboratories, by countries, etc.) (see Arvanitis and Gaillard, 1992; Waast, 1996) but few authors (Alatas, 2003; Keim, 2008, 2011) have studied it from a power structure perspective. By reconsidering the status of publication, this study attempts to bring to the forefront publication as not merely an element in the construction of research practices (the final stage in the research process) but also as a structured space shaping this very research practice (a central element which determines both the research topic and the type of analysis and writing).

In relation to my research questions, this article only analyses production in the social sciences. There is a significant difference in reflexivity between natural sciences, where the object of research is less bound to the local, and the social sciences, where levels of abstraction are lower. Natural science research is undergoing an internationalization process (Larédo et al., 2009), through large European and American scientific programmes that set up international teams and often rely on researchers from non-hegemonic countries. However, social research is often local even if it relies on international funders.

This article is based on a variety of data and fieldwork. First, I conducted interviews in the Arab East (in Egypt, Syria, the Palestinian territory, Jordan and Lebanon) with 23 social scientists about their authorship practices and their participation in the evaluation of colleagues with regard to promotion. Interviews were organized around accounts of personal stories of research and publication, the importance of writing, the different tasks undertaken in the research process and the decision-making processes of journals. Second, 203 CVs of scholars from Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian territory were broadly studied. These CVs were collected in the last four years through research on university websites, together with consultants' CVs provided by the UN human resource department, as well as from those who submitted manuscripts for publication in the journal *Idafat – the Arab Journal of Sociology* (of which I am editor). I use these CVs only to look at the language of publication, the outlet of publication, the ratio between published articles, newspaper articles and unpublished reports, and finally at participation in conferences, workshops, public and academic talks. This 'sample' cannot be considered in any way representative of the Arab East social scholarly community, therefore I do not use percentages in my analysis.¹ Third, I analysed the syllabi of 30 social science courses taught in Saint Josef University, the Lebanese American University (LAU) and the American University of Beirut (AUB). Fourth, I analysed various publications, including university annual reports or UN publications, looking for characteristics of the publication and the sources used in references. Finally, I reflect upon my personal experience concerning the ongoing international debate around the issues addressed in

this article. As editor of *Idafat* and board member of *al-Mustaqbal al-Arabi* (a refereed journal in the social sciences targeting specialized and non-specialized audiences), I have had sight to a large number of social scientific manuscripts. Also, being a faculty member at AUB, I draw many arguments from my own experience and consider this university as a case study. The article does not follow the typical structure of an empirical work; rather the empirical material serves to support a mainly theoretical argument.²

Compartmentalization of scholars by language of interaction

Higher education has historically played a role in the formation of the one sort of elite, endowed with cultural capital. The transformation of the university, especially through marketization and the diversification of its resources that is examined in this section, has engendered a diversification of elites, who are compartmentalized mainly through their language of interaction.

There are three types of universities in the Arab East. The first type is the *public university*, which absorbs the overwhelming majority of students. Being often a national university, it generally uses Arabic-language curricula. According to the UN's *Arab Human Development Report* (UNDP, 2003), political censorship and repression limits critical approaches, especially in public institutions. The democratization of education in Egypt and in Syria (where a free education allows a large proportion of the population access to it), albeit very important in the post-independence era, has led to an increase in the quantity, not the quality of students. In addition to these two major factors affecting education, one should add: lack of proper faculty salary, poor libraries and teaching resources, out-dated curricula,³ enormous logjams of students, lack of financial resources for research and poor knowledge of foreign languages. These factors make the level of education in these universities problematic.

The second type of university is older; some of them historically founded by missions. As their tuition is very costly, they are *private non-profit universities*, which attract the upper middle class (e.g. Saint Josef University, LAU and AUB in Lebanon, American University in Cairo [AUC]).⁴ These universities teach exclusively in English or French and are 'selective universities', or universities with a distinct linkage to social class. These universities accommodate both (upper) middle-class students as well as faculty from the same classes. Bourdieu (1984: 214) characterizes academia as a fundamentally conservative institution that reproduces and reinforces social class distinctions as a result of internalized faculty outlooks and expectations. This observation would only apply to the exclusive universities in the region (and not to the public universities). Some of these universities have mission statements which clearly state that their aim is to prepare students to serve the people of the region (e.g. AUB, AUC), while the mission statements of others aim to prepare students for work in the global market (e.g. LAU).

Finally, since the beginning of the 1990s, many countries in the region have opted for the privatization of education. While private non-profit universities in Lebanon date from the 19th century, Jordan opened its first *private for-profit university* in 1990, followed by Egypt, Syria and the Gulf Region.

These three types of universities do not necessarily produce corresponding types of elites and knowledge, but they do indicate particular patterns of classification, which are

addressed later in the article. Boundaries are occasionally blurred between these types of universities; for instance, some public universities have created private programmes.

