Promotion Policies and Recruitment in Select Key Universities in the Arab Region

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Abstract

This study sought to examine the promotion policies and faculty recruitment in social sciences and humanities in eight public and five non-public universities drawn from seven Arab countries: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, and Tunisia. The thirteen universities selected for the study represented legacy and blossoming institutions classified according to year of establishment. The study also discussed the role of research centers in scaling up the research performance of social scientists and humanists in two public and one non-public university in the sample.

Desktop research and interviews were the main source of data for the study. Data triangulation was utilized to analyze two types of documents: public documents posted on the websites of universities and ministries of higher education and studies that addressed promotion and recruitment in the Arab countries. Interviews with key informants were conducted to verify information in the documents analyzed.

Findings revealed four unique models of ranks: statutory promotion based on the number of years in the rank regardless of merit (Morocco and Tunisia); promotion within the same rank from category (B) to category (A) (Jordan); promotion based on the type of the doctorate classified (Lebanon); and distinguished professorial rank (Palestine). The study also revealed a rampant "Impact Factor Phenomenon" in two thirds of the universities surveyed, transcending country and sector differences with the exception to the public sector in three Francophone countries, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia. The universities that adopted international promotion criteria had prioritized international refereed publishing venues for faculty research. International publications in these universities typically outweighed local publications as demonstrated in the distribution of points allotted for each component for promotion.

Promotion and recruitment in public universities in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia echoed centralized educational policies that had been adopted in Europe during the pre-reform era before the mid-1980s. On the other hand, the public sector in Lebanon enjoyed a legislative margin for self-governance in faculty recruitment, but often aborted by blatant political intervention and a dysfunctional confessional quota system.

Results also indicated the essential role of research centers in lending support and capacity-building opportunities for social scientists and highlighted issues of funding and infrastructure. The study concluded with a synthesis of main findings and limitations.

INTRODUCTION

The Arab world has experienced a remarkable expansion of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) since the 1990s and their number increased exponentially to over seven hundred in 2018 (UNESCO 2018). However, this quantitative expansion has not been met thus far with a proportionate provision of key institutional data, particularly those related to promotion and recruitment of social scientists and humanists in universities. A possible explanation for the scarcity of information on the topic is that HEIs are still trudging into establishing institutional assessment units, and if found, they tend to publish academic data mainly on enrollment, retention, and student learning outcomes, while producing only few specialized reports such as faculty retention, recruitment, and promotion beyond occasional statistical displays. Another explanation is that existing studies tend to look at the larger picture of higher education than on the specifics of social sciences and humanities. Available regional reports in the Arab countries discussed promotion and recruitment policies under broader topics addressing timely issues in higher education such as knowledge production (Hanafi and Arvanitis 2016; Abouchedid and Abdelnour 2015) and quality matters in higher education (El-Amine 2014), to mention but a few. In addition to complementing existing studies on the topic, this study examines models and patterns of promotion, recruitment, and research centers focused on social sciences and humanities in thirteen universities drawn from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar and Tunisia. These countries represented two geographic regions: Western Asia (62 percent) and North Africa (38 percent). The variegated clusters of universities drawn for the study will allow for myriad comparisons through which patterns of promotion and recruitment of social scientists and humanists are discerned and analyzed in a comparative perspective.

It is hoped that ensuing comparative results gleaned from the seven Arab countries will contribute to the existing stock of knowledge in field by providing key information about promotion and recruitment, not merely as the by-product of institutional policy, criteria and procedures per se, but rather as a manifestation of wider situational factors that wield influence on higher education transformation in the nexus of globalization.

FRAMEWORK

In order to provide a framework for the subsequent analysis, four overarching global and local issues that wield considerable influence on promotion and recruitment that guided data analysis are considered: (1) the rising emphasis on research for promotion, (2) publication requirements for faculty, (3) the language of publication and (4) the challenges to publishing locally.

1. The Rising Emphasis on Academic Research for Promotion

Emphasis on the research component for promotion and recruitment does not exist in a vacuum. Evidence suggests that recent trends in higher education are steering the direction of HEIs globally. In fact, the widespread global competitiveness of 21st century incited by the ascendency of neoliberal policies has posed numerous challenges to higher education. Prominent massification of higher education is ubiquitous and highly evident in East Asia and in many parts of the world. Ambitious projects establishing university constellations on a mammoth scale epitomizes the current era of fierce global competition in the higher education sector. For instance, the 985 Project in China, also known as The World First Class University project, has

been initiated by the central government to construct first class universities. The 211 Project in China also seeks to raise the research standards in one hundred universities and introduce a number of key disciplines for the 21st century[1]. In a similar vein, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in Japan initiated the Global 30 Project that promotes internationalization of the academic environment of Japanese universities, through recruiting the best international students to study in Japan[2]. These and other projects of the same genre represent a potent global drive geared towards transforming higher learning into world-class universities capable of distinguishing themselves globally in terms of programs that are yoked into the labor market and research for boosting the tempo of knowledge production.

The survivability of HEIs amidst fierce global competition hinges upon a host of factors; chief among them are internationalization and research as main pillars for increasing visibility and for reinforcing the position of universities in world rankings, let alone gaining a marketable international world-class reputation 'niche' as part of entrepreneurship branding and market economy sweeping into higher education. While these requirements can be partly articulated in the mission statements of universities, the authors attempted to explore the extent to which the mission statements of HEIs in the Arab countries are calibrated to meet 21st century higher education requirements, taking into consideration that mission statements articulate, among other things, institutional goals to be achieved in the near future.

For this exploratory purpose, the authors quantified the frequency of the keywords 'Research, and Internationalization' in the mission statements of three hundred and ten HEIs in seven Arab countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and UAE), that encompassed five countries drawn for the current study. It is worth noting that the public sector in Francophone countries notably Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia pronounce general university tasks in lieu of mission statements. Still, these were analyzed since we were interested in depicting keywords that connote research and internalization, as applicable. The dataset was initially constructed for a regional pilot project on the classification of HEIs in the region of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in 2009, conducted jointly by the Lebanese Association for Educational Studies (LAES) and the Institute of International Education (IIE) (Bhandari and El-Amine 2012). Through word crunching, they identified the orientations of HEIs along local, regional, and international dimensions and looked, in tandem, for keywords accenting the labor market as part of the extensive global competition that might be spelled out as a leitmotif in the mission statements or general tasks of HEIs. An overall understanding of the orientation of these universities through the prism of their mission statements or general tasks may furnish background information for the subsequent discussion on promotion and recruitment, particularly the confluence of adopting international criteria for research and references to internationalization. This exploratory attempt was conducted as a preliminary exercise for ensuring consistency between mission statements or general tasks as institutional goals on the one hand, and criteria for promotion and recruitment as actions within these overarching goals, on the other.

The present results showed that local factors, such as interaction with the community and services provided to the country, accounted for only 22 percent of the mission statements mostly focusing on linking education to the local labor market. The regional dimension, accenting the

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[1] http://www.besteduchina.com/universities_of_211_project_and_985_project.html, accessed on June 18, 2019.

[2] http://www.mext.go.jp/en/search/result_js.htm?q=The+Global+30+Project#resultstop, accessed June 18, 2019.

keywords 'region' or 'regional', such as committed faculty who teach and conduct research, which address relevant local and regional challenges, appeared in 38 percent of the universities surveyed. Curiously, despite the recent reform efforts in the Arab countries that emphasized internationalization, quality assurance, and distance education (Bunker 2011), the lowest frequency of keywords in mission statements was in the international dimension (13%).

