National Research Strategies and University Strategic Plans in the Arab Region

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine national research strategies and university strategic plans in reference to the social sciences and humanities in eight public and five non-public universities selected from seven Arab countries: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar and Tunisia. The 13 universities were classified according to their year of establishment, which ranged from legacy universities established before 1960 to blossoming universities established between 1960 and 1998, and an emerging institute established after 1998. The study also examined the availability of graduate programs and research production as well as the existence of research centers, funding policies, and incentives for research as means of enhancing the quality of research performance and production in the social sciences and humanities.

Information for the study was gathered primarily through desktop research and interviews. Analysis of mission statements, strategic plans and national research strategies as well as relevant research studies, using discourse cards to organize the information, and statistics on graduate programs and the production of research was conducted to identify trends, emergent themes and emphasis on research in the social sciences and humanities.

Most universities, public and non-public, that have developed a mission statement, mention the significance of research, the importance of culture and their service to society. The strategies of almost all universities emphasized the importance of research quality, innovation, and relevance to the community. While legacy universities focused on the quality of publications and the establishment of academic and research centers of excellence, blossoming universities focused on student involvement in research. In almost all universities, the availability of centers or deanships for research coincided with the availability of funding and faculty resources. Two public and one non-public university publish their own journals for social sciences and humanities and five of the 13 universities offer rewards for research publication.

In general, the results indicated the significance of research reflected not only within mission statements and strategies but also through the existence of research centers and an emphasis on enhancing the infrastructure for research.

Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) play a crucial role in promoting socio-economic growth. They support knowledge generation and innovation, contribute to human capital formation, and provide the foundation for nation building and social cohesion (Gardner 2002). To successfully

fulfill the three distinct yet interrelated missions – teaching and learning, research, and community engagement – most institutions share, they need to be able to respond effectively to the rapidly shifting higher education landscape, the emergent global challenges, and the evolving educational needs (World Bank 2017). Amidst global competitiveness and increased prominence of rankings among higher education institutions, success and continuity are dependent upon a range of factors, the most significant of which are internationalization and research to boost the status of universities. In this competitive marketplace environment, HEIs find themselves seeking highly qualified scholars, top-tier students and donors in order to enhance their reputation and visibility (Goldman and Salem 2015). Thus, the employment of new planning models that allow institutions to approach the multifaceted demands placed on them with a strategic perspective is an inevitable demand (Al-Kilani 2019).

According to David and David (2013), strategic planning is an intricate and elaborate process that takes an organization into unexplored territory. It is defined as a "process of developing and maintaining a strategic fit between the organization and its changing marketing opportunities" (Kotler and Murphy 1981, 471). Through strategic planning, organizations establish priorities and goals and coordinate their efforts to anticipate, direct, and manage change fundamental to organizational challenges (Luxton 2005; Tromp and Ruben 2004). When employed wisely, strategic planning can be a powerful tool to bring about quality change and set the future direction of the institution (Nauffal and Nasser 2012).

That said, the aim of this study is twofold: To explore the national research strategies in a selection of Arab countries, and to highlight the place of social sciences in these strategies. It also examines the place of research in the mission statement and the strategic plan of a public and a non-public university in each of the select countries with a special focus on research in the social sciences. The study is structured as follows: First, we outline a brief overview of the strategic planning process, the significance of mission statements, and how essential they are in developing such plans in higher education institutions. This is followed by a review of the extent to which strategic plans or national strategies in the Arab world emphasize the importance of research in general and research in the social sciences in particular. This is done through the analysis of mission/vision statements of eight public and five non-public universities drawn from seven Arab countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar and Tunisia), followed by statistical analysis of existent programs and the production of research in the social sciences among the universities included in this study. The study further identifies trends and emergent themes of focus among mission/vision statements and national and institutional strategic plans and how their content reflects upon the social sciences and related research among public and non-public institutions. More so, while national and university-wide strategic research plans articulate a wide range of support provisions for researchers, this study will be supplanted by analyses of available data on funding policies and incentives for leading social scientists together with an appraisal of the role of research centers through graduate programs as key elements for accelerating the tempo of knowledge production.

This study is conducted amidst the recent changes in higher education in the region of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), including the tremendous spur of HEIs, with the number of institutions increasing from 10 universities in 1940 to 260 as of 2007 (Nauffal and Nasser 2012), to 700 in 2018 (UNESCO 2018), an increase by 63 percent from 2007. This wave of expansion,

triggered by the population growth and corollary increasing demand for higher education led to privatization and internationalization of higher education to meet local demands and those of the global market economy. In turn, the unprecedented increase of HEIs has intensified competitiveness among these institutions. The impact of globalization on HEIs in the MENA region can be optimized by decision makers through preserving national identity on one hand and being open to modernization on the other (Al-Kilani 2019). Thus, in response to these factors, HEIs in the region have focused on the development of strategic plans for sustainability, progression and the management of organizational challenges (Nauffal and Nasser 2012).

Strategic Planning and Mission Statements
Strategic planning is believed to have developed in the 1950s-1970s period (Dooris et al. 2004). Although it is difficult to trace the genesis of this methodology since "planning is an evolutionary process" (p. 6) that has flourished during the past few decades, the publication of *Academic Strategy* by George Keller in 1983 is believed to have encouraged HEIs to undertake strategic planning as an essential tool for advancement and development (ibid., 2004). Strategic planning in higher education has gained momentum in recent years as a key element of quality assurance constituting a pillar in the recent higher educational reforms in the MENA region (Buckner 2011). For this study, strategic planning is defined as "an organizational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment" (Balanced Scorecard Institute 2018). Thus, strategic planning enables the progression of an organization's vision and mission through goals, priorities, and objectives that translate into initiatives aligned with outcomes, with strategic resource allocation and commitments to assessment, accountability reporting, and planning the budget (DuPont-Morales and Harris 1994).

As mentioned earlier, according to Albadri (2019), the strategic planning process is comprised of a sequence of activities beginning with determining the mission, defining goals, assessing internal and external factors, conducting SWOT analysis and defining the strategy. In universities, strategic planning begins with identifying the vision and the mission of the institution in order to extract strategic goals from them (Al-Kilani 2019). Thus, the mission statement is an essential element in the process of devising an institution's strategic plan (Keller, 1983). "Mission statements define the nature, purpose, and role of organizations; focus resources; and guide planning" (Keeling 2013, 30). Ideally speaking, mission statements are not only essential for the formulation of strategic plans but are also demanded by accreditation agencies (Morphew and Hartley 2006), as well as for informing stakeholders who and what is important to an organization and to indicate the services and products it provides to cater to student demands (King et al. 2012).

However, it should be noted that not all HEIs have mission statements. For instance, the concept of a "Mission" is non-existent in the French university system being established and run by the government. An example can be found in three public legacy universities in the sample (Morocco, Lebanon and Tunisia) that follow the Francophone system of education. In Morocco, Law No. 01-00 issued in 2000 uses the term "General Tasks" instead of mission and the Lebanese University uses "Goals" instead of mission as derived from related legislative decrees.

Thus, the mission concept in this study is used as a generic term that indicates overarching goals to be achieved in the near future by a university.

In this study, we analyze the mission statement/goals or general tasks of 13 universities in seven different Arab states, taking into consideration the significant role mission/goals provide in guiding strategic plans (Conway et al. 1994; Immordino et al. 2016; Pearce 1982; Shirley 1983).

Strategic Plans and Research
The quality, broadly understood, of higher education is determined through the institution's academic programs and teaching, research and scholarship, and community service (UNESCO 1998). These functions are often emphasized through mission statements and strategic plans at the college and university level or through national plans devised on the country level. Although research and scholarship are controlled by funding and favorable trends imposed by higher education institutions (Hanafi 2011), they are not only an integral function of higher education but also the most important criteria for faculty promotions. This emphasis on research as a requisite for recruitment and promotion has increased because of global competitiveness brought about by the emergence of neoliberal policies, which have imposed numerous challenges on higher education.

According to Akkari (2004), the Arab region suffers from "inadequate research and development for knowledge creation" whereby "educational research is particularly limited in the region and not integrated within the international research networks" (p. 152). The World Bank (2008) also reports a distinctively low level in the production of knowledge in Arab countries in comparison to countries of similar economic development levels. Abouchedid and Abdelnour (2015) conducted a study analyzing data on faculty research productivity and research budget allocations in higher education institutions in Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Morocco, and Jordan. The study was conducted in the effort of contributing to the knowledge of research performance of HEIs in the Arab countries in relation to the strategies of reform hovering over the sector of education through quality assurance, internationalization and neoliberalism (Buckner 2011). Preliminary results confirmed that research production in the Arab region is "comparatively low" with mean scores ranging from 3.78 in Morocco to 7.24 in the UAE (p. 687). The study also revealed a very weak correlation between research productivity and budget allocation and that the education sector (public or non-public) was an insufficient predictor of research productivity (Abouchedid and Abdelnour 2015). However, the authors stress that despite these results, budget allocation should not be undermined as an essential factor related to research productivity. On the contrary, they articulate the necessity "to go beyond the scope of this study and examine the broader context of research engagement in the Arab world, including the roles of campus climate and university missions, in order to explain more accurately the counter-intuitive findings of a weak association between budgetary allocation and research output" (Abouchedid and Abdelnour 2015, 687).

Higher Education Research in the Arab Region
HEIs in the Arab region can be differentiated by sector (public, non-public/non-profit, non-public/for-profit) (Abouchedid and Abdelnour 2015; Hanafi 2011), model (American, French) (Nauffal 2009) or cultural reference (Islamic, Christian, secular) among other criteria (Abouchedid and Abdelnour 2015). Public universities accommodate for a major portion of

student enrollment and use the Arabic language for delivering their curricula. Historically, grounded universities that were founded by missionaries have high tuition fees, are non-public/non-profit universities and use English or French as the languages of instruction. Non-public/for-profit universities increased in the region during the 1990s following the wave of privatization (Hanafi 2011). In Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan, non-public HEIs occupy a central position, whereas in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia the opposite is true.

