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# The Academic Universes and Career Trajectories of Social Scientists in the Arab World

2023

Third Arab Social Science Report

**Ahmad Dallal**

# THE ACADEMIC UNIVERSES AND CAREER TRAJECTORIES OF SOCIAL SCIENTISTS IN THE ARAB WORLD

**Dr. Ahmad Dallal**

Third Arab Social Science Report
**2023**

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**The ASSM Team**

# PREFACE

It is with pleasure that the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) presents the third Arab Social Science Report (ASSR). The series of Report is a signature publication produced by the ACSS through its project entitled the Arab Social Science Monitor (ASSM). The ASSM works to understand the context of social science knowledge production through documenting and analyzing the social science research infrastructure and landscape in the Arab region. The ASSM, like the ACSS as a whole, deploys a broad definition of the social sciences that includes the humanities as well as allied and interdisciplinary fields.

The terrain of higher education and research has been changing rapidly across the Arab region, especially since the 1990s, and developing in different directions. The infrastructure as well as the opportunity structure for the social sciences still leaves a great deal to be desired in the region, but they are sufficiently complex and varied so that neither the existing research capacity nor the major trends and characteristics of the knowledge produced, nor societal needs for the social sciences can be captured by the conventional wisdoms which has long informed knowledge institutions and programs. The waves of unrest, conflict and war as well as economic and governance deterioration that characterize the region in the present moment makes the rethinking of trends, needs and priorities in knowledge production more, rather than less, important.

The first ASSR, authored by Dr. Mohammed Bamyeh, built upon the pilot phase of data gathering by the ASSM and presented a "Framing Report" that laid out the landscape of inquiry for a broad understanding of the social sciences in the region. The preliminary investigation of the various spheres in which the social sciences in the Arab region present themselves and are represented, for different purposes and audiences, raised important and new research questions.

The second ASSR, authored by Dr. Abdullah Hammoudi, delved into the substance of the research and writing taking place in the Arabic language across several interdisciplinary fields and across the region. The ways in which different contexts shape the themes and preoccupations of social scientists in the region was explored and the Report also showed the ways in which disciplines developed differently in different national contexts.

The third ASSR focuses on the social scientists themselves and the factors that shape their career trajectories, their work conditions and their research productivity, principally within the institution of the university. The ASSR3 is based on information

collected through 3 instruments: An online survey of Arab social scientists and humanists; semi-structured interviews with a random sample of respondents to the survey in order to supplement the quantitative data; and six background papers providing qualitative insights that help contextualize the survey data.

There were significant delays in finalizing the report, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and other crises in the region. Thus, the survey which provides the backbone of the report was conducted in Spring 2019 and the background papers were authored in 2019 as well. However, the trends and characteristics identified remain valid and open up important questions and avenues of investigation. The research results also show that the upcoming younger generation of social scientists are studying and working in quite different circumstances than previous ones and that the future of the social sciences in the region will look quite different from its past.

These three reports open up new and ambitious research agendas that will inform the work of the ASSM and hopefully will also inspire other researchers and research institutions to become interested in undertaking similar research and surveys. The documentation endeavors of the ASSM have brought us face to face with the staggering scarcity of publicly available data in the areas of higher education, science policy and research capacity in the region. The ASSR3 builds upon the updated information of 4 databases developed by the ASSM on Universities, University-based research centers, Non-university-based research centers, and periodicals (https://dataverse.theacss.org/dataverse/assm). Moreover, the establishment of the ACSS Dataverse (https://dataverse.theacss.org/) as a public data repository in 2019 fills a significant gap in the region. The ACSS hopes for future collaborations with similar efforts and will also advocate for better structures and process of data gathering and sharing in the various countries in the region.

The Report and the Series as a whole hope to engage the interest of relevant national and international research policy and development organizations, of university leaderships as well as of scientific and academic communities, through centers and member-based associations. Much work is needed at various scales and through different institutions to improve the state and status of the social sciences in the region. This Report is one contribution to this ongoing ambition.

**Seteney Shami**
Director General
ACSS, Beirut

# I. Introduction: The Effects of the "Silent Knowledge Revolution"

This report charts the educational and career trajectories of social scientists and humanists in the Arab world, both within and outside the academy, as well as the factors that enable or constrain their careers and knowledge production. The first Arab Social Science Report (Bamyeh 2015) documented a rapid increase in the number of universities in the region over the past three decades and contended that a "silent knowledge revolution has taken shape across the Arab world over the last two or three decades, even though we still know little about that revolution's actual content" (Bamyeh 2016). But the size and content of this "knowledge" surge are not the only aspects of the social science and humanities (SSH) knowledge landscape that require further exploration.