Emphasis on research occupied 41 percent of the mission statements. It is worth noting that the public sector registered a slightly higher percentage of research in their mission or general tasks (54%) than the non-public ones (46%) did. Accounting for both sectors, Morocco led by use of the keyword 'research' followed by the UAE as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Appearance of the word 'research' in mission statements (n=310)
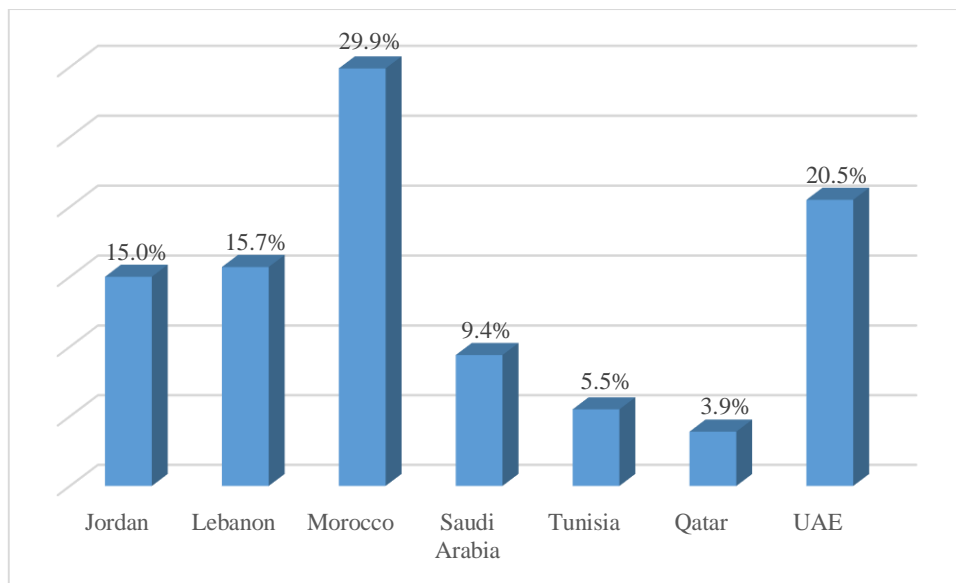
Source: Crude data was obtained from Bhandari and El-Amine (2012)[3].

While the authors report these findings with caution, since the mission statements represent only one bibliometric measure of universities' orientation and not all universities in the Arab countries are mission-driven. However, the modest emphasis on research stultifies various communiqués and recommendations in the Arab countries that emphasize the importance of research for proactively engaging in the dynamics of a knowledge society. This observation is consistent with extant studies that note the lackluster performance of the Arab countries in research. In fact, successive Arab Human Development Reports (UNDP-RBAS 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2009) have portrayed a rather gloomy picture of the slow pace of knowledge production in the region being curtailed by 'freedom and good-governance deficit' (Alan 2005, 28) aggravated by the limited financial allocations and inadequate infrastructure needed for

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[3] The authors of the present background study conducted word crunching for the key word 'research' in mission statements.

scaling up research productivity. Still, we adopt a conservative position towards data derived from reports in the Arab countries since there is no *a priori* reason to suggest that such data are accurate and reliable given the lack of transparency meshed with a near absence of data depositories rendered readily accessible to the public. In fact, piecemeal initiatives of data accretion and documentation in the Arab countries are lacking in that they do not constitute a comprehensive regional statistical database for sustainable data mining, information disclosure, and systematic access to statistics.

2. Publication Requirements for Promotion

Globally, there has been a surge into scaling up the research component for promotion by exhorting faculty to publish in refereed, indexed, and high-ranking international journals besides urging them to solicit research grants. In a similar vein, recruitment hinges on hiring faculty with competitive research portfolios. As a result, a sequential assignment undertaken by HEIs was to benchmark their promotion, tenure, and faculty recruitment policies with research universities (Youn and Price 2009) in order to staff a wider pool of junior faculty who possess competitive scholarship portfolios of an international standard. In tandem, robust criteria for faculty retention have been established. According to Chou and Chan (2016), universities have set probationary schemes for faculty placing those who do not publish at risk of dismissal, thus giving rise to the fervor of 'publish or perish' in higher education. Moreover, because internationalization is a vital criterion accounted for in international rankings, many universities have, among other things, taken into consideration hiring international faculty and engaging in faculty and student exchange activities. While methodologies and results published yearly by international rankings raise concerns associated with the accuracy of data and data collection procedures, to mention but a few, one cannot deny the supremacy of rankings as an indicator of quality, broadly understood. Thus, the jumping into the bandwagon of international rankings has propelled HEIs into accenting considerable emphasis on faculty international publications.

The drive to increase the research output in HEIs worldwide is ubiquitous across disciplines and the criteria centering on research for recruitment and promotion are evident in worldwide higher educational contexts. The literature on promotion and tenure in the United States and Canada, for instance, suggests that faculty evaluation are now laying more emphasis than before on research than on teaching and service (Acker and Webber 2016), with an interest in accounting for the number of citations and the Impact Factor (IF). To exemplify, promotion guidelines at the University of Windsor in Canada state that candidates will be encouraged to submit a statement that explains the importance of their publications, which may include factors such as journal impact factors, citation rates, publication in journals with low acceptance rates, high levels of readership, and demonstrated importance to their field[4]. This international reputation 'niche' pursued by HEIs is common world-wide. However, the competitive advantage of rankings via publications favor institutions whose faculty publish in prestigious publishing houses and journals predominantly housed in the US, UK, Canada, and Australia. On the other hand, Arab universities take less advantage of publishing opportunities in such venues due to issues of language, culture, and readership.

The disciplines of social sciences and humanities are not atypical, as they have been increasingly inducted into the culture of publishing in refereed journals at the expense of traditional research

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[4] http://www.uwindsor.ca/provost/sites/uwindsor.ca.provost/files/research_evaluation_framework_0.pdf, accessed June 23, 2019.

outlets, mainly books, with clear implications on criteria for hiring faculty. For instance, Li and Tian (2014) observed that departments of social sciences and humanities are being required to compromise their preferences for faculty with book publications, and instead opt to hire those with more journal publications, with an eye to H-Index, IF, and journals' ranking. This is somehow evident in the hype to publish in journals indexed in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) as well as in the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI), at the expense of crediting books that traditionally characterize the publication portfolio of social scientists and humanists.

3. Supremacy of English as the main Lingua Franca of Research

In the context of research productivity, an important challenge worth mentioning is the supremacy of English as the main lingua franca of refereed journals indexed and ranked in reputable databases such as Scopus, Scimago, SSCI, and A&HCI. These databases clearly shun non-English publication journals and favor the consolidation of English language journals in the diffusion of knowledge (González-Alcaide, Valderrama-Zurián and Aleixandre-Benavent 2012). Thus, Arab scholars in social sciences and humanities are bound to write their manuscripts in English as a main medium for internationalizing their publications as well as for gaining international reputation and credence of their scholarship portfolios. However, publishing in international reputable journals is not without limitations. Local issues of paramount significance to the Arab countries tackled by social scientists and humanists may not appeal to Western journals and readership, often resulting in manuscript rejection, or at best acceptance in third, or fourth quartile ranked journals. On the other hand, some faculty opt for expediting the process of augmenting the number of their publications for promotion through seeking local social sciences journals that charge publication fees and accept manuscripts in a record time. According to Shehata and Eldakar (2018), the publishing process in a local social science journal in Egypt, for instance, is faster and the changes requested by referees are minor and insignificant as a result of perfunctory and pro forma refereeing.

To sum up, a common language of publication typically shared by international publishers may reinforce the idea that publishing in international journals requires researchers to follow a single set of standards, which leaves little room for a variety in the types of publications (Ching 2014). Thus, conforming to a single set of international standards of research is not without repercussions: Arab social scientists are likely to misplace the domestic relevance and local responsiveness of their publications and they may ''publish globally and perish locally'' (Hanafi and Arvanitis, 2016). This situation represents the antithesis of social sciences, particularly sociological and anthropological research that studies issues relevant to the context of society articulated in the local language. Thus, publishing in a language that is different from the language of the context concerned is likely to divest research of affecting change, stirring public debate, and informing policymaking.