In a synthesis of case studies conducted on 11 HEIs from Lebanon, Egypt, and Morocco, El-Amine (2014) presented the issues and trends related to the quality of education. The review revealed that the government institutions featured in the study "lack financial and administrative autonomy…independence in some academic areas such as selection of students, faculty and programs" as well as a lack of "accountability, transparency and partnerships" in their governance (p. 1). Also noteworthy is the differentiation between admission standards and teaching and assessment standards between humanities and pure and applied sciences in favor of the latter. The review also noted the absence of institutional research in some of the HEIs despite their existence in research plans that have not been executed in a number of cases. Nauffal (2015) asserts however that while institutional research is relatively new in the region, the institutional research function has expanded in a short period from institutional data management to a function focused more on research, planning and policy formulation.

On a similar note, Hanafi (2011) noted that state control over public institutions, and the impact of globalization, neoliberalism and internationalization on both private and public sectors has shifted the emphasis of higher education from society to market demands. As a result, focus on the liberal arts and the social sciences programs declined. This shift in focus from the social sciences has affected research in these fields. Research in the domain of the social sciences is more often than not conducted within the society of the researcher which influences the choice of topics and research methods used (Bamyeh 2015) and is mostly in the form of books rather than journal articles (Hanafi and Arvanitis 2014). Therefore, research in the social sciences is rendered more valuable to the local than to the international community.

Nevertheless, the establishment of private HEIs that impose the use of English or French as the language of instruction and demand faculty publish in internationally renowned foreign journals has tremendously affected the production of research in the social sciences in the native Arabic language on the local level (Hanafi et al. 2014). On the other hand, ratings of HEIs and faculty promotion criteria, which rely on publications in internationally renowned, peer-reviewed journals, have diverted researchers from matters of local and national significance (Hanafi 2011): "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. If the former issue is a problem of *publish globally and perish locally*, the latter issue is *publish locally and perish globally*" (Hanafi 2011, 302). A few local universities, such as Birzeit University (Ramallah), recognize the importance of both local and international research and publications (Hanafi 2011). This finding coalesced with our current results showing the chiming of local and international research and publications in these two HEIs.

The Social Sciences in Higher Education

Social sciences studies and initiatives in the Arab countries considered in this study are undertaken mostly by three constituencies: Universities (public and non-public); independent research associations; and governments in the form of promulgating national strategies or corollary national policies. A cursory look into the extant literature on the position of social sciences in universities in the Arab countries shows the following main features that relate to this study.

1. The mission statements of universities mirror two competing historical trends in the Arab countries: Neoliberalism, on the one hand, which prioritizes professional or functional education for market competition as well as for meeting labor market requisites via science and technology, and on the other hand promoting the civic role of higher education vis-à-vis the social sciences. Table 1 shows a sample of excerpts from two mission statements in Jordan and Lebanon.

Table 1. Mission statements

Public university in Jordan	Non-public university in Lebanon
"…provides the Jordan Market with distinguished highly qualified graduates fulfilling the demands of the Jordan Market with experts and professional employment accordingly of high standards responds to the exchangeable market's needs technically and systematically."	"The University believes deeply in and encourages freedom of thought and expression and seeks to foster tolerance and respect for diversity and dialogue. Graduates will be individuals committed to creative and critical thinking, life-long learning, personal integrity and civic responsibility, and leadership."

A recent report shows the role of neoliberal policies in the region in marginalizing the social sciences. The Arab Social Science Monitor (ASSM) report in 2015 titled "Social Sciences in the Arab World: Forms of Presence" provided a bleak picture of the actual presence of social sciences in only 48 percent of universities. Since interest and focus on the social sciences is distinctive of historically grounded universities, the relative recentness of the establishment of many HEIs in the Arab region could provide an explanation of this phenomenon. Thus, it would be interesting to examine the "mission polarization" between emerging universities, that have been established during the last two decades or so, as a result of population growth and increasing privatization, mostly non-public and technically oriented, and legacy universities, which had been established before, as a nucleus of the social sciences in the region.

2. The second feature of HEIs in the Arab countries relates to the "untidy" agglomeration of educational providers and provisions. This spread can be distinguished by: Sector (public, non-public/non-profit, non-public/for-profit), affiliation (to the Ministry of Higher Education, other ministries), status (universities, independent colleges, technical institutes, community colleges, etc.), type (traditional, open, virtual), nationality (national, regional, international institutions or branches of them), model (American, French, German, etc.), cultural reference (Islamic, Christian, non-religious institutions) and orientation (profession-oriented, academic-oriented). One important area to examine would be the availability of incentives, and resources rendered accessible to social scientists in light of diverse institutional missions.

3. A third feature is the prevalent notion of a lagging-behind knowledge production sector in the Arab countries. Successive Arab Human Development Reports (2002 through 2009) have

portrayed a rather gloomy picture of the slow pace of knowledge production in HEIs. Hanafi's and Arvanitis' (2016) empirical findings attest to the slumberous performance of knowledge production in general and in the social sciences in specific. A host of factors seem to curtail knowledge production in the Arab countries, chief among them is "freedom and good-governance deficit" (Alan 2005) meshed with political repression and meager allocation of research funds (AHDR 2009). The aspect of freedom is of paramount importance to our study being a potent determinant that would discern knowledge production patterns in general and more particularly in the social sciences and the humanities.

Over and above the characteristic features of higher education in the Arab countries, rare attempts have been made thus far to produce evidence-based research gleaned from insight into Arab HEIs with respect to the place of social sciences in national strategies, university strategic plans, and corollary incentives for research. Our study seeks to bridge this gap by examining 13 universities (eight public and five non-public) in Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, Qatar, Tunisia, Morocco, and Jordan.

Methodology
This study was conducted using qualitative data analysis of the documents collected about the selected universities. Data was collected through several types of documents:
1) Mission/vision statements posted on university websites.
2) University strategic plans available on the university website, or national plans available from the ministries of higher education or their websites.
3) National or regional research studies conducted about strategic planning in higher education in the Arab region, the incorporation of the social sciences in universities and the production of research in the social sciences.

The information derived from these documents were summarized in a discourse card developed for each of the 13 institutions surveyed. The institutional discourse card encapsulated relevant background information about the institution including the mission, vision, values, policies and strategic planning as well as other vital sources of information. Discourse analysis was used to highlight the mission/vision statements and strategic/national plans' overlapping themes that emphasize the social sciences and humanities in the surveyed universities and to discern the factors underpinning them.

Interviews with key informants were used for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information to reinforce information derived through discourse analysis and provide clarity where information was inconsistent or unavailable.

Sample
The sample for this study was a selection of 13 universities from seven Arab countries. The countries were selected for geographic diversity, the size of their higher education systems and the potential availability of information via their websites. These countries included Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar and Tunisia.

The 13 universities selected for this study were chosen from different sectors and various periods of establishment. There were eight (62%) public and five (38%) non-public universities, one

public and one non-public university from each country except for Tunisia and Egypt where all universities studied were public. The selection of universities depending on periods of establishment was done following a pilot classification derived from a study of HEIs in the MENA region conducted in 2009 (Bhandari and El-Amine 2012). The three periods of establishment were before 1960 (five universities); between 1960 and 1998 (seven universities); and after 1998 (one university). Universities that belong to the first period are categorized as legacy universities, and comprised 38 percent of the sample. The second period of establishment represents blossoming universities, which make up 54 percent of the sample. The last period is represented by only one university which is 8 percent of the sample (see Table 2).

Table 2. Universities selected for the study

Country	University	Year of Establishment	Sector
Before 1960 – Legacy Universities			
Egypt	Al Azhar University[1]	972	Public
Egypt	Cairo University	1908	Public
Lebanon	American University of Beirut (AUB)	1866	Non-public
Lebanon	Lebanese University	1951	Public
Morocco	Mohammed V	1957	Public
1960-1998 – Blossoming Universities			
Jordan	University of Jordan	1962	Public
Jordan	Al-Ahliyya Amman University	1990	Non-public
Morocco	Al-Akhawayn University	1995	Non-public
Palestine	Birzeit University	1972	Non-public
Palestine	Al Najah University	1977	Public
Qatar	Qatar University	1977	Public
Tunisia	University of Tunis	1960	Public
After 1998 – Emerging Universities			
Qatar	Doha Institute	2014	Non-public

Data Analysis
The strategic/national plans and mission statements for each university were retrieved from the respective websites and organized in discourse cards to analyze their content. Data was analyzed by highlighting emergent themes between strategic plans and mission statements, which convey

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[1] Al-Azhar University in Egypt, the second oldest institution in the Arab region, was considered representative of non-public institutions however since it enjoys an autonomous status despite being a state-funded university.

an emphasis on the social sciences and humanities. Statistics on the production of academic research in the social sciences (retrieved from Scopus) was used to support the results obtained from the qualitative data.

Results

The results of the data analysis of the mission statements and strategic plans along with the statistics on research in the social sciences are presented for public and non-public universities, legacy, blossoming, and emerging universities and for each country separately. For the purpose of this analysis, we have merged blossoming and emerging universities – referred to as blossoming throughout the study – as only one emerging university was included in the study.