With the transformation of the relationships between Henry Etzkowitz and Loet Leydesdorff's (2000) famous triple helix of university, industry and government, education is now being seen more as a private than a public good. Facing declining budgets and under intensified competition, private and public universities in the Arab East have responded with market solutions, standardization and corporatization. They have instituted joint ventures with private corporations and have been reinventing education as a commodity through distance learning (for other regions, see Bok, 2003; Kirp, 2003). Mamdani (2007) argued that whereas privatization (the entry of privately sponsored students) is compatible with a public university where priorities are publicly set, commercialization (financial and administrative autonomy for each faculty to design a market-responsive curriculum) inevitably leads to a situation where the market determines priorities in public universities. The primary objective is to turn the university into an entrepreneurial organization that can foster a relationship with the productive sectors of the economy (Clark, 1998). Turning educational development in the Arab East into a means of industrial development combines with the often backward looking gaze of these elitist institutions, to frustrate social science scholars (Sultana, 1999: 24). Some of the public universities, like those in Syria, are often much better than the newly opened private universities. Mamdani (2007) warns that the commercialization of public universities leads to the subversion of public institutions for private purposes. While commercial universities have often attracted middle and upper middle classes, the quality of the higher education is also problematic,⁵ as they produce an elite that cannot compete in the global market.

There is a massive academic boom in higher education in the Arab world. One important pattern characterizing the current boom is a dual process of *privatization* amidst *globalization*. Two-thirds (around 70) of the new universities founded in the Arab Middle East since 1993 are private, and more and more (at least 50) of them are branches of western, mostly American, universities (Romani, 2009: 4).

While offshore campuses (Qatar Education City, Dubai Campus⁶) can protect the university from their conservative surrounding societies, this results in a tendency for the university to cut its ties with society. The parachuting (Bashshur, 2007) of these structures does not encourage research output and the social sciences in these institutions are very marginal. For Vincent Romani (2009: 5) it is highly unlikely that the influx of new higher education venues can proceed without engaging the conflict between nationalism and the necessary *internationalism* of the projects. On the level of language, national universities often teach social sciences in Arabic, while exclusive universities use French and/or English. Private universities use what Zughoul (2000) called 'innovative accommodation' with lecturers and students code-switching between Arabic and English (or French) in order to get their points across. Many researchers, especially in North Africa, have shown that code-switching is not only frequent, but almost instinctive, producing an effortless and seamless flow of language that accommodates the variable levels of students' understanding (Sultana, 1999: 32).

These new trends in university development in the Arab region, driven by marketization and privatization, thus impact the language of instruction and elite formation, deserving closer scrutiny.

The UN's *Arab Human Development Report* (UNDP, 2003) indicated how little Arab countries translate from, and to, other languages. The damage caused by the lack of translation effort has become quite obvious: mono language teaching (in Arabic, French, or English) and the disconnection from external cultural and scientific advances or disembeddedness from the local context have led to the isolation from international debate of younger generations graduated from public universities. Generally speaking, the language-divide corresponds to an unequal division of labour in which Arabic production is mainly local (only slightly abstract) and of little relevance to international debates. These observations are based on a review of articles submitted to the journals *Idafat* and *al-Mustaqbal al-Arabi* since early 2007.

Although language is a highly symbolic marker of identity, multilingual scholars have multilayered identities which open the door to more expansive research agendas and a commitment not only to local and regional contexts, but international ones too. The language of instruction cannot be chosen exclusively on the basis of political-cultural factors, which are related to identity formation on gaining political independence. There is also a political-economic component, which involves recognizing problems related to the dearth of resources that limits the production of required textbooks, as well problems determined by the marketing strategies of international publishers from core universities (Sultana, 1999: 31). Production in two languages, especially through translation, allows Arab scholars to be read by both the Arab public and an international audience. Recent experience from the region confirms this.⁷ Thus, there are different markets for different languages, which make English very important as a teaching tool. However, there is no reason to have a syllabus devoid of references to Arabic publications. A study of 30 syllabi of social science courses taught in Saint Josef University, LAU and AUB shows that it is extremely rare (only two references) to find Arabic references, even as secondary reading.

However, as many interviewees pointed out, compartmentalization of the language of scholars does not mean one cannot find a way of mixing English and Arab curricula and references. One can expect universities that teach in English to be a bridge connecting the local social science to the international arena, but they become globalized institutions only in the sense that they have access to global conventions and resources but do not necessarily participate in the production of global science. Moreover, these universities contribute to the isolation of students and faculty from their society. George Soros (2002) and Joseph Stiglitz (2002) have recognized the pitfalls of globalization, specifically that internationalization of higher education creates and/or magnifies inequalities and inequities that already exist in southern societies. This process has led to the homogenization of curricula. Knight (2008) and Yew (2009) suggest that the complexities involved in working in the field of internationalization require additional sets of knowledge, attitudes, skills and understandings about the international, intercultural and global dimensions of higher education.