4. Challenges to Publishing Locally

Publishing in homegrown journals in the Arab countries is challenged by a number of factors as revealed by Abouchedid and Bou Zeid (2019) in their study on publishing rules in thirty-two psychology and education periodicals issued in seventeen Arab countries (68 percent) in the MENA region and ten (32 percent) in the Gulf States.

Results obtained from synthesized reports submitted by editors in chief have enumerated a list of challenges that stymie progress in assuring the quality of these periodicals; chief among them is the poor international visibility of these journals, which are not indexed in reputable databases that apply stringent criteria for journal indexation, including quality of content published and journal workflow. Another challenge is that faculties of education and psychology house the striking majority of these journals, with the faculty's dean being the editor in chief and contributing authors being faculty members affiliated with the same faculty. In countries characterized by cronyism, lack of democracy and institutional transparency, the review process of manuscripts is likely to be influenced by the cycles of patron-client relationships. This inherent limitation raises questions about confidentiality, quality, and fairness of the refereeing process. It is worth noting that a few journals had publicly disclosed their rules of publication or articulated conflict of interest policies on their websites and in print material. In addition, the editors in chief lamented the quality of the articles published in their own journals due to the authors' tendency to submit quantitative research without being versed in basic statistical rules. Also, authors tend to reduce the literature review from a critical appraisal of scholarly debates to a mere passive annotated bibliographical list of previous studies.

The preceding prefatory discussion emphasized four overarching issues that serve to illustrate the extent to which promotion and recruitment systems and standards adopted by the universities surveyed converge with or diverge from global trends and respond to challenges posed by them. In this way, a portfolio of the universities surveyed will highlight the major trends and models adopted for promotion and recruitment by country and sector with emphases on social sciences and humanities.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study is qualitative. Data were obtained from university and ministerial documents complemented by interviews to verify the accuracy of the data postulated in two types of documents:

1) *Public documents* posted on the websites of universities and ministries of higher education. The documents were annual reports, policies for promotion and recruitment, and legislative decrees.
2) *National and regional studies* that tackle issues of promotion and recruitment of faculty members in the Arab countries.

Data triangulation was utilized to ensure credibility of information (Bowen, 2009) since some website data were either inconsistent, difficult to follow, or only provided dispersed nuggets of information with instances of 404 or 'Unavailable' popup messages.

Data collection tools: Data was collected from desktop research and interviews according to the following procedure:

1) *Desktop Research:* The desktop research covered all the universities surveyed. An institutional discourse card was designed to assemble 'families' of information derived from each university surveyed, including background information about the institution, mission, vision, values, promotion policies and procedures, and any other key source of information placed under others. The card provided a summary of both available and

missing data related to promotion and recruitment. Due to sparseness of documents, we relied on searching for additional documents from the websites of the ministries of higher education in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia since promotion and recruitment in public universities in these countries are centralized. In addition, we consulted available national and regional studies on higher education in the Arab countries to verify information posted on websites as a proxy measure to compensate for missing information.

2) *Interviews*: This study did not follow a rigorous interview schedule (semi-structured or structured) since the interviews were informally conducted either via email or through phone calls. There were very few instances when interviews were conducted (three telephone interviews in total) since our aim was to either compensate for missing data, check the validity of a claim spelled out in a document, or clarify unclear website information.

Criteria for University Selection: The study focused on thirteen universities in seven countries - Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar and Tunisia - which were selected based on geographic diversity, year of establishment (blossoming, legacy), sector, size (large, medium, and small) determined according to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education in the USA[5], and the potential availability of data on the study's topic.

1) *Sector:* Thirteen universities were selected for the study. We dichotomized sector into public and non-public as a logical grouping of the existing panoply of university sectors in the Arab countries that are currently convoluted into community (ahlia), public, private, semi-governmental, and government dependent private sectors. Eight universities were non-public (61%) and five (39%) were public (see Appendix 1).

2) *Year of Establishment:* The universities represent legacy and blossoming institutions roughly classified according to year of establishment as follows: before 1960, between 1960 and 1998, and after 1998. This classification was derived from a pilot classification study of HEIs in the MENA region conducted in 2009 (Bhandari and El-Amine 2012). Universities that were established before 1960 were categorized as legacy universities compared to blossoming universities that were established between 1960 and 1998. The legacy universities constituted 38.4 percent of the sample while blossoming universities constituted 54 percent. The Doha Institute, which was established in 2014, constituted 7.7 percent of the sample (see Table 1).

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[5] https://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/classification_descriptions/size_setting.php, accessed October 12, 2020.

Table 1. University by year of establishment

Before 1960	Year of Establishment
Al Azhar University	972
American University of Beirut	1866
Cairo University	1908
Lebanese University	1951
Mohammed V	1957
Between 1960-1998	
Tunis University	1960
University of Jordan	1962
Birzeit University	1972
An-Najah National University	1977
Qatar University	1977
Al-Ahliyya Amman University	1990
Al-Akhawayn University	1995
After 1998	
Doha Institute	2014

3) Size: Fifteen percent of the universities surveyed were small, 15 percent middle-sized, and 70 percent large (see Table 2).

Table 2. University by size

Universities	Small	Medium	Large
Al Azhar University			X
American University of Beirut		X	
Cairo University			X
Lebanese University			X
Mohammed V			X
Tunis University			X
University of Jordan			X
Birzeit University			X
An-Najah National University			X
Qatar University			X
Al-Ahliyya Amman University		X	
Al-Akhawayn University	X		
Doha Institute	X		

Data Processing: A coding matrix was created for each university by sector and country in order to conduct comparisons among them and synthesize similarities and differences. For example, point systems allotted to research, teaching, and service were coded separately and entered into Excel spreadsheets for quantification when possible.

Limitations: This study was not without limitations. The relatively small number of universities surveyed (n = 13) compared to the remarkable diversity and number of HEIs in the Arab countries posed a limitation to generalizing the study results. In addition, while document analysis requires data selection rather than fieldwork data collection, some downloaded documents did not provide the necessary information about promotion and recruitment, indicating insufficient data provision by some universities. Further, the paucity of institutional data systematically and accurately disclosed to the public on university websites reflected a 'firewall culture' that deterred the study from generalizing some of its findings.

DISCUSSION

The sections set forth present and discuss the results by country and sector according to criteria and evaluation procedures that were the main relevant elements in the framework of faculty promotion.

1. Promotion Criteria and Evaluation Procedures by Country

As alluded to earlier, the research component typically outweighed teaching and service as evinced in the distribution of points allotted for each component separately. In terms of research, 62 percent of the universities surveyed adopted international promotion criteria that emphasized international refereed publications, mainly journals indexed in Scopus® database (Elsevier B.V.) with a higher weight allotted to high IF[6] and a hierarchal point-system for Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 journals as ranked by Scimago[7]. In fact, the rampant 'IF phenomenon', as a result of the remarkable adoption of international criteria for promotion, transcended country differences except for those with a French legacy background in Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. These countries have not emphasized journal ranking in promotion criteria, leaving latitude to committees to determine the quality of the candidate's file. On the other hand, Egypt and Jordan were leading in adopting international promotion criteria. Despite their zealous leanings toward internationalization in applying promotion criteria, conduits for publishing locally were identified, but with a lesser weight accorded to local journals compared to international ones. Palestine represented a unique case where faculty members were encouraged to publish their own research in local journals since their international counterparts might be biased towards certain controversial topics addressed in humanities or social sciences that are intimately linked to local concerns and may not appeal to international English-speaking journals. Neighboring Jordanian universities had listed nationally accredited local journals as a leeway to promote local journals as promulgated in higher educational laws. In Lebanon's public sector, no restrictions are made in determining whether the publication should be local or international, except that publications should be refereed.