Mission Statements

The word 'research' appears in the mission statement of all universities included in this study with the exception of both public universities in Egypt. It is worth noting however, that the 2015-2030 strategic plan for the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Egypt has an action step under its competitiveness goal, which aims at improving the status of HEIs in the various ranking tables such as QS, THE, Shanghai and CWTS where the score on the research criteria in all of these rankings constitutes at its minimum 30 percent of the total ranking score. The strategy of Cairo University is aligned with the national strategy as reflected in the goal 'Upgrade labs and facilities to conduct research in faculties and schools as well as ensure funding for the research purposes'. A similar alignment between the national strategy and that of Al-Azhar University can be observed in the goal 'improving university competitiveness/rankings regarding the structures and outcomes of education'. As such the absence of the word 'research' in the institutional mission statement is insignificant in centralized educational systems where governments set general strategies for their nations. Additionally, it was found that all blossoming universities included the word 'research' in their mission statement compared to 60 percent of the legacy universities. While mission statements represent only one measure of a university's orientation, these figures are an indication of the momentum that research is gradually gaining in higher education in the Arab world. This is influenced, in part, by the various communiqués and recommendations in the Arab countries that emphasize the importance of research for proactively engaging in the dynamics of the knowledge society but more so by university rankings.

When considering the frequency of words related to the social sciences (society/social, culture, arts, and humanities), we notice that the focus is on societal issues across all institutions with less emphasis being given to the arts and humanities, reflecting the national development agendas of these countries that expand services to local communities. Cultural issues are more pronounced in legacy universities (67 percent) when compared to blossoming institutions (29 percent). Similarly, cultural issues are more prominent in the mission statements of public versus non-public universities and non-existent in the universities of Jordan and Tunisia. A plausible explanation can be found for example in the alignment of Amman's Al-Ahliyya University's strategy with the national strategy which has developed academic programs commensurate with the sweeping developments in IT and local and Arab market demands in an attempt to ensure employable graduates. Reference to the arts, humanities, and cultural issues in blossoming universities hovers around 14 to 29 percent. Similar trends in findings were recorded for legacy universities with the occurrence of the terms arts and humanities ranging from 17 to 33 percent.

Figure 1 gives the frequency of the words related to social sciences in university mission statements.
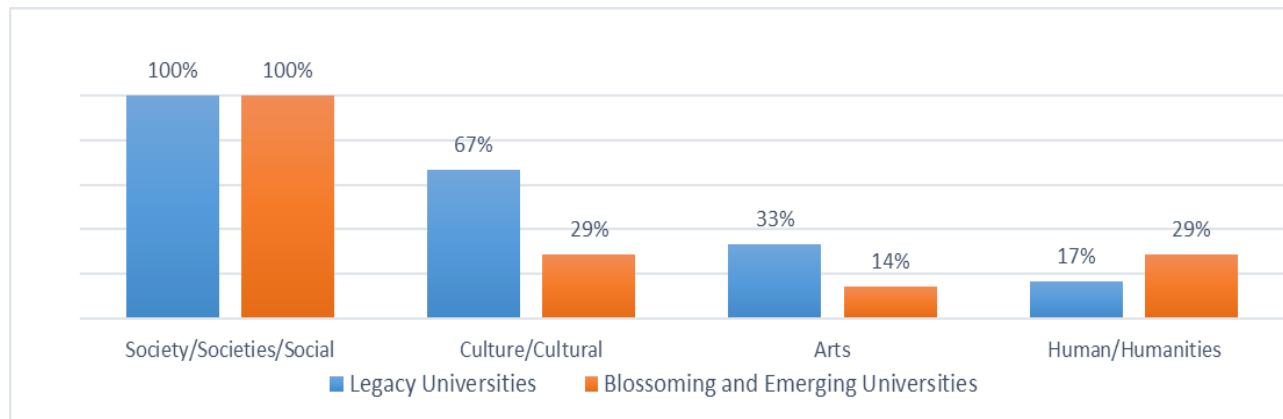

Figure 1. Frequency of the words related to social sciences in universities' mission statements and statements of purpose of the 13 universities.

Strategic Themes

Several common strategic themes and associated strategic objectives related to research in general and research in the social sciences specifically in national research strategies and institutional strategies were identified across institutions. These include themes such as quality of research, quality of publications, academic and research centers of excellence, student involvement in research, innovative research, infrastructure and resources for research, collaborative research, and research tackling local, regional and global issues, among others. Producing quality research was a strategic priority regardless of institutional type (legacy - 100%, blossoming - 75%) or sector (public - 88% and non-public - 80%). The establishment of academic and research centers of excellence was more of a strategic initiative for legacy institutions (60%) than blossoming universities (13%), as it was for public (40%) compared to non-public (25%). Similar results were found for the quality of publications with 80 percent of legacy institutions including it as a strategic goal in comparison to 13 percent of blossoming universities. When taking sector (public, non-public) into consideration, 75 percent of non-public universities considered the quality of publications a strategic direction compared to 40 percent of public institutions. Innovative research and ensuring appropriate infrastructure and resources needed for research, respectively, were important strategic priorities for both legacy (80%, 100%) and blossoming (75%, 88%) universities as compared to public (20%, 40%) and non-public (38%, 40%) universities, although little difference between legacy and blossoming and between public and non-public universities were found. Collaborative research involving internal and external partners is emphasized by about two-thirds of the universities in the study with special attention given to the research tackling issues related to the community in the social sciences and issues of national, regional and global concern. Both public and blossoming universities are more likely to encourage publications in the social sciences in local journals. This is particularly the case for the universities in Jordan and Cairo University in Egypt. A strategic initiative emphasized primarily by public universities is the establishment of new

programs including doctoral programs that meet market demands while the public universities of Cairo and Morocco promote research conducted in collaboration with industry. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the frequency of strategic initiatives among the universities by type and sector.
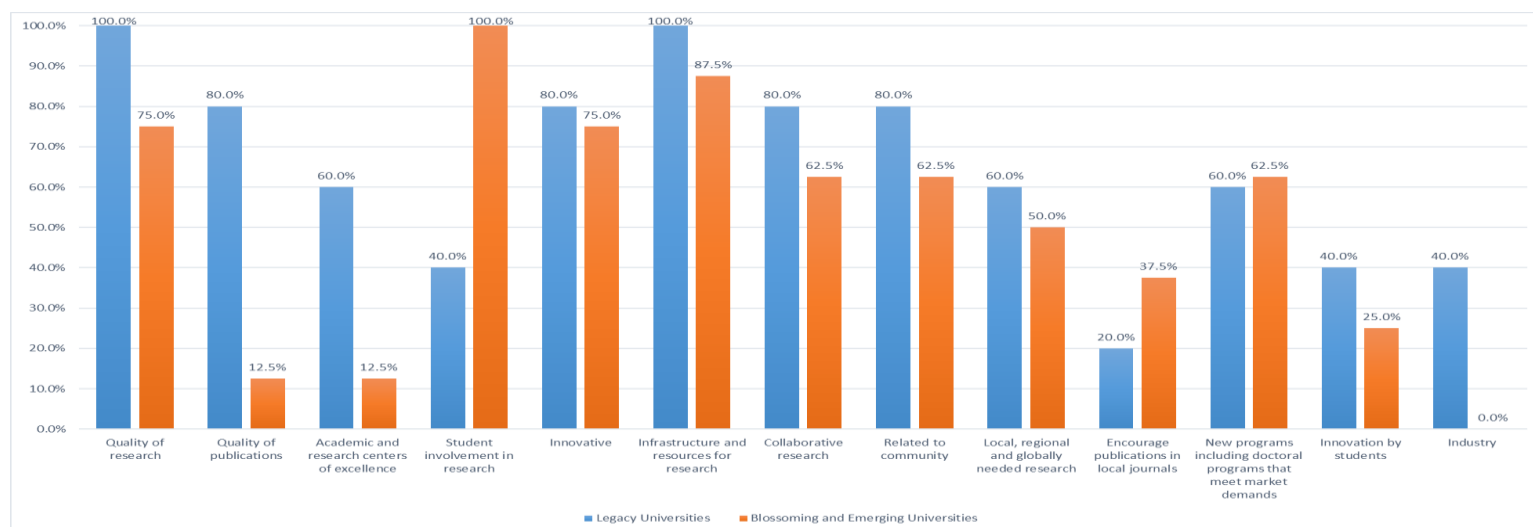

Figure 2: Frequency of strategic initiatives among universities by type (legacy, blossoming) extracted from the national and institutional strategic plans of the 13 universities studied.
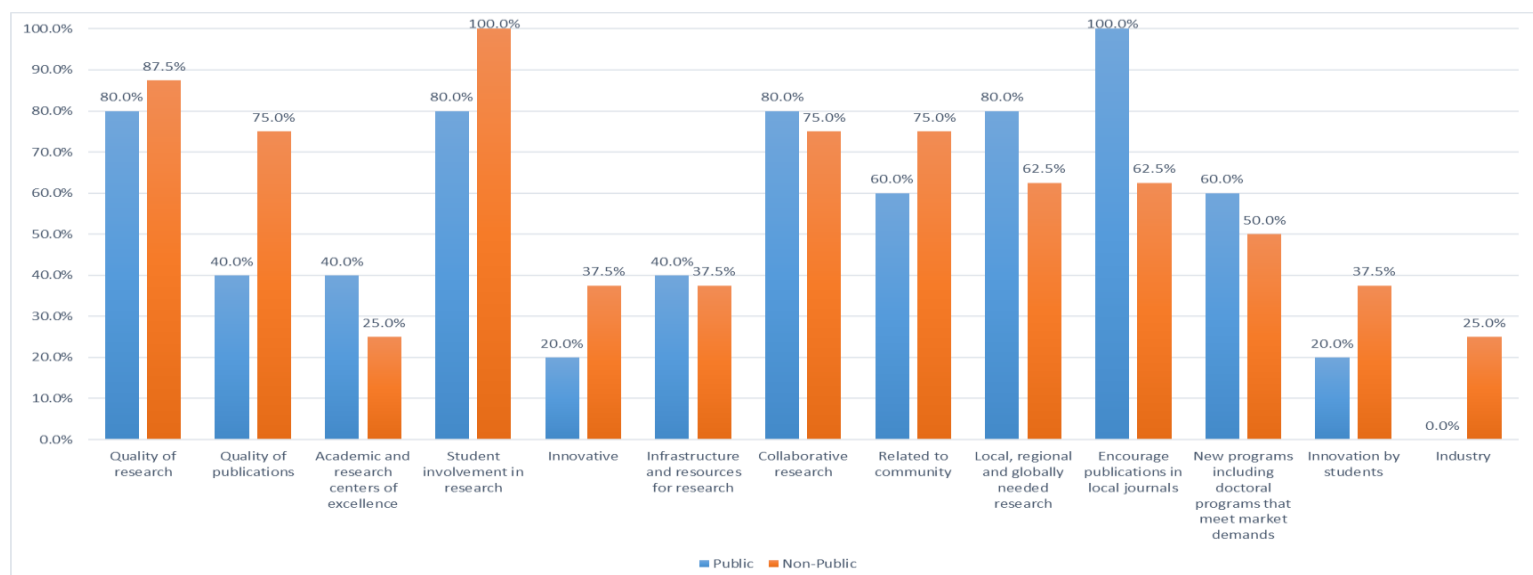