In Lebanon, while there is segmentation of society on sectarian-nationalist lines, language has come to reinforce this division. Knowing a foreign language becomes a source of integration globally and isolation locally. These elite universities produce hybridity that is geared only towards production and leads to alienation from national society and, consequently, marginality. Social scientists in Lebanon do not speak with each other because while the Lebanese University (public university) talks to the society,

AUB, LAU and Saint Joseph talk to the international world. The fora for encounters are rare.⁸

In brief, increasing privatization and the commodification of knowledge have created hierarchies between universities and between different language-speaking elites; and also the compartmentalization of scholars by language of interaction. In addition there is segmentation in the variety of social science activities.

Compartmentalization of scholars by types of social research

To address this second type of compartmentalization, I use the seminal four-dimensional typology elaborated by Michael Burawoy for sociology, applying it more broadly to all of the social sciences. Burawoy distinguishes between four types of sociology: two (*professional* and *critical* sociology) are relevant to academic audiences, and the others (*public* and *policy* sociology) pertain to a wider audience. Professional sociology consists of ‘multiple intersecting research programs, each with their assumptions, exemplars, defining questions, conceptual apparatuses and evolving theories’ (Burawoy, 2005: 10). Critical sociology examines the foundations – both the explicit and the implicit, both normative and descriptive – of the research programmes of professional sociology. Public sociology ‘brings sociology into a conversation with publics, understood as people who are themselves involved in conversation. It entails, therefore, a double conversation’ (Burawoy, 2005: 8) and reciprocal relationships, in which meaningful dialogue fosters mutual education that not only strengthens such publics but also enriches sociological work itself and helps it in setting the research agendas. Community participation in the design of research proposals as well as lectures and workshops with different stakeholders for dissemination of the results of research are forms through which social scientists can interact with the public and determine the relevance of future topics of study, both for the needs of society and the public. Public social science thus has four levels: first, privileging the method of sociological intervention⁹ and action research; second, speaking and writing for the public exclusively about the researcher’s discipline; third, speaking and writing about the discipline and how it relates to the social, cultural and political world around it; finally, speaking, writing and taking a stand for something far larger than the discipline from which the researcher originated (Lightman, 2008). Here we should admit the public researcher’s normative stance without necessarily uncritically espousing a cause (Marezouki, 2004; Wieviorka, 2000).

Finally, policy sociology’s purpose is to provide solutions to problems that are presented to the society, or to legitimate solutions that have already been reached. Some clients (international organizations, ministries, etc.) often request specific studies for their intervention, with a narrow contract (Burawoy, 2005: 9).

While all four types of social science are equally represented and being debated in Europe (e.g. Pierre Bourdieu, Alain Touraine and Michel Wieviorka) and partially in North America (e.g. Michael Burawoy, Herbert Gans and David Riesman), this is not the case in the Arab East. The lack of dialogue regarding this issue in the Arab East can be noted from the ratio between published articles, newspaper articles and unpublished reports in 203 CVs of social scientists in the Arab East. Research shows that scholars often specialize in one type of social science and there is no debate between these individuals.

Table 1. Source of references in the 2009 Arab Human Development Report (UNDP)

	No. of references	%
UN documents	113	47
International organizations	40	17
Internet documents	30	12
Academic production	30	12
Official documents	21	9
Newspapers	8	3
Total	242	100

In terms of researchers' profile, critical social scientists are generally over 50 years old. The trend is often that senior scholars do not do fieldwork. Policy and public social scientists are often male. The high competitiveness and aggressiveness of the consultancy market could explain this male bias.

Some professional and critical social scientists that I interviewed expressed a condescending attitude towards public and policy sociology. For a long time, professional researchers have taken a position of objectivity and set aside their ethical responsibilities by avoiding both expressing their views (pro or con) in public forums and lobbying public officials. This attitude becomes clearer when the faculty serve in elite universities. A glance at the profiles of the consultants conducting policy research for state and international organizations revealed that around three-quarters have never published in academic journals, there are no traces of fieldwork and most of the output recycles the work of the others instead. These consultants seem to be lacking consistent reflexivity.

There is unequal competition between policy researchers and other types of social scientists, resulting from the intervention of the donor agencies, who often favour the former, coined 'expert social scientists', at the expense of the latter. This reflects what Lee et al. (2005) called the tumultuous marriage between social science and social policy, in which the rules of conjugality are never fully established or agreed on by both parties. For instance, UN agencies sometimes produce policy knowledge which is self-legitimized and disconnected from professional research. The 2009 *Arab Human Development Report's* text references (UNDP, 2009) (which are different from the statistical references) reveal only 12 references over 242 (14 percent) and almost half (47 percent) of those references are UN documents (see Table 1).