Consistently across the universities surveyed, promotion criteria were common to all disciplines, including social sciences and humanities though with occasional subtle differences found in the evaluation procedures adapted to the social sciences through appointing discipline-specific evaluation committees in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, or through departmental committees such

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[6] The impact factor of a journal is calculated by dividing the number of current year citations to the source items published in that journal during the previous two years
(https://www.researchgate.net/post/How_is_impact_factor_calculated), accessed July 2, 2019.
[7] https://www.scimagojr.com/aboutus.php, accessed July 2, 2019.

as in Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Qatar. Detailed country differences and similarities became more evident when comparing promotion criteria and procedures by sector.

2. Promotion Criteria and Evaluation Procedures by Sector

While the 'Impact Factor phenomenon' in the promotion criteria transcended country differences, minute and subtle sector differences were found in Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, and Qatar. Both the public and non-public sectors in these countries adopted international criteria for promotion though with varying degrees of adaptation. On the other hand, sector differences were heavily marked in legacy universities in three Francophone countries, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. The public sector in these countries represented a unique case since they adopted domestic criteria for promotion and had not imposed international journal rankings and IF for promotion. A main difference related to the management of promotion was found: while Morocco and Tunisia, two heavily centralized countries in the sample, adopted domestic promotion criteria and complex processes promulgated by the ministry of higher education, conversely, the public sector in Lebanon enjoyed latitude in applying promotion procedures such as vetting committees and evaluating faculty files away from direct ministerial oversight.

3. Promotion Criteria in Public Universities – Adaptation of International Standards

A noticeable case of adopting international standards in promotion was the public sector in Jordan. The promotion system is called Promotion and Movement, which is unique in the Arab countries since promotion occurs within the same rank from category (B) to category (A)[8]. This within rank promotion system is applicable to Assistant and Associate Professors. The 2018 Law No. 18 of Jordanian Universities lists academic ranks according to the following hierarchal order from lowest to highest: Practicing Lecturer, Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor[9]. Promotion from one rank to another is subject to a set of criteria that are internationally adopted, while providing a sluice for local standards that recognize local journals accredited by the university. For instance, the university lists one hundred and forty nine 'accredited' Arabic homegrown journals and another two hundred and fifty seven non-Arabic accredited journals in English as valid venues for faculty publications. Despite being accredited, this category of journals was classified as third class journals. It is worth noting that 90 percent of the accredited homegrown Arabic journals were in the social sciences and the humanities while around 40 percent of the list of accredited non-Arabic journals were in social sciences and humanities. The 2010 Article 3 of Regulation No. (42) titled "Regulation on the Scientific Research Support Fund" calls for supporting the publication of Jordanian peer-reviewed, specialized scientific journals. As such, articles published in journals counted towards promotion, such as the Studies Journal and the Jordan Journal of Social Science, both approved by the Scientific Research Support Fund in the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and quarterly published by the Deanship of Academic Research[10]. This journal publishes articles in English and Arabic. Thus, the promotion criteria at the University of Jordan offer opportunities for social scientists and humanists to publish their work in both Arabic and English; hence, acknowledging local and international publications for promotion in tandem, but with more weights allotted to international high-ranking journals indexed in Scopus or in other internationally renowned databases.

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[8] http://units.ju.edu.jo/ar/LegalAffairs/Regulations.aspx, accessed July 18, 2019.

[9] http://mohe.gov.jo/ar/GovPapers/18-2018.pdf, accessed July 6, 2019.

[10] https://journals.ju.edu.jo/JJSS, accessed July 15, 2019.

Emphasis of research: Further, there was a clear emphasis on research as the most powerful and point-earning component in the evaluation of faculty files submitted for promotion. For instance, the distribution of weights is 60 percent for research, 25 percent for teaching, and 15 percent for service. The latter bifurcates into service to the university and service to the community[11]. Overall, the faculty applicant should accumulate 60 percent of the points for promotion from teaching, research, and service; hence, they may be promoted based on accrual of points earned from journals that are not indexed in Scopus or in other international databases or ranked by Scimago.

Centralization in Egypt's public sector: A similar case is the public sector in Egypt, where the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) centrally manages higher education. According to the Rules and Laws of the Scientific Committees[12] for 2019-2022 approved in the Supreme Council's meeting No. 646 dated April 4, 2016, all public universities that are members of the Supreme Higher Education Council, such as the University of Cairo and Al Azhar, follow the same procedures and criteria set by the MHESR.

The faculty ranking system is composed of five ranks: Teaching Assistant, Senior Teaching Assistant, Assistant Professor, and Professor. The Teaching Assistant and Senior Teaching Assistant are booked for Masters and PhD graduate students teaching at the university level, representing an inbred model of promotion. Promotion to the rank of Assistant Professor takes place after receiving a doctoral degree, while promotion to the Full-Professor rank is based on production of scholarly research that is given a weight equal to 70 percent of the total promotion grade. According to ministerial rules, a specialized committee may be formed to assess faculty files by discipline, including social sciences and humanities de facto but not explicitly mentioned. Thus, the promotion criteria may recognize the particularity of social sciences and humanities in the evaluation process by a specialized committee, but the promotion system itself does not customize any point system to the particularities of these disciplines per se.

The refereeing process is multilayered in the public sector in Egypt. According to Article 17 of the promotion rules, refereeing the research component includes many elements in which the referee sets the estimates that they see fit for these elements - in each research, and this is an evaluation of the research itself without any regard to the place of publication or the role of the applicant. Then, refereeing scrutinizes the content of the research according to the applicant's area of specialty. The research estimates are based on the scores obtained from the research over a total grade over 100 as follows:

- 80 and above (very good)
- 70-79 (good)
- 60-69 (acceptable)
- Below 60 (weak)

Points required for promotion are rank-based. For instance, a candidate applying to the rank of Assistant Professor should earn a minimum of 60 points, while those applying to the rank of

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http://units.ju.edu.jo/ar/LegalAffairs/Lists/Regulations/DispForm.aspx?ID=12&ContentTypeId=0x0100C7850F392E786A439F935E088708707E, accessed July 6, 2019.

[12] www.eupc.edu.eg, accessed June 28, 2019.

Professor are required to earn 70 points. The general trend in the public sector in Egypt is to bundle the promotion criteria in one promotion basket for all disciplines regardless of the particularities of other disciplines.

Similar to the public sector in Jordan, higher points are given to international journals and prestigious publishing venues. To exemplify, a research published in a scientific journal, which the scientific committee gave 9-10 points, is not re-evaluated. The research would receive 15 points if it were published in a journal that had received a 10-point grade, while 13.5 points would be given to journals graded 9. Each author receives all obtained points regardless of the number of co-authors even if they are in the same area of specialty. Internationally registered patents receive 20 points while locally registered patents receive 15 points. The scientific committee evaluates and ranks journals for assigning points and grading the research component of the applicant's file (see Table 3).

Table 3. Points according to publications by type

Publication type	Points
International refereed journal with a high IF indexed in several sources and published in an international publishing house of an international weight.	9-10
An international specialized or non-specialized journal with a moderate, well-defined and classified IF published in an international publishing house of a reasonable weight.	8
A specialized local and refereed journal, with an external referee, a publisher, a university publisher, or a national body with a good regional and local reputation.	7
A local journal specialized internally refereed and categorized as a college publisher or a scientific department and has good local reputation.	5
A non-specialized local journal published in a faculty and has a modest local reputation.	2
A non-refereed and non-indexed journal with no clear local reputation.	1

Conference proceedings are also evaluated and ranked with the highest points allotted for international conference proceedings (8 points), and the lowest points to refereed and published conference proceedings in non-specialized local conferences (2 points), and 1 point goes to a paper (with a refereed abstract) presented at a local non-specialized conference.