Figure 3: Frequency of strategic initiatives among universities by sector (public, non-public) as extracted from institutional and national strategic plans of the 13 universities studied.

Research in the Social Science
Research is gaining momentum at HEIs across the Arab world. Strategic initiatives on research form an integral part of national research strategies and institutional strategic plans. One way of promoting research over the past three decades has been in the establishment of specialized offices in institutions that provide support for graduate education and research. Many have

created deanship positions with the aim of strengthening the research culture at the university by providing support to faculty through the allocation of needed resources and incentives in various forms, including monetary incentives. The vast majority of institutions in this study have such an entity under varied names such as Office of Research and Graduate Studies, Office of Academic Research Evaluation, and Board of Graduate Studies, among others.

Two metrics can be used to illustrate the significance of research in the social sciences in universities: the number of graduate programs in the social sciences and the volume of publications in the social sciences. The objective of graduate programs is to cultivate students' knowledge and research expertise in their field of study. Thus, the successful completion of a graduate degree requires focused research whereby students delve into the analysis and synthesis of the knowledge they have acquired during the duration of the program, which more often than not, results in the publication of such research.

The number of graduate programs offered by the universities in this study ranges from one in Al -Ahliyya Amman University to three in Qatar University through to 14 in Tunis University and AUB. Lebanon offers the highest number of graduate programs, 26, followed by Palestine at 16 and Egypt at nine.

The number of publications in the social sciences is yet another indicator of research productivity in the field. When looking at publications in the social sciences for the period extending from 2015 to 2018, we notice that the research output in the social sciences is approximately 15 percent of the total research output for blossoming universities and about 6 percent for legacy universities. Among the legacy universities, Cairo University publishes a Journal of Humanities and Applied Sciences, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at AUB is not only the oldest but also the largest faculty in Lebanon and at Mohammed V University, the Faculty of Letter and Humanities and the Faculty of Law, Economics and Social Sciences are also the oldest. Figure 4 gives the proportion of publications in the social sciences for blossoming and legacy universities between 2015 and 2018.
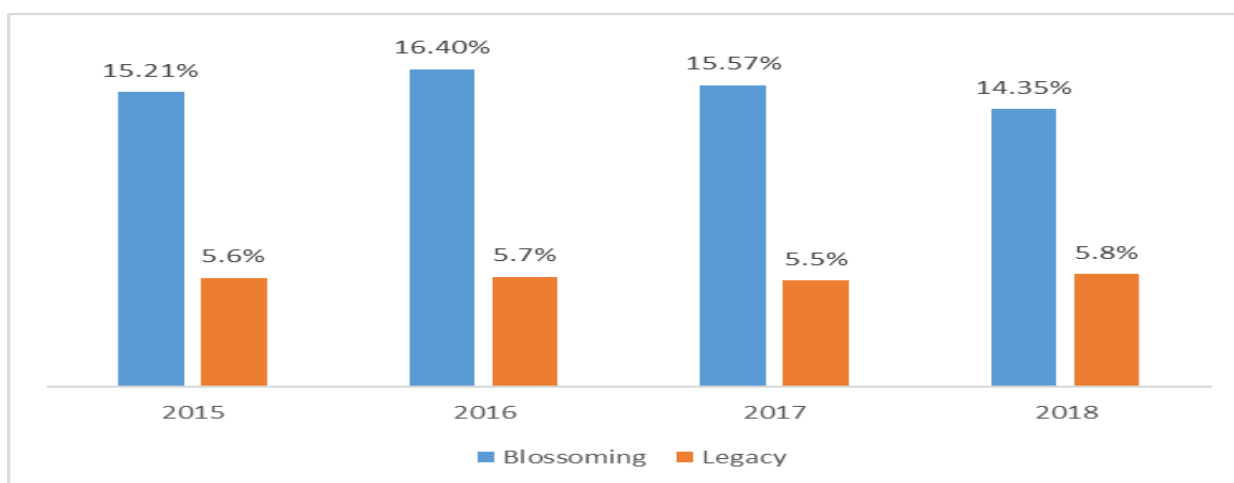

Figure 4: Proportion of publications in the social sciences for blossoming and legacy universities between 2015 and 2018.

On the other hand, the volume of the research output for both legacy and blossoming universities is somewhat similar in the social sciences when considering the total research output in the social sciences for all 13 universities studied. The research output for legacy universities, however, is more than double in all other research fields compared to total volume of research output for all universities under study. Nonetheless, the research output for all universities in fields other than the social sciences is quite substantial ranging around 94 percent for legacy universities and 85 percent for blossoming universities. It may be plausible to conclude that universities have been influenced by the neo-liberal movement, which emphasizes focus on programs related to market demand and hence the research follows programs offered. Figure 5 gives the proportion of publications in the social sciences and in all other research fields for blossoming and legacy universities between 2015 and 2018.
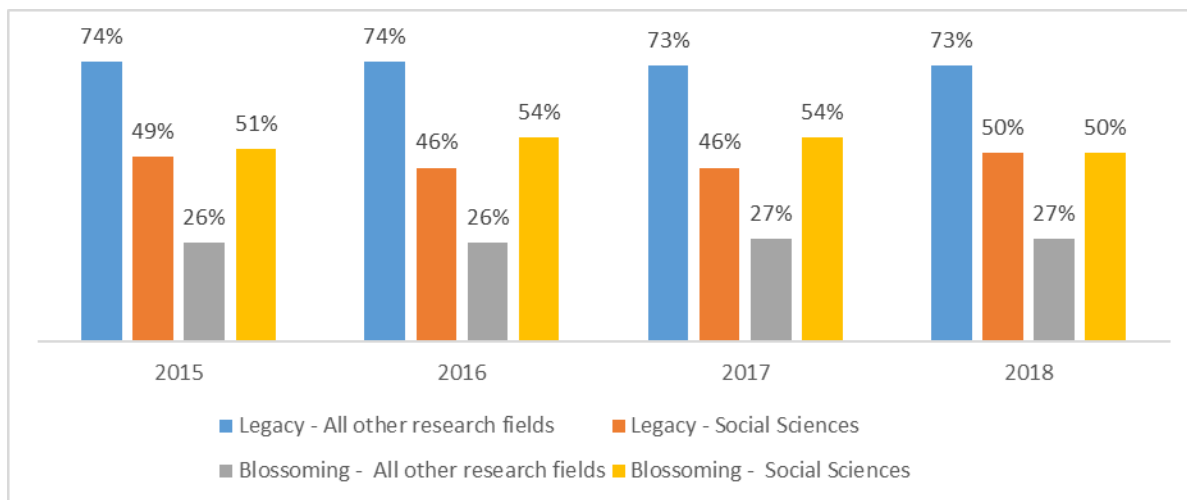

Figure 5: Proportion of publications in the social sciences and in all other research fields for blossoming and legacy universities between 2015 and 2018.
Source: Elsevier. Scopus in detail: facts and figures. http://www.info.scopus.com/detail/facts. Accessed July 31, 2019.