Examination of CVs shows that public social scientists in the Arab East are also often disconnected from professional social scientists. They become experts on any topic that they are requested to research by media or public institutions. Although anecdotal, I have watched TV programmes in some Arab channels (al-Jazeera, Future TV, Syrian TV, Palestinian TV and al-Arabiyya) during the last year, to look for the presence of Arab public social scientists. I have noticed a small number of them being interviewed on different topics which are sometimes related to their field of expertise, but in many cases the topics are not related at all. Reviewing some of these media savvy scholars' CVs shows that they have not been producing much professional and critical research. Similarly, it is rare to find books written by social scientists that are read beyond the academic realm,

and they become the vehicle of a public discussion about the nature of Arab or local society – the nature of its values, and the gap between its promise and its reality, tendencies and malaise. Many scholars have studied the figure of the intellectual and its relationship to academia and to society. For Hisham Ju'eit (2001), while European intellectuals are connected to their traditions, Arab intellectuals have deserted theirs. Both Ali Harb (1996) and Abdul-Elah Balqiz (1999) complain that Arab intellectuals are overly politicized and partisan to political formations, rather than being critical thinkers connected to academia.

Having said that, I am not suggesting that each scholar should do all four types of social research. However, when there is a trend of compartmentalization at the societal level, this risks producing mediocrity in each type of social science and, in particular, risks rendering professional and critical research more elitist and irrelevant (Alatas, 2001); disconnected from society's needs. Structures such as universities, donor agencies and media are pushing towards this specialization. I argue *infra* that the university is disconnected from the public sphere.

Demise of the university as a public sphere

Does the university constitute a 'public good' or a public sphere? As many interviewees pointed out, many faculty members in public, commercial and selective Arab universities avoid engaging with the public or with social movements; they instead conceive of the university as an 'apolitical' space.

Arab universities do not often constitute a public sphere, in terms of a space in which new ideas are discussed and tested. They isolate themselves from the city, avoiding the risk of generating animosity from certain social groups. Before the 1970s, this was not the case. The change of AUB's status in Lebanon constitutes an enlightening example.

Historically (before the 1970s), AUB played a major role in producing critical scholarship (Myntti et al., 2009). Critical intellectuals, reformists and nationalists engaged with the public, addressing critical issues in Arab history, modern reading of the Koran, gender education and Arab unity.¹⁰ However, since the beginning of 1980s, the financial and institutional focus within universities has shifted from the departments of history, philosophy and Middle Eastern studies, and is instead focused on business and engineering schools. Whereas AUB was once a vibrant space of critical thinking, challenging common suppositions and engaging with the public, some interviewees indicated that administrators have become cautious because of the sensitivity of some of these engagements. Some from administration request that faculty not reveal their affiliation to AUB when they write public articles and that they even add a disclaimer disassociating their opinions from the institution. Others have asked faculty not to use the AUB email system when they call for signatures or petitions dealing with societal issues. Some faculty hide their writing in newspapers in their CVs, not only because these do not count towards promotion, but also because some of their colleagues would consider it dispersion or as 'being too widespread'.

While national universities were heavily controlled by the state in a fashion resembling McCarthyism-style campaigns and deliberately not invited to engage with society, the commercialization of higher education has produced a place for interaction with the

demands of the market and not of society. For instance, the importance of liberal art education programmes is shrinking and they have become merely general education requirements to service and supplement other programmes.

In some universities in the region, a new trend has recently emerged: the establishment of civic engagement and community service centres (as in the case of AUB and Saint Josef University in Lebanon and AUC in Egypt). AUB has many initiatives, six of which are worth noting here: the Civic Engagement and Community Service Centre,¹¹ the Agricultural Research and Education Centre (AREC) (which is the AUB campus in the Bekaa Valley¹²), the Neighbourhood Initiative,¹³ Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy,¹⁴ City Debate¹⁵ and Sociology Café.¹⁶

In spite of these numerous initiatives, many challenges are still facing the faculty. AUB interviewees have mentioned how some deans and administrators do not positively evaluate the faculty's efforts. They highlighted a paradox: while AUB wants to show a good image of civic engagement, this is not counted de facto in evaluation of the faculty. Thus, what about the promotion system?

Universities often have three criteria for promotion: research output, effective teaching/learning and contribution to university services and development. As to the last criterion, it is described in the AUB regulations as follows: 'this criterion is reflected in two types of service: a. Service based on initiatives to promote the quality of education in the Faculty and University. This takes the form of introduction of new courses and programs to the applicant's department, contribution to the graduate program, research funding initiatives, service to the community and outreach, etc. b. Service to the Faculty and University in committees needed for the management of the affairs of the Faculty and University' (*source*: unpublished electronic circulation). Although 'service to the community, and outreach' is mentioned, interviewees reported that 'achievement according to this criterion is hardly discussed in meetings for evaluation of the promotion files, whether at the department, advisory committee, or superior levels'. If faculty engage in community work, their rigour and reputability are often held suspect.