Egypt: At Al-Azhar University, the rank of the faculty members are Teaching Assistant, Senior Teaching Assistant (Master's degree), Assistant Professor (Ph.D.), and Professor. A faculty member in the Humanities must submit five research papers for the rank of Professor and four researches for the rank of Assistant Professor. The faculty member who applies for promotion in basic scientific, medical, engineering and agriculture studies shall submit seven published research papers for the rank of Professor, with the Assistant Professor rank to be evaluated by specialized scientific committees. The authors requested a faculty member from Al-Azhar to verify information obtained from online resources regarding promotion criteria of social scientists and humanists. Interviewing results confirmed that a faculty member who holds a

doctorate must submit at least four published research papers and preferably more since one or more of the researches submitted might be disregarded and eliminated from the review process. A candidate is eligible to apply for promotion to the rank of Assistant Professor five years after earning a doctorate. As for those applying to the rank of full-professor, the candidate should present five research refereed papers published in international or regional journals. A research paper might be eliminated from the review process if did not appear in print, with exception to cases where an official letter from the journal notifies the author that their paper was accepted for publication.

For promotion to Assistant Professor, the candidate is requested to present curriculum maps or a teaching plan and course description, participated in preparing the self-study of institutions of higher education, effective presentation skills, design and preparation of research, systems of examinations and evaluation of students.

The promotion committee comprises professors who have spent five years in their rank - this is a new rule as previously it was made up of professors who had spent ten years in their rank. The committee member who evaluated promotion files should have a proven record of scholarship such as being an expert in the field besides a track record of integrity, i.e., has not been subjected to disciplinary punishment for transgressions affecting honor and academic integrity, according to article 8 of the rules and order of the scientific committee stipulated by the Supreme University Council in 2019. It is worth mentioning that the promotion process involves detailed procedures that cover all facets of promotion such as the components of the promotion file, eligibility for promotion, criteria, and points allotted for each component, i.e., teaching, research, and service. Within the research component, a point system is established for single and co-authors.

For promotion to Professor, the candidate should provide evidence of the following: be up to date with modern trends in the development of institutions of higher education, time management and work pressure, strategic planning, crisis and disaster management, and development of administrative and legal skills.

As mentioned earlier, the Higher Council for Universities, chaired by the minister of higher education, enjoys executive prerogatives over all public universities. The minister of education also chairs the Higher Council for Private Universities in Egypt. As such, decision-making in both public and universities is heavily centralized. Requirements and criteria for promotion at Al-Azhar become more demanding for faculty in the sciences, medical sciences, engineering, and agriculture than in humanities and social sciences. In scientific disciplines, seven research papers are required for the rank of Professor, and six papers for the rank of Assistant Professor. It should be noted that international standards are adopted through listing international journals that are indexed in renowned international databases with a clear requirement for IF in the promotion evaluation. A point system is adopted for the evaluation of files with a higher weight allotted to research. After submitting research papers to refereeing, the candidate moves to the next step by submitting a reference research or concept note paper on how to advance one's area of specialty, in which the topic is determined by the committee. The evaluation includes an appraisal of the delivery by the candidate giving a lecture according to recent trends in their field of specialization or in one of the topics covered by the committee and discusses the reference paper before the evaluation committee. The faculty member is promoted based on scientific production of the research component submitted for examination by the specialized scientific committee alluded to earlier. The research file represents 75 percent of the total points of the

assessment for promotion; the committee takes into account other elements related to the total scientific productivity of the candidate, representing 25 percent[13].

Qatar: Other public universities in the sample adopted international standards but with a lesser focus on IF and journal rankings compared to Jordan and Egypt. For instance, a key feature in the evaluation of files submitted for promotion in the public sector in Qatar is the element of external review; the candidate should submit for consideration of promotion and external peer review evaluation at least four refereed (unedited) publications. Publications shall include reputable peer-reviewed journals, scholarly books and book chapters, review articles, and other creative work. Colleges and the Vice President and Chief Academic Officer of the university determine the type of publications acceptable for promotion in the discipline[14]. The general requirements regarding the number of publications needed for promotion are considered as the minimum standard requirement. The promotion policy gives considerable latitude to colleges to determine their own standards, as well as for specifying the procedures to be followed. Thus, the promotion policy in the public sector in Qatar accommodates discipline-specific requirements that encompass social sciences and humanities since promotion within these disciplines is determined by their corresponding colleges.

While promotion criteria in the public sector in Egypt, Jordan and Qatar clearly adopt international standards, the public sector in Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunis is distinguished by specific attributes.

Morocco: Promotion in public sector universities is a unique case compared to the other Arab countries in our sample, except for Tunisia which shares comparable promotion criteria with Morocco. Promotion occurs according to tracks or 'paces' that either comprise assessment of files, or simply forgo assessment; vacancies of ranks, and complex processes that encompass reviewing of files, deliberations and viva voce in which candidates defend their file before a specialized committee. To substantiate, the Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research in Morocco determines the promotion rules for recruitment and promotion of faculty members from a rank to another as follows: Assistant Professor, Qualified Professor and Professor of Higher Education. According to Cadre Formation 2171.12 dated June 4, 2012 based on Article 14 of the Decree of February 19, 1997, the promotion of the research professors is done by presenting a scientific file in the form of reports that detail the accomplishments of the faculty applying for promotion. Eligibility for promotion is based on the years of service, teaching, and research[15]. Concerning the latter, publications should be in one's area of specialty and candidates are considered first or second author based on the compatibility of the research topic and the researcher's specialty.

Promotion of an applicant to a higher rank in Morocco's public sector is distinctive since it follows a system of 'tracks' or 'paces' as follows:

- Exceptional pace: 20 percent of those who had spent six years in the rank;
- Rapid pace: 20 percent of those who had spent seven years in the rank;

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[13] Salman, Tarek (2017). Explaining the work of permanent scientific committees for promotion professor and assistant professors at Al-Azhar University. PowerPoint presentation.

[14] http://www.qu.edu.qa/static_file/qu/officespercent20andpercent20departments/VPAA/documents/OK-PL_ACADEMIC_006_Promotionpercent20Policy_Oct_2013percent20-.pdf, accessed July 10, 2019.

[15] https://www.maghress.com/almassaia/2535, accessed July 3, 2019.

- Regular pace: after spending eight years in rank.[16]

The exceptional and rapid paces require criteria and an evaluation process for promotion, whereas the regular pace is a mere automatic promotion akin to promotion of civil servants in the public sector since it is based on the number of years spent in service rather than on job performance and merit. Clearly, this distinctive feature of promotion benefits senior more than junior faculty because the promotion system itself is based on vacancies, selectivity, and fierce competition that might create a demotivating academic environment for junior faculty striving to achieve in their academic careers. The regular pace also downplays the role of assessment and merit for promotion via scholarship productivity and equalizes it with statutory promotion[17] - a clear abdication of scholarly merit to a civil servant status that divests promotion of collegiality, shared governance, academic criteria, and due process.

Top-down approaches in evaluating promotion files are legally entrenched. According to Article 9 of decree 2.01.2329 dated July 4, 2002 and decision 1271.02 dated September 19, 2002, the evaluation of promotion files is undertaken by a specialized committee. This committee is composed of the president of the university, two faculty members appointed by the faculty dean based on the recommendation of the president, two faculty members elected according to ministerial procedures, and the chair of the department. An external university professor specialized in the area of the candidate applying for promotion may be appointed by the president of the university to advise on any item specified in the meeting agenda. Decree 2.01.2329 does not mention the role of the appointed external advisor in the academic review of the promotion files. This article reflects the magnitude of the bureaucratic nature of the promotion review process. In addition, the centralized nature of the promotion system in Morocco is evinced in Article 8 of Law 1.75.102 dated 1975 in which the government authorities responsible of higher education (Ministry of Higher Education) officially promotes faculty based on the recommendation of the scientific committee and after sounding the opinion of the university council concerned.