Looking at trends in publications in the social sciences over four years from 2015 to 2018, (see Figure 5) we notice that for the public universities in Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco the proportion of publications in the social sciences of total publications does not exceed 8 percent, while in Jordan and Tunisia it ranges from 10 to 19 percent for both the public and non-pubic institutions. For the non-public university in Palestine the proportion of publications in the social sciences reached a peak of 35 percent in 2015, however, it gradually dropped to 30 percent in 2016 and 19 percent in 2017. Similarly, the highest proportion of publications in the social sciences for the non-public university in Morocco recorded a high of 40 percent in 2016 and a low of 24 percent in 2017. The highest proportion of publications in the social sciences was recorded for the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies ranging from a high of 100 percent in 2015 to a low of 73 percent in 2016. As the institute is made up of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities, the School of Public Administration and Development Economics and the School of Psychology and Social Work these proportions reflect the academic offerings.
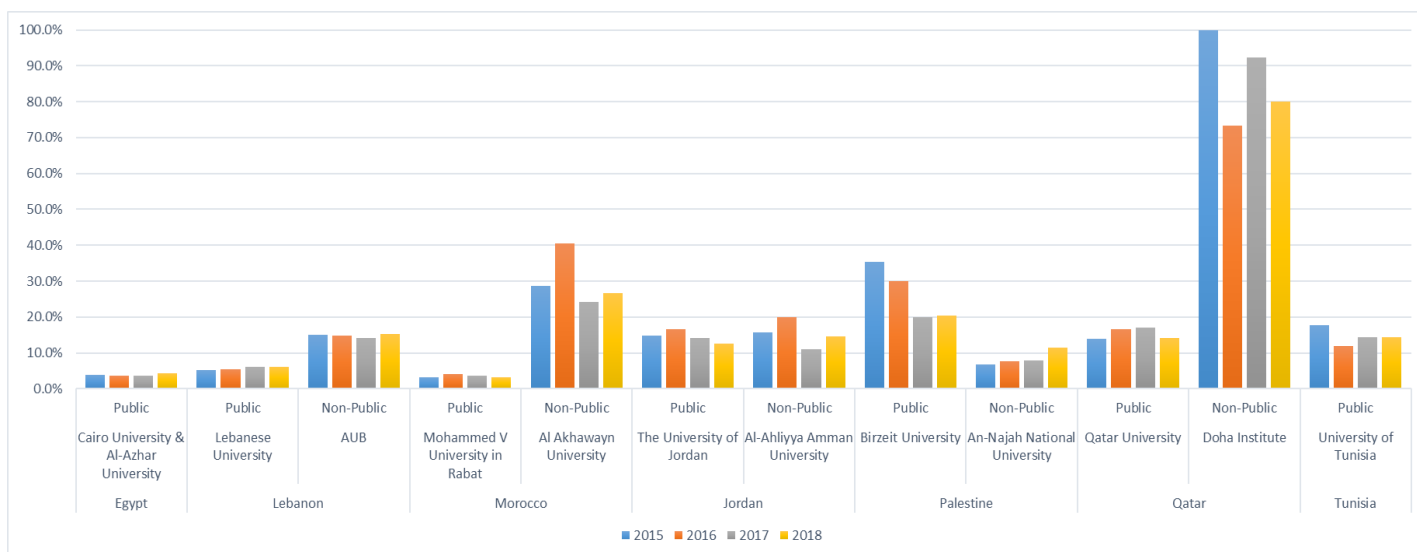
Figure 6: Proportion of publications in the social sciences out of total publications over four years from 2015 to 2018 for all universities under study.
Source: Elsevier. Scopus in detail: facts and figures. http://www.info.scopus.com/detail/facts. Accessed July 31, 2019.

Promotion of Research

To promote research in the social sciences various forms of incentives have been made available to faculty. These include funding faculty research by supporting access to internal and external funds, facilitating the participation of faculty in research related events, providing the necessary facilities and resources needed to conduct research as well as promoting existing and establishing new graduate programs in response to local and regional market needs and supporting graduate students through scholarships and research assistantship positions. Many universities have emphasized research as a criterion for faculty recruitment and promotion. Still others have provided incentives for research production through awards. An-Najah University in Palestine, for example, offers the Best Published Research Award, which is a cash award of USD 1,000 offered to the author with the best publication in the An-Najah Natural Sciences Journal. Additionally, at An-Najah the Extracted Research from MA and PhD Theses Award is offered to faculty and students to encourage publications extracted from theses; and the Scientific Publication by High Impact Journals Awards are offered to faculty who publish in distinguished international journals. At Qatar University, the College Distinguished Research Awards are offered annually to the most active colleges in terms of number of recognized scholarly publications per faculty member. These forms of incentives are adopted by all universities (public and non-public, legacy and blossoming) and have been brought about by the ranking of universities leading to enhanced competitiveness among universities.

The results of the data analysis of the mission statements and strategic plans along with the information on research in the social sciences are presented for each country separately in the following sections.

Qualitative Analysis/Mission Statements and Strategic Plans

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Lebanon
The two universities selected from Lebanon are both legacy universities. AUB was established in 1866 and is a non-public university, while the Lebanese University, established in 1951, is the only public university in the country.

The Lebanese University
Mission
Parts of the goals of the Lebanese University, which reflect emphasis on the social sciences and humanities are the "dissemination of knowledge and culture", providing "community service through studies and continuous training to meet the needs of development", "deepening social and national integration" and "instilling human values in the heart of citizens".

Strategy
On the other hand, the strategy for the development of the Lebanese University cannot be separated from the comprehensive political approach adopted by the country when it comes to national education, higher education, and scientific research. In the effort of enhancing the system of education, the university is in the process of developing plans and strategies in coordination with stakeholders from the president to faculty and staff.
The Lebanese University is aware of its shortcomings and has suggested some needed changes such as providing more budget for research and revisiting its criteria for what is considered quality research and positions of faculty in academic ranks. In support of the Lebanese University, "**Raising the value of the budget**" will help accomplish the enhanced strategy. Some components of which, related to research and scholarship are the following:
1) Strengthen research and studies and intensify the standards and methodological specifications to protect the quality of research and reinforce the academic ranks;
2) Organize the doctoral schools and raise the level of research and management by considering the need of the labor market;
3) Activating external relations, concluding agreements with Arab and foreign universities and institutions, and forming committees to coordinate such relations;
4) Holding scientific conferences and specialized seminars and turning their recommendations and decisions into work projects and plans[2].

Research and the Social Sciences
As for the research strategy, the Lebanese University has set several strategic objectives. Providing faculty and students with an academic research environment and access to resources in order to participate in scientific research, literary and artistic creativity, are some of these strategic objectives. There are three institutes for research, with one situated in the social sciences and humanities. According to a dean at the Lebanese University, funding is provided to faculty who submit a research proposal to the Institute of Social Sciences based on a decision taken by expert peers in the field depending on whether the topic of research is novel, if it is relevant and tackles a current issue related to society, and if it adds value to the field in which it is being conducted.

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[2] More on the university strategy is available on: https://www.ul.edu.lb/lu/strategy.aspx

The Lebanese University has three programs for research funding[3]:
1) Basic faculty research;
2) Development and innovation research;
3) Practical research related to the community.

The Institute of Social Sciences (ISS), established in the Lebanese University in 1959, aims at producing qualified experts in affairs related to the social sciences and issues associated with the Lebanese, Arab and global environments. The ISS is located in the main campus in Beirut and four branch campuses dispersed across governorates in Lebanon. The institute offers undergraduate degrees as well as professional and research master degrees in the social sciences. In addition to the ISS, the Lebanese University has established the Doctoral School of Literature, Humanities, and Social Sciences in 2007, which currently enrolls 508 students. The ISS produced 31 publications in 2015 compared to 53 in 2017 and 52 publications in 2018, in subjects rooted in the social sciences.

American University of Beirut
Mission
The mission of AUB is focused on the provision of educational excellence and the advancement of knowledge through research. Based on the standards, philosophy, and practices of the American liberal arts model, the university's mission is to encourage freedom of thought and expression and foster tolerance and respect for diversity. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the oldest faculty at the university, embodies the university's commitment to the liberal arts and sciences by offering undergraduate and graduate degrees in the arts, humanities, natural, and social sciences. AUB also offers doctorate degrees in Arabic language and literature and Arab and Middle Eastern history. In response to regional and global demands, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences is dedicated to advanced research in all its domains.

Strategy
Anchored in their strategic plan, AUB is committed to "create knowledge and advance quality research; promote interdisciplinary and innovation" (Academic Strategic Plan, 2014). In support for the promotion of pure and applied research, AUB has developed strategies to increase support for university-based research and related activities and to strengthen the role of research in educational programming. Some of the strategies are the following:
1) Raise funds for new academic centers of excellence and for research in targeted areas;
2) Prioritize research initiatives that emanate from regional needs;
3) Enhance student participation in research activities at all program levels in each faculty;
4) Develop new research partnerships and programs with peer institutions.

According to the Facts and Figures 2019 report, "AUB produces more than 63% of all citable knowledge for Lebanon, the highest proportion of any major university in the Arab world for its nation of residence" (p. 20)[4].

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[3] https://www.ul.edu.lb/lu/researchSupport.aspx
[4] https://www.aub.edu.lb/provost/Documents/Academic-Strategic-Plan.pdf#search=strategic%20plan

Research and the Social Sciences
The Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) was established in 1866, the same year as the establishment of AUB. With 469 instructional faculty, 3,038 undergraduates, 471 Master's students and 32 PhD students, the FAS is not only the oldest, but also the largest faculty with 17 departments in humanities, natural sciences, quantitative thought and social sciences. AUB produced 96 publications in 2015, 119 in 2017 and 113 publications in 2018, in the social sciences.

Jordan
The two universities that were selected from Jordan are both blossoming universities. The University of Jordan, established in 1962, is a public university that offers more than 250 programs from 40 schools. Al-Ahliyya Amman University, established in 1990, was the first non-public university in the Hashemite Kingdom. Jordanian universities have conducted a full SWOT analysis and involved all stakeholders in the process.

Al-Ahliyya Amman University
Mission
The mission of Al-Ahliyya Amman University (AAU) "is to provide teaching, learning and scientific research services with high quality international standards…by providing an academic environment that supports creativity and contributing to the preparation of qualified human cadres" (Strategic Plan, 2019-2023).

Strategy
The university's strategic plan was developed in compliance with the Jordanian Ministry of Higher Education and Academic Research. Since its establishment, AAU has made it its priority to create an academic and social environment that would qualify it to stand out at the local and regional levels. In this vein, AAU has consistently developed academic programs commensurate with the sweeping developments in IT and local and Arab market demands.

Research and the Social Sciences
The Deanship of Scientific Research was established in 1998 to oversee the development of basic and applied research. In 2005, it was renamed Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research after AAU received the approval of the Ministry of Higher Education. The Deanship publishes Al-Balqa Journal for research and studies, a bi-annual refereed journal for research in Arabic and English in Humanities and Social Sciences. The areas of interest include sociology, administrative and financial sciences, archeology, tourism, geography, history, religious sciences, international relations, law, criminology, languages, literature, philosophy and ethics. Yet AAU only offers psychology in the social sciences and therefore not much research production is available there. AAU has produced six publications in 2015, 10 in 2016, five in 2017 and nine publications in 2018, in the social sciences. There was no information available on research funding and incentives rewarded to faculty for research publication.