In brief, and in the words of Myntti et al. (2009: 13), 'internal discussions are taking place about how to proceed, but, generally speaking, what is interesting is how narrowly service is defined. The argument rests not on the inherent value of service – *as an act of citizenship* – but how it will build the financial, political and social capital of the implementer through service on expert committees, editorial boards, and media contributions.' I now turn to look at publication as a criterion in the promotion system and the problems that this implies.

Ratings system in the promotion procedure

The university has a role, not only in the production, but also the legitimization of knowledge (Stevens et al., 2008: 129). It orients research through funding or favouring a certain type of research output for the promotion of faculty (e.g. Slaughter, 1993). Research output is indeed the most important criterion for promotion. For instance, according to the AUB Faculty of Arts and Sciences regulations, 'the research output should reflect an international standard in fields that are deemed timely and contributing to knowledge in a well-defined area of research. Above all, work should be published in recognized

academic journals that are refereed internationally. In the case of books, the quality of the publisher, the process of refereeing, and the reviews the book receives will be taken into account.¹⁷ As is clear from this regulation, there is no mention about the importance of publishing in regional or local publications. Although regional or local journals cannot compete with 'internationally recognized journals', they have the possibility of generating better debate locally and regionally. This regulation also does not address the question of language. In the meetings discussing their promotion, some faculty reported that 'Arabic articles cannot be counted' or are labelled pejoratively as 'local'. The 2008 annual report of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at AUB demonstrates clearly how few social science publications are published in Arabic (only three of 245 articles and two out of 27 books).¹⁸ The American University of Sharjah (UAE) does request in its research criteria that some of the research activities should 'apply specialized research to the needs of the UAE'. However there is no encouragement to publish in local or regional outlets.

How have we come to this point? Is it due to the regulations surrounding promotion or the practice of the well-established professor, i.e. the *reproduction of the corps* (Bourdieu, 1984: 84), and the continuation of the orthodoxy? Academia is determined by the control of the mechanisms for accepting new faculty members into the university ranks. The selection and moulding of these new faculty members are a core exercise of power in the ongoing creation of academia. I tend to blame the corps rather than institutional regulations. Even if I blame regulations for not encouraging faculty to spare some time for dissemination of their research beyond referee journals, the corps have not resisted. Worse, according to many faculty interviewed, this practice is to some extent related to colleague snobbery rather than regulations. This does not disregard the fact that there are also other factors which render publication in Arabic difficult, such as the small number of refereed journals in the Arab world.

While this problem is acute in selective universities in the Arab world, a similar problem can be found in a large part of the southern world. In South Africa, for instance, Tina Uys (2009) noted that the rating system of their scholarly output, while designed to promote international competitiveness, raises a major problem for embeddedness of the research in the local context.

The promotion system's objective is to signify institutional isomorphism with top American universities, but this objective should not stand alone. Accommodating the local context is also very important. In DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) theory of 'institutional isomorphism', isomorphism is a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions. I am not against borrowing institutional forms from North America, but rather object to the uncritical imitation of American institutions, especially when the Arab region has a very different set of environmental conditions. In addition, this process of isomorphism does not assume that there is heterogeneity in the US system, neglecting the fact that comparisons refer to very few elite universities.

Ratings based on publications in international journals and relying on international reviewers draw research away from issues and problems of local and national importance. A professor of education at AUB reported that many articles were distorted to fit within the framework of the international audience and lost both their focus and the capacity to

generate debate at the national and regional levels. Other faculty members complain of reviewer reports rejecting their manuscript as 'being not relevant to the American audience', 'mixing academia with advocacy', or because 'important American literature is not cited'. This means northern locals become international while the southern locals become obsolete.¹⁹ Based on bibliometric studies, Wiebke Keim confirms the marginalization of the south in social scientific production: 'Pouris (1995), for instance, applies this methodology to the study of social sciences internationally, stating that 90% of the articles contained in the "Social Science Citation Index" originate from 10% of the world's countries' (Keim, 2008).

The idea of simply publishing in international journals yields to a modernist interpretation of producing (objective) knowledge of 'who, what, when, where, why' with a 'view from nowhere', while attention should be drawn to a knowledge that considers the (situated) questions of 'for whom, for what, for when, for where' and 'from whose viewpoint' as an inseparable part of the analytic project and not merely a matter of the individual analyst's concerns (Lee et al., 2005). Public social science is a way of writing and a form of intellectual engagement that cannot be accommodated in an international refereed journal, especially if one takes into account the delay (sometimes two years) in publication.