Judging by the content of the documents analyzed for Morocco, we have not come across or identified promotion criteria specific to social sciences or humanities per se; the general criteria include reports of teaching, completed researches, ongoing research activities, and the works of deliberations presented in local and international symposia or conferences. No restrictions on the language and venues of publications were found in the promotion criteria. The same pattern was found in the public sector in Lebanon and Tunisia, in two other Francophone and legacy universities in the sample.

Lebanon: The Lebanese University specifies three levels of faculty ranks: Law 67/70 specified three ranks for faculty members according to the following hierarchal order from high to low: Professor, Assistant Professor, and Mou'eid (Lecturer)[18]. Moving from one rank to another requires faculty to present a promotion file to merit promotion not necessarily subject to a point system evaluation and rankings or imposing requirements for publishing in international refereed journals and indexed journals. The promotion system represents a unique case. According to section II of Law 6/70 stipulated in Article 16 dated 1961, promotion to the rank of Professor requires that the candidate's doctorate degree should be classified as first category and that they

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[16] http://www.uh1.ac.ma/l-universite/gouvernance, accessed July 3, 2019.

[17] https://www.enssup.gov.ma/sites/default/files/u306/341/Arrete_2171.12_Ar.pdf, accessed July 3, 2019.

[18] http://legallaw.ul.edu.lb/LawView.aspx?opt=view&LawID=166998#Section_245560, accessed October 20, 2020.

should have spent five years working in their field after earning the degree, and published at least five original researches after earning the doctorate degree. Second, for promotion to the rank of Assistant Professor, the candidate should have obtained a first-category classified doctorate degree and been teaching in higher education for at least two years after obtaining their degree. The law also promulgates that holders of a second-category doctorate who have been in higher education for at least four years, and have published at least three original researches after obtaining their doctorate degree, are promoted to Assistant Professor. In other words, a faculty member applying for promotion can include in their file material that was published in non-academically refereed venues, a matter that raises questions about the quality of the publications being submitted. The promotion system also lacks systematic evaluation of faculty performance in teaching and service, which besides research defines the tripartite role of universities.

Tunisia: At Tunis University, faculty recruitment and promotion is centralized by the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, as in Morocco. The academic ranks in Tunisia are the following: Assistant, Assistant Professor, Lecturer, and Professor of Higher Education. Faculty applying for promotion submit two files: the academic file comprising publications and scholarly activities as well as evidence of the pedagogical component that contains lectures, lessons plans and the like.

Similar to Morocco, statutory promotion is also available to veteran faculty on the basis of number of years spent at the university, thereby divesting promotion from merit and assessment via due process. Others work their way up the ladder of promotion according to rank vacancy. According to Law 1825 of 1993 and its amendments stipulated in Law 2877 dated 2008, promotion from one rank to another occurs under the auspices of the Department of Examinations and University Debates in the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Promotion to the rank of Assistant Professor is mandated to candidates who have passed a debate as an eligibility requirement and are holders of doctorate degrees. Promotion to the rank of Assistant Professor occurs through the scientific committee according to Chapter 31 of Law 1825 of 1993 and its amendments stipulated in Law 2877 of 2008. Promotion to this rank requires a doctorate thesis defense and promotion may be granted according to two independent reports prepared by two members from the scientific committee. Assistant Professors applying to the rank of Lecturer (equivalent to the rank of Associate Professor in the US system) who have spent at least three years in the rank may choose between discussing their work through a debate or discussing their work in the form of a lecture exam. Candidates applying to the rank of "Professor in Higher Education" as depicted in the Law, are mandated to apply through a debate and should have spent at least four years in the rank of Lecturer. It is worth noting that debates involved in the Tunisian promotion system are discipline specific and openings for the debates are announced on the website of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research[19]. Peer review is conducted as part of the procedure involved in reviewing the academic files of candidates applying for promotion.

Palestine: An-Najah National University, Nablus represents a unique case in academic ranks. Faculty ranks are Lecturer, Associate Professor, Professor, and Distinguished Professor. Promotion to Distinguished Professor requires at least double the points required for the rank of Full Professor, four articles in refereed journals that have an IF, and should be a full-time faculty at the university. Overall, a promotion point system is distributed on single-authors (appeared

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[19] http://www.mes.tn/page.php?code_menu=154&code_menu_parent=122, accessed July 4, 2019.

five times in the Promotion Instructions) and co-authors (appeared seven times in the Promotion Instructions). Applicants are evaluated according to four components of which two overlap and the difference, if any, cannot be discerned: Research and scientific production, scientific effort to serve the university and society, teaching, and general services to the university, university life, and society[20].

The promotion instructions spell out a number of checks and balances that reflect a quantity control system. For instance, articles must be published in recognized and refereed journals that are regularly issued by universities or associations (at least three issues). Such journals should not be electronic unless they have an IF. Further, instructions postulate that articles should be published in a variety of journals in the Arab world and internationally. In addition, books should be published in recognized academic institutions or in reputable publishing houses. The instructions clarify that the maximum limit for the scientific output published in the same journal should not exceed 25 percent except if the journal has an IF and publications in local journals should not exceed 25 percent of the total number of publications submitted for promotion.

4. Promotion Criteria in Non-Public Universities

Jordan: Several observations were registered from the analyses of the non-public sector in the universities surveyed. Similar to the University of Jordan, Al-Ahliyya Amman University follows the Movement and Promotion System which is divided into two strands. The first strand is promotion within the same rank from category (B) to category (A). Here, the faculty should satisfy a good record of teaching, be collegial, have earned 60 percent of the points awarded from research in the candidate's area of teaching and research, have spent five years in the rank, possess a good record of service, and have no record of penalty or warning. The second strand is promotion from a lower rank to a higher one like mundane promotion systems in higher education.

The university ranks the journals counted for promotion along a hierarchal system in which tier one journals and conferences receive higher weights and points than tier two and tier three journals respectively. Tier one journals are classified according to indexation in Journal Citation within Knowledge ISI Web of Report or its parlance in Australia, Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA). Further, amendments to promotion guidelines introduced in 2019 referred to journals in Clarivate Analytics Web of Science or Scopus. Local journals accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research were recognized for inclusion in the candidate's promotion dossier, same as those listed in the University of Jordan. Thus, faculty members have the opportunity to publish locally or internationally in the social sciences and humanities, while keeping in mind that higher weights are allotted to international, refereed, and indexed journals. In addition, earning points for promotion through publishing in a local journal is restricted since article 6 of the Promotion Instructions, states categorically that with exception to Q1 journals, scientific production should not exceed two articles published in the same journal. A similar pattern was found in the non-public sector in neighboring Palestine.

Palestine: Promotion instructions at Birzeit University set out a point system. These instructions articulate that the research accepted for the promotion shall be given points according to the

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[20] https://www-cdn.najah.edu/media/filer_public/74/dc/74dc2dea-8c8f-4b73-9832-6f26546a2c8f/instructions.pdf, accessed July 12, 2019.

status of the scientific research and the place of the publishing venue. The total scientific output shall accumulate at least 4 points for promotion to the rank of Assistant Professor, at least 6 points for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor, and at least 10 points for promotion to the rank of Professor according to a point system listed in the promotion instructions. For the research published in one of the specialized refereed journals in Arabic, the opinions of the experienced referees are sought[21]. Table 3 shows the distribution of points by publication type[22].