University of Jordan
Mission

The University of Jordan is dedicated to fulfilling students' "learning experiences, conducting knowledge-producing research, and building firm societal ties, within an environment conducive to creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship".

Strategy
As part of the strategic plan (2017-2022), the University of Jordan has set the following strategic priorities and corresponding objectives in relation to research and the social sciences and humanities:
1) Robust knowledge-generating research:
   - To generate knowledge and scientific research of world-class quality;
   - To focus research efforts on current problems, issues and challenges that concern the local, regional and global community;
   - To make available sufficient information resources for the purpose of research.
2) Effective social development:
   - To provide value-added community services;
   - To assist the local community in matters pertaining to development;
   - To increase the efficiency of the university's community service apparatus.
3) National, regional and international strategic partnerships:
   - To forge relations with external bodies that support scientific research;
   - To exchange experience and knowledge globally;
   - To establish a global information system for the documentation and classification of Arabic publications;
   - To maximize benefit from international grant programs.

Research and the Social Sciences
In accordance with the priority of scientific research articulated in the university's mission and strategies, the University of Jordan established the Deanship of Scientific Research in 1973. The Deanship has since become responsible for supporting scientific research and developing scientific activities locally and globally. The missions and responsibilities of the Deanship of Scientific Research include the following: Funding researchers not only from inside but also from outside the university; and issuing Dirasat, which is a refereed journal that publishes research in educational sciences, Shari'a and law and human and social sciences. The Deanship also issues the Jordan Journal for Social Sciences and the Jordan Journal for History and Archeology in cooperation with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The Deanship also offers funding not only for faculty research, but also to graduate and undergraduate student projects and research in accordance with the supervising faculty. In addition, the Deanship offers financial rewards to faculty members who publish academic research in academic journals approved by the database[5].

The Faculty of Humanities at the University of Jordan offers around 65 Master's degrees from 12 faculties and four PhD programs in Arabic language and literature, history, geography, sociology and philosophy. The University of Jordan has produced 135 publications in 2015, 166 in 2016, 172 in 2017 and 216 publications in 2018 in the social sciences, resulting in a 60 percent increase from 2015 to 2018.

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[5] http://research.ju.edu.jo/Pages/FundingAvailableatTheDeanship.aspx

Palestine
The universities selected from Palestine are both blossoming universities. Birzeit University was established in 1975 and An-Najah National University was established in 1977.

Birzeit University
Mission
The mission of Birzeit University is to provide an environment that "celebrates freedom of thought and expression, embraces democratic practices and dialogue, and provokes excellence, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in teaching, learning and research to contribute to society's progress and advancement through transformative knowledge and capacity development".

Strategy
The strategy for Birzeit University was developed in participation with students, staff, management and the board of trustees, as well as collaborating with the community in reproducing the vision. Of the four strategic objectives within the plan for 2017-2022 two are focused on the social sciences and humanities[6].

Strategic objective 2: Active contribution to knowledge production and development nationally and internationally through research leading to innovative knowledge and products. The emphasis on the humanities by "endorsing free and participatory thought that asserts reciprocity and interaction within the epistemic and the humanist domains" among other criteria. The expected results include advanced research production relevant to the society, in refereed journals and in coherence with social and economic contexts.

Strategic objective 3: Community engagement embedded within the university culture and practices with active contribution to sustainable development. The emphasis on the social sciences by "Advancing community engagement within an epistemic national context, linking university outputs in all forms with the needs of the society across segments and sectors, through proactive involvement that advances complementarity and impact on critical issues and supports intellectual exchange, openness, diversity and differentiation in partnership with local and international organizations". The expected results include local and international collaborative programs and activities focused on the social, economic and cultural demands of the society and integrating community engagement within the university system.

Research and the Social Sciences
Being an important aspect for academic growth, research at Birzeit is of core emphasis, whereby competition is empowered for serving the Palestinian community and the Arab region by contributing to production of universal knowledge. The university supports, encourages and funds scientific research by faculty as well as undergraduate and graduate students. In April 2018 the University Publishing Unit (UPU) was established in order to institutionalize a system of scientific publishing by following up on publications by faculty and university institutes and centers.
As for academics, Birzeit University has nine faculties, which offer 111 academic programs; 75 Bachelor programs with around 6,700 students enrolled in social sciences and

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[6] https://www.birzeit.edu/sites/default/files/strategic_plan-eng-1.pdf

humanities, 32 Master programs and 1 PhD in social sciences, with 1,468 enrolled graduate students. Birzeit University has produced 23 publications in 2015, 27 in 2016, 26 in 2017 and 33 publications in 2018, all in the social sciences.

An-Najah National University
Mission
The mission of An-Najah National University is to advance learning, promote a culture of scientific excellence, and equip students with the skills necessary to be both productive and creative members of the Palestinian society. Also part of the university's mission is advancing scientific research on a global level and fulfilling the needs of the community by participating in economic, technical, and human development.

Strategy
The university is in the process of revising previous plans and developing the strategic plan (2016-2020), as such the plan was not available online, but was featured in university news and events. Nevertheless, An-Najah National University has developed a set of strategic purposes such as "advancing and promoting scientific research in the sciences and humanities for the achievement and enrichment of scientific knowledge" which reflects emphasis on the social sciences and humanities.

Research and the Social Sciences
An-Najah National University offers 90 BA degrees with around 34 degrees in the humanities and social sciences, 58 MA degrees with around 10 degrees in the humanities and four PhD degrees, one of which is in Arabic Language and Literature and the other in Teaching and Learning. According to the facts and figures for 2017-2018, the university has eight research centers, 384 publications in scientific journals in 2017, 284 publications in Scopus and 78 publications in the Human Sciences among numerous others.
An-Najah National University offers several incentives for research production through awards. The Best Published Research Award is a cash award of $1,000 offered to the author with the best publication in An-Najah Natural Sciences Journal. The Extracted Research from MA and PhD Theses Award is offered to faculty and students to encourage the publication of their research studies. The Scientific Publication by High Impact Journals Award is offered to faculty who publish in distinguished international journals. The Deanship of Scientific Research publishes two scientific journals, one of which is the An-Najah University Journal for Research in the Humanities, active since 1986. The journal has a multidisciplinary scope including research in the human sciences, arts, economics, education, legislation among others. As for publications in the social sciences and humanities, An-Najah National University has produced 23 publications in 2015, 27 in 2016, 26 in 2017 and 33 publications in 2018.

Egypt
The universities selected from Egypt are both legacy universities: Cairo University and Al-Azhar University, the world's third oldest Islamic university.

Cairo University
Mission

The university mission places great emphasis on developing students' character, whether it's "mother-land development, self-development, abilities-development" in light of the society and the culture. Cairo University is also dedicated to spreading cultural, artistic and literary awareness. The mission statement was revised in the process of developing the strategic plan for 2015-2020.

Strategy
The strategic plan for 2015-2020 was developed following the strategic plan from 2010-2015 and by conducting a SWOT analysis in participation with various university stakeholders.
A gap analysis was conducted to determine the shortcomings from where the university actually is and where it aspires to be. That analysis and the SWOT analysis, to determine opportunities and threats, were used to develop the following goals:
-   Develop programs and services that take into account quality assurance standards;
-   Maintain excellence in university performance by assuring quality of programs and student learning through achieving accreditation and enhancement of infrastructure and facilities;
-   Enhance students' skill sets and ability to innovate and create;
-   Improve the university's human capital through professional development of faculty, academic administrators and staff members;
-   Upgrade labs and facilities to conduct research in faculties and schools as well as ensure funding for the research purposes;
-   Enhance the universities civic engagement capabilities;
-   Integrate information management systems covering all processes of the university.

Research and the Social Sciences
Cairo University's strategic plan for research in the social sciences (2012-2017) is in line with the mission of directing, supporting and investing in scientific research for the development of the national economy. Through the strategic plan for research, the Faculty of Social Sciences aims at fulfilling several strategic objectives, some of which are:
1) Specify research priorities in the social sciences;
2) Advance the level and quality of research performance and practices in all domains;
3) Advance the level and quality of publications;
4) Deepen the benefits of social research results in the area of social and intellectual development.

The research goal is made up of two sections: projects (infrastructure for research) and program related issues. Under infrastructure they emphasize the need to enhance the faculty professional development center and the research centers in schools and institutes across the university, as well as the research facilities for agriculture, and the need to establish incubators and accelerators. Under programs they list the following:
1) Coming up with an initiative to enhance collaborations with industry and international partners;
2) Development of interdisciplinary programs at the graduate level;
3) Development of faculty skills and talent;
4) They want to ensure that the research being done serves society and its needs;
5) Support the publication of faculty and supporting staff research in international journals;

6) Support faculty and supporting staff (research assistance) to attend conferences;
7) Ensure support for research projects;
8) Establish MOUs with industry, international organizations.

As for the community service goal related to research and social science, projects include the development of a building for archeological studies in Al-Oksar and additional levels in the building of economics and political science in the Center for African Studies. As for the community service programs, the university aims at increasing intellectual awareness and organizing literacy classes for the neighboring community.

To fulfill these strategic objectives and research goals, Cairo University has established several research centers, some of which are focused on the social sciences and humanities, such as the:
- Community Service Center, established in 1970;
- Conferences Center and Social Center, established in 1986;
- Oriental Studies Center, established in 1989;
- Center for Foreign Languages and Professional Translation (CLT), established in 1991;
- Cairo University Center for Arabic Language and Culture, established in 1991;
- Center of Human Sciences and Faculty and Leadership Development, established in 2010.