The result is the demise of fieldwork and textual analysis in favour of theoretical and statistical analysis. The way researchers are required to publish exclusively globally has led them to perish locally. What is the interest of being a researcher who enjoys considerable international recognition by one's peers for the high quality and impact of their recent research outputs while she or he is unknown locally? Many social scientists in Lebanon and the Arab world fall into this category. Clearly, refereed journals are often very academically jargoned and do not make social science assessable to the general public, contrary to what some journals insist. In the editorial of the inaugural issue of the *American Journal of Sociology*, Alibion Small wished by the end of the 20th century for this journal to be accessible to the public, but so far this journal, like others, has failed in this mission (Haney, 2008). Refereed journals should be one of the outlets of social science production, important for the dialogue inside the discipline, but should not be the unique publication outlet. Japanese and German social scientists reach a certain balance in this effort. Their social science establishment, while very much influenced by western models, does not gauge success according to publications in international periodicals and the English language (Alatas, 2003: 606).

Becoming a globalized researcher does not happen without cost in terms of content or narrative. For instance, it is at times difficult to publish articles critical of the mainstream western thought in the 'core' journals of the field (i.e. the *American Journal of Sociology*, the *American Sociological Review*, *Social Problems*, *Social Forces* and *Rural Sociology*). Some interviewees mentioned for instance 'how difficult [it is] to publish in such journals on social classes or a radical criticism of Israeli colonial practices'. In terms of narrative, the ratings system disregards publication in non-orthodox 'scientific' journals, such as literary journals. Writing for an international standard imposes a certain stylistic model and structure of argument. If we adopt Wolfe's classic distinction between two ideal-type models: the 'scientific or experimental model' and the 'literary model' (Wolfe, 1990),²⁰ we see that a scholar will hardly find a scientific journal allowing a literary model of writing.

Ratings system also have not yet adapted to new media technology. The proliferation of publications and resources on the Internet has dramatically changed the way information is transmitted. For academic journals, the Internet provides an opportunity to make articles available to subscribers and the public while eliminating the delay that is inevitable with a print publication. However, the interviews showed that in some universities, the promotion criteria rate such journals are far lower than hard copy journals.

In brief, in selective and private universities, instead of assessing research, international benchmarking of research output and the rating system are what makes the product count. An article based on two years' fieldwork is equal to a literature review. Once the product is identified, there is no need to assess what happened, either before (research methodology and process) or after (dissemination of knowledge to the public or the recycling into policy study).

While selective universities are often *globally* oriented, the national universities are only *locally* oriented. Faculty publish very little in international journals and in languages other than Arabic.²¹ If the former issue is a problem of *publish globally and perish locally*, the latter issue is *publish locally and perish globally*. This is the publication profile of the average researcher in the Arab East, based on the CVs analysis, but this does not mean that there are no few other scholars who were able to bridge between the global and the local. Already the conditions for carrying out research in the region are very difficult: they have poor libraries and comparatively low salaries.²² This leads to a lack of interest, but also to a difficulty in satisfying international journal criteria. A glance at the CVs of social science faculty at public universities shows that the faculty who published in English or French journals are those who graduated from northern or Atlantic universities. A survey of the publications on the science of education conducted by Maaloof (2009) has shown two striking facts: first, 95 percent of articles in the Jordanian journals are published by Jordanian authors. Another survey has shown that 11 percent of Egyptian authors and 35 percent of Kuwaiti authors publish outside their respective countries (Maaloof, 2009).

The marginality of the Arab-language production in the global arena is accompanied by invisibility in international scientific fora. Few scholars coming from the Arab world attend international conferences. National universities rarely provide scholarships to attend international conferences. There were only five, seven and 10 participants respectively in the World Congress of the International Sociology Association in Madrid (1990), Bielefeld (1994) and Montreal (1998). However, if Arabic-language social research is somehow peripheral in global knowledge circuits it is mainly due to its non-hegemonic language (Arabic) rather than to the issues, perspectives or paradigms that are worked with.

Finally, some local universities are aware of the importance of evaluating local and international publications. For instance, Birzeit University (Ramallah, the West Bank) distinguishes between research output and scientific output. To evaluate scientific output, applicants for promotion are invited to cite the titles of all their publications and talks addressed to large public audiences, while research output concerns production in academic journals and books and academic workshop attendance.

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated the role of the university promotion system in the orientation of faculty research and sheds some light on elite formation. As a critical vector for

scientific production, publication crystallizes the particular links woven between the institutional (rating systems inside the university and donor funding) and cognitive (types of knowledge) aspects of a field. This article reveals that understanding the field's scientific practices goes with the analysis of the specific interrelations between its contextual modalities of institutionalization and the characteristics of the knowledge it produces. Donor agencies and universities tame the social sciences. The state either promotes loyalists or criminalizes the opponents (Abaza, 2010), and sometimes just does not promote 'national sciences' (Kabbanji, 2009) and leaves it to the donor agenda. Being exposed to these institutional frames, and having economic concerns as well, social scientists self-censor.