Table 4. Point System at Birzeit University, Palestine

Publications	Points
Q1 Journals	3
Q2 Journals	2
Q3 Journals	1
Q4 Journals	0.5
Refereed conference proceeding	1
International refereed and indexed conference proceeding	1 - 3
Non refereed conference proceeding	0.5
Book evaluated according to reputation of publisher	1 - 6
Translated/edited book evaluated according to reputation of publisher	1 - 2
Chapter in a book evaluated according to reputation of publisher	1 - 3
Internationally registered patent	3
Patent registered in the Arab countries	1 - 2
Creative work in the candidate's area of specialty	1 - 2

It can be observed from Table 3 above that the points allocated to international journals and international patents are categorical and do not include malleability or ranges for possible subjectivity in the evaluation of scholarship productivity. By contrast, the points allotted for local venues contain ranges, a matter that might open vistas for subjectivity in the evaluation of the promotion files. Overall, promotion is not a dashboard of mechanically earned points accrued over the years, rather it involves a subjective element largely and overwhelmingly achieved through peer review, while maintaining an appeal system for faculty who might have concerns about possible biases in promotion decisions. Furthermore, while promotion instructions at Birzeit University outline a number of recognizable publishing venues indexed in reputable international databases, it cautions against social sciences and humanities journals that might hold non-neutral intellectual prejudices. This wariness represents a key recognition of the particularity of social sciences and humanities in the research arena in the Arab countries; but, at the same time, may open doors for possible justifications and excuses related to the rejection of low quality manuscripts by international journals. However, this claim remains a tentative one in the absence of corroborating evidence.

Lebanon: In Lebanon, at the American University of Beirut (AUB), the promotion policy for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences does not allude to IF or indexation of research articles in reputable publishing houses for the social sciences and the humanities. According to interview data, faculty members are expected to present evidence of the quality of their publications. Anecdotal

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[21] Ibid.
[22] https://ritaj.birzeit.edu/university-laws/?root_node_id=100#, accessed July 6, 2019.

evidence suggests that external reviews of published books by faculty applying for promotion play a role in determining the quality of the publication. Such external reviews of published work may be taken into consideration by the committee reviewing promotion files during the evaluation process.

Morocco: Regarding promotion requirements at Al-Akhawayn University, we could not find detailed information on promotion, but the website lays out overarching instructions typical of those found in liberal arts colleges in the US. The decisions of retention and promotion are based on a wide range of evidence, including self-assessment, quality of teaching, scientific activities, services provided to the institution, peer feedback, student assessment, and recommendations of academic coordinators and evaluation of the elected colleagues committee. Promotions are reviewed by the Council of Deans, which submits its recommendations to the President for the final decision.

Qatar: The Doha Institute, established in 2014, emphasized research as the main component for promotion, as did most universities in the sample; it accounts for 50 percent compared to 30 percent on teaching, and 20 percent on service. Promotion to Full-Professor[23] requires that the candidates possess a distinguished research record that is similar to those in the same rank at equivalent regional and international institutions. In addition, promotion to Associate Professor requires that candidates must have earned a good reputation in their research specialization that is commensurate with academics in the same rank at equivalent regional institutions. The promotion criteria and procedures at Doha Institute are limited to social sciences and humanities since the Institute does not offer scientific disciplines neither in teaching nor in the research centers. The Doha Institute is a unique case in the sample given exclusive disciplinary focus on graduate studies in the fields of social sciences, humanities, public administration, and developmental economics.

5. Recruitment in the public sector

Recruitment of faculty members in the universities surveyed can be mapped out along two levels of classification: centralized and decentralized selection processes. Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia adopt a heavily centralized recruitment system by virtue of the higher education laws promulgated in these countries. These centralized systems resonate with the pre-reform era in Europe in the mid-1980s. For instance, until 1983 the system of recruiting faculty members across disciplines alongside determining vacancies was centralized in Spain and in other European countries. This practice is still prevalent in centralized educational systems in the Arab countries, particularly in the public sector with some exceptional particularities in Lebanon where the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) does not interfere in the affairs of the Lebanese University. However, since 1996, the Council of Ministers has been playing a role in deciding on the employment of full-time faculty, a practice that has legitimized the influence of political factions in the employment affairs of the Lebanese University.

According to Article 19 dated August 18, 1961, full-time faculty recruited by the Institute of Social Sciences at the Lebanese University to teach should meet the following criteria: has practiced higher education in law or literature for at least ten years and has taught one of the

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[23] https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/Documents/AcademicPolicies/DIAcademicPolicies_Promotions_0316.pdf, accessed on July 4, 2019.

subjects offered in the curriculum of the Bachelor degree in Sociology[24]. In terms of recruitment procedures, anecdotal evidence and interview data revealed the presence of a due process for recruitment. For instance, the department concerned selects new faculty members, on full-time or part-time basis, often involving faculty members in the process who assist in interviewing candidates, studying their files, and issuing recommendations accordingly. However, bottom-up and participatory procedures are short-lived, as they are foiled by myriad political interventions that tend to intensify during the sorting of candidates' files resulting in reducing the academic role of departments in recruitment and selection to a mere pro forma practice.

In Morocco, public universities lack autonomy in faculty recruitment, which remains the prerogative of the governing body concerned with higher education, mainly the Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research. A distinguishable feature of faculty recruitment in Morocco is that once a faculty member is appointed they become affiliated to their faculty rather than to the university, and mobility from one faculty or discipline to another is not allowed.

In Egypt the decision and procedures for recruiting faculty members is also centralized. Articles 65 to 95 of the Law on the Organization of Universities in Egypt specify the conditions for the recruitment of faculty members and their duties. Article 68 that replaced Law No. 54 dated 1973 promulgates that recruitment of faculty members in the ranks of assistant lecturer in a certain faculty occurs without announcing the vacant position in that faculty, and appointment takes place from within the faculty de facto leading to excessive inbreeding of faculty members from the same faculty, particularly fresh graduates. In case there were no applicants from within the faculty, the vacancy is then announced externally. However, unlike Morocco, faculty members can move to another major, faculty, or institute within the same university provided the transition was approved by the University Council based on the recommendation of the Department's Council, according to Article No. 80[25]. Also, to work at Al-Azhar University, the candidate should have a doctorate degree from the University or from other equivalent Egyptian universities, provided the candidate has studied qualified Islamic subjects. Thus, recruiting faculty follows an amalgam of ministerial decisions and university-criteria for recruitment evident in the requirement that accents Islamic studies. It is worth noting that although Al-Azhar University is public, it enjoys a semi-autonomous status in governance despite being a state-funded institution.

The public sector in Qatar digresses from the mundane bureaucratic centralization of recruiting faculty members adopted by public universities in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, and Tunisia. Qatar University posts vacancies for recruiting faculty members on its website and in journals, according to need and vision. This model resembles the private sector where recruitment usually starts with advertising for the vacant position. The process involves evaluation and assessment of the candidate's credentials as well as their ability and suitability to serve the institution in teaching, research, and service. Interviews are involved and committee work as well as part of shared governance in the selection and appointment of hired faculty.

6. Recruitment in the non-public sector

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[24] http://www.legallaw.ul.edu.lb/LawArticles.aspx?LawTreeSectionID=189848&lawId=187609, accessed on July 18, 2019.
[25] http://portal.mohesr.gov.eg/ar-eg/Pages/laws.aspx, accessed on July 15, 2019.

In the non-public sector, procedures are less centralized and follow similar mundane mechanics for recruiting faculty through advertising for the vacant positions, vesting committees with the task of studying files for screening and short listing, to conducting interviews with candidates prior to referral to higher echelons in the university system for final decision. For instance, jobs at Al-Akhawayn University are advertised on the university's website[26]. A committee of professors within each department studies the files received. The Dean or Director shall make the decision to join the university based on the Committee's report after the interview with the candidate and in consultation with the Vice President in academic affairs.

7. Role of Research Centers in supporting Arab social scientists

Research centers in the Arab countries can be divided into four types: privately owned, public, non-governmental (NGOs), and university research centers. The latter bifurcates into university research centers and research centers within faculties and departments. Public research centers are funded and operate under the aegis of the government and undertake research projects with a strong government oversight. On the other hand, privately owned research centers mainly provide consulting services, and at times address challenging social issues. Such research centers can be found in Lebanon and represents independent research that address timely issues such as LAES. In addition, research centers in public universities coalesce with government agendas while the activities are determined by university guiding policies and strategies.