In addition to the research centers, Cairo University publishes the Journal of Humanities and Applied Social Sciences, which is an open access journal delivered by Emerald Publishing Services. The University has produced 174 publications in 2015, 207 in 2016, 194 in 2017 and 229 publications in 2018, in the social sciences. Cairo University also has a list of research awards on their website such as the Atiya A. Ashour Prize in Mathematical Sciences and Their Applications[7], which is a new award, and rewards for international scientific and best Master and PhD awards, which seem to be discontinued since the date posted was 2012 with no further details or updates.

Al Azhar University
Mission
The mission of Al Azhar University is to propagate Islam and Islamic culture and it reflects its institutional identity clearly.

Strategy
Al Azhar University has aligned its institutional strategies with the national strategy "Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030", set by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The objectives set within the plan focus on education, scientific research and innovation, building the human personality, community service, and health. The general country plan covers all fields of study that the university implements based on their programs and resources – human, facilities, finance – and its mission and vision.
The strategies for higher education cover four objectives: Facilitating education for all, enhancing the quality of education according to international standards, improving university competitiveness/rankings regarding the structures and outcomes of education, and establishing international university campuses.

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[7] https://cu.edu.eg/page.php?pg=contentFront/SubSectionData.php&SubSectionId=641

The goals of Al-Azhar University, as articulated by the University's president, Mohamad Hussein Mohersawi, are to:
- Preserve the Islamic and Arab identity;
- Spread enlightened Islamic thought;
- Spread the heritage and the virtues of science and literature;
- Consolidate the values of citizenship, tolerance, love, peace, pluralism and acceptance of the other.

Mr. Mohersawi also emphasized Al-Azhar University's great role in maintaining intellectual balance and protecting the minds of cultural excesses, building bridges of civilization and consolidating world peace between nations and peoples through open thought and serious culture that guarantees human dignity and protects its freedom everywhere.

Research and the Social Sciences
The objectives of the research strategy set within the national plan focus on:
- Education by participating in the eradication of illiteracy;
- Scientific research and innovation by upgrading the infrastructure for scientific research, creating incentives and funding for scientific and technological research and innovation and increasing exceptional scientific knowledge production;
- Building the human character and personality by instilling national identity, political, intellectual, artistic and physical education awareness;
- Community service and health by developing the areas surrounding university campuses and dispensing medical teams to offer free treatments and organize workshops to populations in need.

The university website has no guidelines for research funding or rewards offered for research production.

Al Azhar University has a college for female students and another for male students. The college for female students includes the Faculties for Humanities, and Islamic and Arabic Studies. The college for male students includes the Faculties for Arabic Language Studies and Islamic and Arabic Studies, as well as a graduate program in Islamic studies. As for research production in the social sciences, the university produced 19 publications in 2015, 20 in 2016, 20 in 2017 and 38 publications in 2018.

Morocco
The universities selected from Morocco are Mohammed V University in Rabat, a legacy university established in 1920, and Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, a blossoming public university established in 1995. In Morocco, there is planning and strategic planning. Planning is based on a project planned for by a new president in any public sector university and is performed in collaboration with the different faculties whose participation in the process is limited nonetheless. Planning is outlined by the president but the strategic plan itself is set by the Ministry of Education where all public universities implement it by virtue of the law. Overall, higher education in Morocco is heavily centralized.

Mohammed V University in Rabat
Mission
There is no clear mission statement available on the University website. The vision strategy and orientation are listed under the mission heading on the website. However, according to Law 01-00 issued in the year 2000, 'general tasks' are used in lieu of a mission statement. The tasks include the strengthening of the Islamic and national identity; providing lifelong learning; developing science; and disseminating knowledge and culture. An important task is to integrate the young into the dynamics of the labor market through inculcating skills, competencies, scientific knowledge, and research.

Strategy
The strategic plan developed by Mohammed V University is guided by unity, trans-institutional collaboration and outreach activities. Some of the themes driving the strategy are the following:

1) Education is the gateway to employment. As such UM5 plans to engage with employers in order to develop academic programs that will equip graduates with the skills required for market demand;

2) Boosting research-innovation through the merger of the two giants. With the merger of the two universities the number of faculty and their respective fields of expertise will increase significantly. Thus, enhancing research in societal issues which will impact social and economic growth;

3) Connecting to its socio-economic environment. The emphasis on knowledge production as the key to socio-cultural development through research conducted not only by faculty but also by students. Encourage students to become engaged citizens by rewarding their research and achievements.

The presentation of the strategic themes is concluded with the assertion that "real improvement to this quality approach would be to engage students, the university's main stakeholder. Students should be asked to evaluate course content, the quality of teaching and the overall learning experience" (Strategic plan 2014-2018, 27).

Research and the Social Sciences
The university's strategic goals related to research, innovation and technology/knowledge transfer, emphasize the reorganization of research. This reorganization started in 2008 and has led to the establishment of research units with participating faculty members. Yet this initiative has not realized its anticipated success whereby a significant number of researchers have not joined research units. On the other hand, accreditation of research units at Mohammed V University - Souissi (UM5S) has only reached 65 percent whereas it's 97 percent at Mohammed V University - Agdal (UM5A). Therefore, the university aims at boosting the performance of research by fostering multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinarity as well as human and physical resources. The university also plans on setting up research centers for physical sciences and technology, biology and health and social sciences and humanities, with at least three labs in each.

As for graduate students enrolled in the Center for Doctoral Studies, the university intends to improve their status and facilitate their research by providing more scholarships and better

facilities. To improve the procedures of applying for research funds, the university plans to coordinate and increase the attainment of grants from the Ministry of the Economy and Finance. Also, as part of the research strategy, the university plans to improve the infrastructure, boost scientific output and enhance the evaluation of research in relation to its impact on society. The research strategy is extended to cover improvements to the arts, humanities, and social sciences in terms of increased publications and knowledge production beyond the regional and national domain.

Research publication is a major criterion for promotion at the Mohammed V University as is the case in many others. Thus, the university has a plan to encourage faculty research by rewarding the most productive professors, organizing events and facilitating the participation of faculty in research related events. As for student research, obstacles regarding the cost of doctoral studies, the scarcity of scholarships and the unavailability of career prospects at the national level have resulted in students abandoning their studies. Thus, the university strategy is to overcome these obstacles by working with the Ministry to enhance the status of doctoral students and to reinstate research assistantship. Mohammed V University in Rabat has produced 50 publications in 2015, 79 in 2016, 72 in 2017 and again 72 publications in 2018, in the social sciences.

Al Akhawayn University
Mission
The mission of Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane (AUI) is to educate future "citizen-leaders" in the English language following the American liberal arts program. The university is dedicated to engaging with the world through educational research programs and promoting equity and social responsibility.

Strategy
AUI has undergone a complete SWOT analysis, based on the 2010 analysis, in preparation for the development of the 2015-2020 strategic plan. The plan was externally reviewed by experts and internally shared and edited by stakeholders including the board of trustees, faculty, staff, students and alumni.

Research and the Social Sciences
Student learning, development and success and research, and innovation and discovery are the strategic priorities mostly related to research and the social sciences. By adopting a student-centered approach and the liberal arts, AUI is dedicated to the success of its students as future scholars and global citizens. Within this priority, AUI aims to increase student involvement within the local and global community. Because research is essential for acquiring international ranking among other higher education institutes, AUI is focused on promoting research, innovation and the production of knowledge. This is to be accomplished by emphasizing research as a criterion for faculty recruitment and promotion, increasing graduate enrollment to enhance the quality of research and to provide the necessary infrastructure to ensure the success of research development. Thus, AUI offers research grants to help cover travel expenses, material acquisition, or conference participation. The Presidential Innovation Fund is offered for the development and implementation of innovative research programs that contribute to the advancement of the major elements of the University Strategic Plan.

The university offers seven Bachelor degrees and 15 Master degree programs. The School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS), the largest faculty, offers undergraduate degrees in Communication Studies, Human Resource Development, and International Studies, with 1,059 enrolled students in 2018 (highest enrollment). It also offers four Master programs: Human Resource Development, International Studies and Diplomacy, Islamic Religious Studies, and North African and Middle Eastern Studies, with 122 students in 2018.

AUI has produced 13 publications in 2015, 18 in 2016, 14 in 2017 and 14 publications in 2018, in the social sciences.

Tunisia

The higher education system in Tunisia is dedicated to providing quality academic training in line with the objective of continuous reform set by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in order to reduce rates of unemployment through internationalizing institutions. The mission of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research is defined in the form of functions that include:

1- Implementation of the state policy in the field of higher education and scientific research;
2- Supervising the activities of universities and institutions of higher education and scientific research;
3- Supervising students' university life and coordinating the activities of the university service centers;
4- Coordination and follow-up of international cooperation in the fields of higher education and scientific research.

University of Tunis
Mission

The University of Tunis strives to offer diversified yet quality training. "Its aim is to provide quality training, in accordance with the rules and traditions of the transmission of knowledge and the requirements of modern science, as part of a strategy for the development of society."

Strategy

The strategic plan for the reform of higher education and scientific research 2015-2025 in Tunisia is composed of five general objectives:

1) Improve the quality of university education and the employability of graduates, by adapting educational programs to societal demands, strengthen partnerships with international organizations, develop training through research, and to improve the integration of graduates in their professions;
2) Promote research and innovation through strengthening research funding and infrastructure, developing a quality management system for research and the evaluation of research output, and structuring and promoting research in the humanities and social sciences;
3) Promote good governance and optimize resource management by establishing the autonomy of higher education and research institutions;
4) Revise the university map for better anchoring and regional balance through improving university life, emphasizing the role of the university in regional development and promoting its influence on the environment.