While it is conceivable that the increase in the number of universities as well as the current societal upheavals in the Arab world have contributed to more interest in deploying SSH knowledge as a tool to understand and even drive societal transformation, the changes in higher education are skewed toward professional degrees (like medicine, engineering, and business) as opposed to critical SSH fields. Political instability and the lack of basic professional security also compromise the ability of social scientists and humanists to pursue independent research agendas. In addition, recent studies have shown that compared to other countries around the world, the overall volume of scientific research, the average number of publications per researcher, and the average number of publications per million population remain very low (see, for example, Mrad, Hanafi, and Arvanitis 2013, 4; Hanafi and Arvanitis 2016, 89–97). These trends raise questions that can only be answered empirically.

The Third Arab Social Science Report (ASSR3) looks at the ways in which the careers of individual social scientists and humanists unfold within the academic sphere and principally within the institution of the university. ASSR3 aims to identify individual as well as institutional and occupational characteristics of Arab social scientists and humanists, including their biographical profiles (age, gender, and citizenship), education (fields of study, level and year of obtained degrees, and study location), employment (including job title, type and location of employing institution, professional duties, and recruitment and promotion criteria), and research profiles (fields, themes, and geographic scope of research; quantity, quality, form, and outlet of research output; and evaluation criteria). ASSR3 thus aims to shed light on the opportunities, motivations, incentives, and barriers that social scientists and humanists encounter over the course of their careers.

## 1. New Transformations, New Questions

But why is this information useful? The simple answer is that it enables us to better understand social scientists' and humanists' career trajectories, the opportunities they have to establish successful careers, and the obstacles they face in attaining them. This is important in order to realistically evaluate the type and quality of academic output in the social sciences and humanities from the Arab world as well as to plan and advocate for needed changes and reforms in the higher education system.

### *Universities and Disciplines*

As mentioned above and according to the Arab Social Science Monitor (ASSM) databases, the number of universities in the Arab world offering SSH degrees has increased steadily over the last few decades. Of a total of 1,377 universities, 46% offer SSH degree programs. A total of 636 universities[1] currently offer such degrees; of those, 43 universities, roughly one in 15, were established before 1960. However, a smaller percentage of new universities offer SSH degrees. Indeed, while 70% of universities established by 1960 today grant degrees in the social sciences and humanities, this proportion progressively decreased over time to reach 61% and 54% for those established by 1980 and 2000 respectively and 46% for those present in 2021.[2] It is thus notable that today, older/legacy Arab universities are more likely to offer SSH degrees than those established more recently (ASSM 2021a).

In terms of disciplines, those most offered in universities are literature (offered in 26% of universities), followed by economics (23%), media (21%), political science (17%), education sciences and history (16% each), psychology (15%), sociology (13%), and on the lower end, fields like anthropology, demography, and gender studies (2–4%) (ASSM 2021a). Although a single university might offer multiple majors in SSH fields, we don't know the number of graduates from these programs. It is nonetheless notable that what might be termed professional social sciences (that is, disciplines that equip students with the skills needed to pursue particular, largely nonacademic careers), such as economics, media, and psychology, figure among the top available fields of study in the social sciences and humanities. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that the admissions requirements for the humanities are lower than the admissions requirements for the social sciences.

Thus, the effects of the dramatic increase in the number of Arab universities have varied across different disciplines and fields, with clear correlation between the types of newly introduced fields and professional employment opportunities.

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[1] The establishment dates are those of universities and not of SSH programs.

[2] Out of 1,377 universities included in the 2021 ACSS database of universities, the establishment dates of 1,302 universities are available.

Worldwide, compared to the exact and applied sciences, the social of sciences and humanities receive little support. Many universities all over the world do not offer social science or humanities degrees or don't even require a layer of general education as part of their professional degrees. Increasingly, the value of a university education is measured in terms of the income that a degree potentially generates, rather than the intellectual value of the knowledge acquired through it. And while this intellectual devaluation has a negative effect on all forms of university education and knowledge production, the social sciences and humanities are most affected because of the difficulty of illustrating, in tangible terms, the usefulness and direct material gain from an SSH degree. Moreover, despite the lack of accurate data, there are sufficient indicators to suggest that this trend of monetizing knowledge is more acute in the Arab world. Additionally, many universities in the Arab world would not qualify as research universities despite their frequent claims to the contrary. It should be noted upfront that none of the universities in the Arab world feature among the top 100 universities in established global ranking systems.[3]