The place of social sciences and humanities in these centers is encouraging since many of them are housed in universities or are faculty-based. However, these centers are under threat from cuts in funding for research in the public sector. Another major impediment curbing the role of social sciences research in these centers is the prevalence of lack of democracy and freedoms in the Arab countries as consistently revealed in burgeoning reports like The Arab Human Development Reports (UNDP-RBAS 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2009) and in the broader literature on Middle Eastern affairs. Despite these challenges, research centers remain potent places for harboring faculty research projects and initiatives. A recent report published by the Arab Social Science Monitor (ASSM) titled "Social Sciences in the Arab World: Forms of Presence" in 2015 showed a quantitative leap in the number of research centers in the Arab countries, though with variations among countries.

While this study endorses the claim that the presence of these centers reflects a pathway towards strengthening the relationship between the research aspect of social sciences and university curricula, it further explores the role of these centers in supporting Arab social scientists. For this purpose, we sampled randomly four research centers drawn from Egypt, Morocco and Qatar to examine the level of support rendered accessible to researchers in the social sciences and the humanities in terms of leaves for research, reduction in the teaching load, and allocation of research funds.

Egypt: There are two types of research centers at Cairo University: university research centers and faculty research centers[27]. Based on our count, the website of the University lists twenty-one university research centers of which nine (42.8%) are in social sciences and humanities. In addition, there are one hundred and two research centers within each faculty of which twenty-

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[26] http://www.aui.ma/en/jobs.html, accessed June 2019.

[27] https://cu.edu.eg/ar/page.php?pg=contentFront/SubSectionData.php&SubSectionId=201, accessed on July 17, 2019.

seven (26.4%) are also in social sciences and humanities. These percentages indicate a declared university-wide commitment towards providing research support opportunities to faculty members and strengthening their engagement with tackling pressing issues in the community from the prism of research such as the Center of Community Service and the Center of Elderly Care. One center, the Cairo University Center for Arabic Language and Culture, focuses on special training for students and provides Arabic courses for Egyptians to enhance their writing skills, as well as to foreigners (modern standard Arabic courses, Egyptian dialect courses). The center also offers special courses in the language of media, Arabic literature, Islamic studies, Egyptian society and culture, and calligraphy. And, the Center of Faculty Capacity Building provides leadership training and human resources development for faculty and administrators. Faculty members also have access to research funds and research awards for publishing in international venues. However, it was difficult to assess leave granted for research purposes, reduction in the teaching load, and allocation of adequate research funds for social scientists and humanities due to the paucity of data on the subject obtained from the University's website.

Morocco: At Al-Akhawayn University, the Social Science Research Institute (SSRI), which is part of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, collaborates with all the faculties at the university, other research centers, and the larger university community. This research center focuses on gender, political, international and development issues, contributes to current national and international initiatives, and debates in all these fields[28]. In terms of incentives for faculty members, the University has a set of policies, including a faculty per diem policy[29], which regulates the University's financial allocations to defray faculty's academic travel costs and conference participation.

Qatar: The Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI) at Qatar University[30] covers a wide swathe of topics relevant to Qatari society, including labor and employment, modernization and shifts in social values, education, health, family structure, and media impact. Projects are initiated by researchers at the Institute, sometimes in association with faculty members at the University or with other external collaborators. Commissioned projects are requested by members of the external community, including development organizations, non-governmental organizations and private businesses. Such projects must be in line with SESRI's mission and related to its broader research agenda.

Further, the Office of Research Support at the University of Qatar lends support to the research community at the University by facilitating the accrual of research funds. It helps faculty and researchers in the preparation and submission of proposals, and finding sources and opportunities of funding. The ultimate aim is to provide faculty with research opportunities for capacity building and wider engagement in scholarship.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Immediately discernible from the analysis of website material and relevant ministerial documents is the ubiquitous emphasis on research published in international venues for

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[28] http://www.aui.ma/en/component/content/article/74-school-of-humanities-a-social-sciences/2526-social-science-research-institute-ssri.html, accessed on July 13, 2019.

[29] http://www.aui.ma/P20150218percent20Facultypercent20Per-diempercent20Policy.pdf, accessed on July 20, 2019.

[30] http://sesri.qu.edu.qa/research/sesri/, accessed on July 13, 2019.

promotion. This finding coalesces with global trends in higher education, which are steering universities towards research, including social sciences and humanities. While it was intriguing to find universities' emphasis on quality knowledge production among faculty members, this study has not probed into the local relevance and social impact of faculty publications or the actual strategy of universities in this regard. If we assume that increasing the publication rates in international venues promotes the university image and visibility internationally, universities in the Arab countries are still characterized by a lagging behind knowledge production reality, seen at least from the prism of international rankings despite the upward tick of some Arab universities in QS World University Rankings[31]. Further, the international promotion criteria adopted by around two thirds of the universities surveyed may require revision and assessment, in light of the need for local quality research that has local relevance and readability, as well as social and political impact for steering much needed change.

Moreover, the highly diversified models and patterns of promotion in ranks, procedures, and modes of management of faculty promotion and recruitment yielded from the study, invite further research into issues of shared governance, peer review, and due process, particularly in heavily centralized countries which offer statutory promotion across all disciplines. In reference to university research centers, our observations suggest that the actual role of social sciences and humanities research is still opaque in light of the lack of evidence about financing issues, involvement of faculty members in research, and infrastructure.

Although this study yielded several findings pertaining to faculty promotion and recruitment gleaned from the universities surveyed, several limitations precluded us from generalizing our findings. In fact, the relatively small number of universities surveyed compared to the remarkable diversity of HEIs in the Arab countries posed a limitation to generalizing our findings. It is worth noting that this study did not include non-public sectors in Tunisia and Egypt. However, we included Al-Azhar University as a special case in Egypt since it is mission-driven, considered the second oldest university in Arab countries after Al Quaraouiyine in Morocco, and enjoys an autonomous status despite being a state-funded university.

In addition, some downloaded documents did not provide the necessary information about promotion and recruitment, indicating insufficient data provision by some universities. Even available data may not be reliable and accurate for generalizing our research findings. The paucity of institutional data disclosed to the public reflected a 'firewall culture' that deterred the study from generalizing its findings. In reference to research centers, the degree to which they involve faculty members in research that promotes social science and humanities through developing teaching material for the curriculum, or in conducting research with a local relevance, have not been adequately explored in this background study; also, the adequacy of funds to carry out scholarly activities was not surveyed. This gap invites future systematic research that involves analyses of key research centers in the area of social sciences and humanities according to a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) including governance, infrastructure, funding, and research productivity.

Because of the above limitations, we were cautious about making even tentative generalizations regarding all HEIs in the Arab countries despite the temptation to generalize some of the results

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[31] https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2021, accessed November 8, 2020.

obtained from public universities in centralized countries that adopt uniform criteria and procedures for promotion and recruitment.

Overall, the documents analyzed represent only a declared discourse about promotion and recruitment as stipulated in university and ministerial documents verified by occasional intermittent interviews. Thus, a tracer fieldwork study involving interviews with faculty members and administrators would complement our analysis of promotion and recruitment policies and practices of academia in social sciences and humanities in the Arab higher education landscape. The tracer fieldwork study should look into practices and particularities during deliberations of promotion files, unravel possible biases, and examine aspects of faculty appeals.

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Appendix 1

Universities selected for the study

Country	University	Sector
Egypt	Cairo University	Public
	Azhar University	Public but enjoys a sizeable margin of independence despite being state-funded.
Lebanon	Lebanese University	Public
	AUB	Non-public
Morocco	University Mohamed V	Public
	Al Akhawayn University	Non-public
Jordan	University of Jordan	Public
	Ahliyya Amman University	Non-public
Palestine	Birzeit University	Non-public
	An-Najah National University	Public, non-governmental
Qatar	Qatar University	Public
	Doha Institute	Non-public
Tunisia	University of Tunis	Public
Seven countries	**Thirteen universities**	**Eight public, Five non-public**