5) Promote teacher training by institutionalizing it and promoting the renovation of education.

Research and the Social Sciences
The University of Tunis offers around 12 Bachelor degrees and 22 (research and professional) Master degrees in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The mission of the doctoral school is to provide PhD students with the necessary research training to complete their theses. The Doctoral School for Structures, Systems, Models and Practices in Humanities and Social Sciences includes seven research laboratories and eight research units. The University of Tunisia produced 64 publications in 2015, 58 in 2016, 68 in 2017 and 71 publications in 2018, in the social sciences.

Qatar
The universities selected from Qatar are Doha Institute, a non-public emerging university established recently in 2014, and Qatar University, a public blossoming university established in 1977.

Qatar University
Mission
The mission of Qatar University is to provide high quality undergraduate and graduate programs by maintaining a diverse community of dedicated faculty focused on teaching and research relevant to the national and regional interests and which contributes to the aspirations and demands of the society.

Strategy
The strategic plan (2018-2022) titled 'From Reform to Transformation' is derived directly for the mission, vison and core values which have been updated in the process. The plan was developed following a comprehensive strategic analysis and taking into consideration Qatar's National Vision 2030. The core strategies focus on teaching and learning, student experience, research and knowledge advancement, institutional excellence and engagement.

Research and the Social Sciences
The strategic goal of research excellence aims at advancing research that is focused, relevant, solution-oriented, incorporating collaborative approaches, and that contributes to the promotion of knowledge and innovation. Qatar University intends to fully integrate research into graduate studies and promote industry research projects to support economic development. The strategic objectives set to achieve research excellence are the following:
1) Enhance R&D impact and support research and innovation in certain fields that are in line with national research priorities and which respond to current and future socio-economic needs of Qatar;
2) Foster a research and innovation culture within Qatar University and offer the necessary supporting environment;
3) Diversify and sustain funding resources for research projects;
4) Emphasize excellence in graduate programs in order to serve research priorities and to ensure the active participation of graduate researchers in enriching a knowledge-based economy in Qatar.

The office of the VP for Research and Graduate Studies has developed a research strategic plan focused on accomplishing a set of strategic goals for research, some of which are the following:
- Promote the production, dissemination, and application of significant research by faculty, staff, and students;
- Facilitate cooperative and productive relationships with academics that share similar research goals;
- Develop approaches and resources to maintain and enhance the research infrastructure;
- Encourage the development of interdisciplinary and multi-institutional research projects from within Qatar University;
- Monitor the proposal review process, negotiate award amounts, and coordinate internal grants and awards processes;
- Maintain constant dialogue with college and center/institute administration and faculty members on issues related to research;
- Formulate appropriate policies and procedures to ensure successful implementation of our research vision.

The Critical Strategic Initiatives for Qatar University (2018-2022) were developed to enable the achievement of the 2022 strategic goals. Related to the social sciences and humanities are the following two initiatives:
1) Review, enhance, and/or restructure the humanities and social sciences programs and offerings;
2) Provide support and enhance quality of research methodologies and outputs of research in humanities and social sciences to maximize their impact on Qatar.

The Office of Research Support facilitates the acquisition of funding for researchers and faculty through collaboration with industries, government, and international partners. The office manages internal and external grants in line with the policies of contributing agencies and Qatar University. In addition to facilitating research, Qatar University offers research incentives through its Research Reward Program. The purpose of the program is to honor the efforts of researchers and to encourage them to elevate research productivity and the academic rank of the university. The objectives of the program are to encourage publishing in leading international journals, achieving internationally recognized research excellence, foster collaboration with international researchers worldwide and encourage diversification of scholarly outcomes. In case the scholarly work/publication is an outcome of graduate student work and or thesis/dissertation or undergraduate senior project, students will be part of the scholarly work reward. The College Distinguished Research Awards will be offered annually to the most active colleges in terms of number of recognized scholarly publications per faculty member. The college receiving this award has the flexibility to utilize the amount (QR 200,000-300,000) to enrich research productivity. According to SCOPUS, Qatar University has produced 177 publications in 2015, 260 in 2016, 262 in 2017 and 235 publications in 2018 in the social sciences.

Doha Institute
Mission

The Doha Institute for Graduate Studies offers degrees in the social sciences, humanities, public communication and development economics. The institute emphasizes the integration of teaching and learning with scientific research in order to prepare graduates to become academic researchers and capable professionals.

Strategy
There was no strategic plan available on the institute's website.

Research and the Social Sciences
The Research & Grants Department at Doha Institute is the main administrative unit responsible for the facilitation and advancement of research. The department's mission entails the following goals:
1. Identify, acquire and administer research funding;
2. Provide effective administrative services to Doha Institute research personnel to facilitate their work and to enhance their capacity and productivity;
3. Ensure that Doha Institute research maintains a level of objectivity, integrity and ethics in line with applicable regulations and internationally recognized best practices;
4. Collect, organize and communicate Doha Institute research outcomes internally and externally to enhance the research activities' impact;
5. Seek out and foster national and international strategic research collaborations and initiatives.

Doha Institute is committed to enhancing faculty and student research capacity and productivity by providing funding through various sources. Internal research funding through the Faculty Research Fund (FRF) and the Major Research Fund (MRF) award grants in support of faculty and post-doctoral fellows and for competitive small- to medium-sized research projects, respectively. On the other hand, extramural funding is offered for large multi-year research initiatives through agencies such as the Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) and the National Priorities Research Program (NPRP). Doha Institute for Graduate Studies had eight publications in 2015, 34 in 2016, 12 in 2017 and 19 in 2019 based on data extracted from their publication reports.

Conclusion
Mission Statements
The University of Mohammed V and the University of Tunis do not have mission statements but rather the mission is conveyed in the form of general tasks or as objectives as is the case with the Lebanese University. With the exception of the universities in Cairo, all universities stress the importance of research in their missions. All universities studied emphasized society in their mission statements with legacy universities also focusing on culture. In addition, the Lebanese University mentions "deepen social and national integration" and AUB mentions "tolerance and respect for diversity and dialogue", which could be related to the fact that the country experienced a devastating civil war that tore a ridge among the Lebanese people. While Cairo University aims at developing and enriching the character of students and the Lebanese University wants to instill human values in citizens, AUB and Birzeit encourage freedom of thought and expression, creative and critical thinking, integrity, civic responsibility and leadership. Birzeit University and the University of Jordan, public universities in neighboring

countries, are the only institutions that shared the terms creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in their mission statements. An-Najah and Al-Ahliyya University are the only universities from both categories that mention sustainable development.

Strategic Plans
Regardless of the institutional type or sector, the significance of the quality of research and research production was apparent across strategic plans and research strategies of the universities included in this study. This was also reflected in the emphasis on enhancing the infrastructure for research and providing research funding and resources and developing centers for research excellence, mostly for legacy universities. Research innovation and the involvement of students in research were strategic initiatives among almost all HEIs, specifically blossoming universities. While almost all universities highlighted the importance of relating research to the community, inducing collaborative research and fostering internal and external collaborations, only two stress collaboration with industry.

Research and the Social Sciences
This emphasis on research has accelerated its production in HEIs in the Arab region. The creation of research centers and offices that facilitate research and awards that incentivize research production have contributed greatly to this thrust. On the other hand, the development of graduate programs and the emphasis on research production in the social sciences are indicators of the significance of research in those fields. The combination of these indicators is apparent in universities that not only encourage student involvement and contribution to the production of knowledge but also offer them necessary funding and award the publication of their thesis or dissertation, if significant. Although publication output in the social sciences is relatively similar at both legacy and blossoming universities, some blossoming universities such as Birzeit University and Qatar University produce at higher levels than others in their category, and the emerging Doha Institute publishes the highest proportion of publications in the social sciences in that category.

Promotion of Research
While many universities have established centers for research as an infrastructure to disseminate funds and provide facilities and resources for research, others offer these incentives for research even in the absence of such centers. Three of the universities in this study publish their own journals. Cairo University publishes the Journal of Humanities and Applied Sciences, the University of Jordan publishes the Dirasat Journal, the Journal for Social Sciences and the Journal for History and Archeology, and Al-Ahliyya Amman University publishes Al-Balqa which is a bi-annual refereed scientific research journal that publishes original innovative scientific research in Arabic and English in the humanities and social sciences. In addition to the provision of research centers, funds and resources, and the opportunity to publish locally, most universities offer additional incentives in the form of rewards for research productivity and quality publications. While Birzeit University offers funding for student research, An-Najah University has developed an award for the best publication extracted from a thesis or dissertation.

Limitations
A major limitation in this study was the fact that HEIs in the Arab region are distinguished according to a wide array of characteristics. The fact that HEIs in the Arab countries can be

classified by sector (public, non-public/for-profit, non-public/non-profit), status (universities, independent colleges, technical institutes, community colleges, etc.), type (traditional, open, virtual), nationality (national, regional, international institutions or branches of them), model (American, French, Arabic, etc.), cultural reference (Islamic, Christian, non-religious institutions), and orientation (profession-oriented, academic-oriented) (UNESCO, 2009), deemed the generalization of findings difficult.

Another limitation is related to the method of data collection. Since data was collected mainly from university websites using desktop research, the unavailability of documents or insufficient content on strategic plans and research strategies indicated inadequate public disclosure of vital information. While most universities had displayed an organized structural content that conveyed their mission, vision, goals, strategic plans and research strategies, others merely had a clear mission statement, let alone a detailed strategy. This deficiency in making institutional information available to the public to some extent reflects the absence of transparency.

Therefore, even the slightest attempt at generalizing the findings of this study to all HEIs in the Arab region must be approached with caution, even when it comes to countries that function under a centralized educational system and abide by the national strategies defined by their governments as is the case in Morocco, Jordan, Tunisia, and Egypt.

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