I demonstrate that the promotion system in some universities, especially selective ones, is pushing for a narrow definition of the service as the promotion criterion. This has contributed in the demise of the university as a public sphere. The research criteria and the publication rating system have influenced research narratives and research agendas and discouraged professional and critical researchers from combining their research with policy and public concerns. Faculty are then pressured to standardize their way of conducting research and to publish mainly in English-language refereed journals. Using Bourdieu's (1984) dichotomy, these journals often publish orthodox and institutionally approved intellectual viewpoints, rather than 'heretical' ones. Little space has been left for creativity or eccentricity.

While there is human achievement to social sciences' certain universalism (albeit discontinuities also), there are also *differentiated trajectories to reach these tendencies*. Already, the logic of scientific discovery is interrupted by epistemological breaks and paradigm shifts. It becomes more difficult for the southern researcher to contribute to these discontinuities. Social scientists' relationship to their practice is usually mediated by values, attitudes and their representations that are frequently quite remote from the formal standards of verification.

A local researcher has the right to choose the style she or he likes, to use local metaphors without 'proper translation' and to cite the authors she or he likes in the literature review, whether they are local, southern or northern. High-impact journals should adopt the multiculturalist approach to allow a diversity of concepts and styles, but not in the sense that we need only Arabic concepts for Arabic phenomena. In the words of Kenway and Fahey (2009: 2), it is a question of how these journals can encourage the development of 'defiant' global imaginations and communities with the capacities to think, 'be' and 'become' differently in a world of research increasingly governed by rampant reductionist rationality.

In short, the promotion system effectively internalizes the hegemony of northern social sciences, thereby deepening the divide among Arab social scientists. Southern countries, dominated in the international division of scientific work, thus produce *peripheral science* (Losego and Arvanitis, 2008) and *peripheral visions* (Connell, 2009), reinforcing 'academic dependency' (Alatas, 2003). This rating system inhibits the emergence of autonomous sociological production, marginalizing it and not supporting work that is 'more consequential' (Appadurai, 2000: 3). The work of Wiebke Keim (2008) on the marginality of the southern social sciences is very enlightening. For Keim, the rating system hides an inherent evolutionist perspective in the social sciences, which despite postmodern deconstruction and disillusion, still prevails and creates hierarchies between

objects of research as well as between locations of sociological production: the success of the southern social sciences is determined by its catching up the northern sciences. The internationalization of social science is just its ongoing process of modernization/westernization (Keim, 2008; Oommen, 1991: 7).

Finally, this dependency path is not inevitable and there are many notable exceptions. If there is a structural dependency that the third world finds hard to change, there is 'optional dependency', in the words of Munir Bashshur (2007),²³ that scholars can challenge. Wiebke (2011) provides a very illuminating example of what she called counter-hegemonic currents in international sociology from South Africa, namely the development of labour studies in South Africa. The central feature in this work is their refusal to participate in the common arena; less through theoretical discussion and explicit critique, but rather through specific forms social scientific practice. Keim writes:

In the South Africa of the 1970s, the political opposition was banned and the only broad social force against Apartheid remaining in the country were the black trade unions newly emerging after the Durban Strikes of 1973. Progressive intellectuals in the liberal white English-language universities entered into contact with the labour movement and started programmes of research and teaching in support of the black trade unions, thus initiating the first phase of counterhegemonic development.

Instrumental in this contact were . . . 'Labour Service Organizations' (LSO), university-based non-governmental organizations that provided research and training for the newly emerging trade union movement. . . . The reason for installing LSOs on campus was mainly that the liberal universities . . . provided a relatively secure environment for oppositional activities in the Apartheid environment. Furthermore, universities acted, as several sociologists ironically put it, as 'money laundering' institutions, channelling funding from the international anti-Apartheid solidarity into the labour movement or using it to provide support in the form of commissioned research and trade union education. (Keim, 2011: 132)

In the region, the 'dependency path' is still very strong, though with some exceptions. We see at AUB, for example, that hope is on the horizon. Quiet debates began to emerge among faculty following the establishment of the Civic Engagement and Community Service Centre. New regulations, announced by the president in June 2009, also emphasized that the minutes of the meetings about faculty promotion should not only report the quantity but also the quality of research output. However, more effort should be made to connect research output and the university to local and regional societies and not hinder the cultivation of scholars' strong roots in their community. Institutional resources are very important for the Arabization of social sciences: a department of publication can facilitate publication in the Arab language through providing funding to faculty to publish in Arabic or in cooperation with local publishers.

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Notes

1. Beyond the issue of representativity, a serious qualitative research should carry out a more detailed coding process, which entails not only the form of the publications but also their content.
2. Because of the lack of space, I have not included extended extracts from the interviews. Whenever there is quote without a reference it means that it is a quote from one of the interviews.
3. For an example, see Badawi (2009) on the sad reality of the curricula in sociology in Egypt.
4. There is also a more recently established university, the Islamic University in Medina (Saudi Arabia), which was founded in 1961.
5. For an example, see the report of the Academic Delegation on the Private Arab Universities in Al-Eid (2009).
6. Branches of foreign universities like Carnegie Mellon, Texas A&M, Weill Cornell and Sorbonne were opened in these campuses.
7. For instance, the translation into Arabic of 150 classical and theoretical books from English, German and French by the publisher Arab Institute of Translation achieved a real success if one is judge from the number of copies sold in the Arab world since the establishment of this institute in 2000 (interview with the publisher in January 2010). Also since 2006, the Centre for Arab Unity Studies has co-published with Routledge (London) the journal *Arab Contemporary Affairs*. The journal aims to present Arab social scientific knowledge translated into English to an international audience.
8. The president of the Lebanese Sociological Association has complained that AUB faculty are not interested in adhering to this association and are condescending to it.
9. This method is developed by Alain Touraine (1981).
10. The case of the historian Constantine Zureik is very revealing. While he was professor at AUB in the 1940s, he wrote seminal books in Arabic engaging with his society. Affected by the Palestine War in 1948, he coined this loss as al-Nakba (catastrophe) (arguing it is not only a destruction of Palestine as a geopolitical entity but also of entire communities) in his short book *The Meaning of the Nakba* (Zureik, 1948). He also wrote books on Arab nationalism (e.g. *The Manifesto of Arab Nationalism*). At the same time, he was conducting small closed cultural seminars, talking to a limited number of students (20–30) about Arab nationalism, and about the Arab nation and how and why it should be resurrected (Kawar, 2008).
11. This centre has three main functions: support for community-based research initiatives; development of and support for teaching service to the community; and the organization of a strong student volunteer outreach programme (Myntti et al., 2009).
12. Established in 1953 on 100 hectares of land near Baalbek, in the northern Bekaa Valley, AREC was initially created for students, faculty and local communities to collaborate in the development of innovative solutions to agricultural problems.
13. AUB hoped that this initiative would play three roles in their communication with their immediate environment: first, to foster an atmosphere where change is possible through invigorated but targeted outreach that would demonstrate AUB's commitment to the neighbourhood; second, to provide incentives to faculty and students for research on problems confronting the neighbourhood; and finally, to create positive and sustainable change through a strategic focus on projects that would have many positive secondary effects (Myntti et al., 2009).
14. Established in 2007, this centre aims to connect research to policy and to community. For instance, the programme 'Policy and Governance in Palestinian Refugee Camps' has invited different publics and stakeholders to participate in debate on current issues related to the refugee camps in the region.
15. City Debate is an annual workshop organized by the graduate programme in Urban Planning and Urban Design in the Department of Architecture and Design. The idea originates from the belief that urban planning must be an all-inclusive process. This process involves the various

- stakeholders, including architectural and development professionals, NGOs, such as environmental groups, and of course the general public who live in and use the urban environment.
16. It aims at creating a forum for informal discussions between students and professors on critical issues of life in Lebanon and the region. An invited speaker usually initiates the discussion. From 2006 until January 2010, 27 sessions have been organized.
 17. This regulation also mentions that 'In general, promotion to the rank of Associate Professor requires a minimum of six (6) "individual – equivalent" publications. Non-major publications (e.g. notes, communications, book reviews, posters, etc.) shall be accounted for on a case by case basis. In all cases, a measure of relevance and timeliness must be demonstrated, whenever possible, by current citations of the papers concerned.' For the promotion to full professor, eight publications are required.
 18. *Source*: www.aub.edu.lb/fas/fas_home/faculty_and_research/Pages/annual_report.aspx
 19. The work of Syed Farid Alatas (2003: 607) is very important. He noted: 'A glance at several issues of a leading theory journal in the discipline of sociology, *Sociological Theory*, will reveal this. Volume 20 (2002) of that journal carried 20 articles authored by a total of 28 authors. All of them were based in universities in the US, despite the fact that the journal calls for submissions in all areas of social thought and social theory and does not specify any particular theoretical or geographical area of interest.' He also mentioned an example from the journals *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* and *Theory and Society*. Even in area studies journals, according to Alatas (2003: 608), most of the articles on non-western topics are nearly always authored either by scholars based in one of the social science power bases or by scholars who are nationals of the country being written about.
 20. Wolfe (1990) defined these ideal-types by considering that the experimental model is generally 'characterized by shorter sentence construction, elliptical phrasing, greater density of jargon and scientific shorthand, multiple authors, tables and algebraic expressions, stylistic conformity, and greater use of the passive voice', whereas the literary model is characterized 'by more a leisurely development of ideas, more frequent obiter dicta, less consideration of economy of presentation, single authors, idiosyncratic styles, use of first-person singular, reliance on metaphor, and more complex rhetorical strategies' (Wolfe, 1990: 479).
 21. For the case of Lebanon see Kabbanji (2009).
 22. According to Mona Abaza (2010), faculty at Cairo University earn 20 times less than their colleagues with comparable rank at AUC.
 23. Interview with the author, December 2010.

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