In addition to these general trends, university curricula in the Arab world tend to focus exclusively either on science and professional degrees on the one hand or on the humanities and social sciences on the other, with little mixing between the two. Students who pursue degrees in the sciences or engineering receive very little, if any, general education training in the humanities and social sciences (see, for example, Guessoum 2018, 175–185). Moreover, students are often channeled early in their education into either a science stream or a non-science (literary) stream. As a result, students are conditioned early on to choose a "profession" and are not trained to connect their professions to cultural and social issues. By the same logic, students in the social sciences and humanities often lack basic literacy in and familiarity with the sciences and technology.

### *Trends in Knowledge Production*

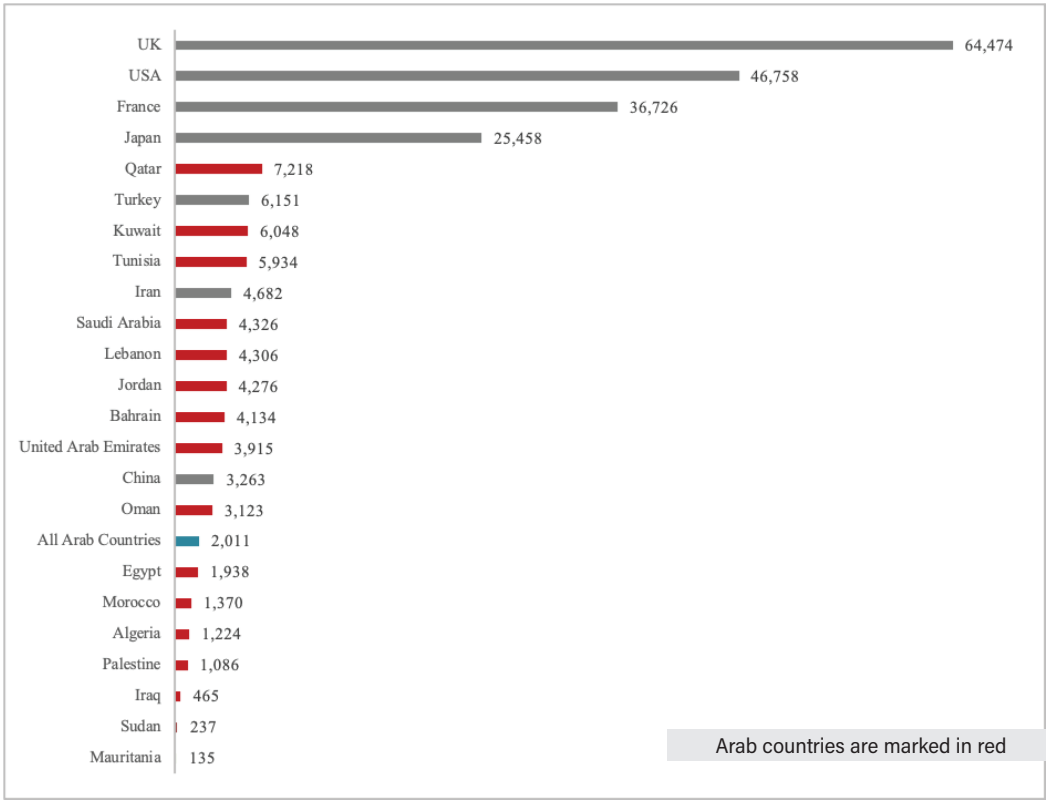
What applies to higher education extends to knowledge production. In addition to the increase in universities and research centers, since 1960, the Arab world has also seen an increase in the number of scholarly periodicals by about fourfold by 1980 and fiftyfold by 2021 (ASSM 2021d). Yet the 2003 *Arab Human Development Report: Building a Knowledge Society* painted a grim picture of knowledge production in the region (UNDP 2003); the report surveys all fields of knowledge, but the situation of the social sciences and humanities is the grimmest. At the time of its publication, the report noted the lack of accurate and comprehensive data on knowledge production in the Arab world. Data collection today remains lacking. Regardless of the accuracy of available statistics, however, there are multiple indicators of the relative weakness of the social sciences and humanities, both in terms of the overall volume of publications in these fields and, more critical still, the number of publications per university

[3] See, for example, the QS World University Rankings (https://www.topuniversities.com/qs-world-university-rankings?qs_qp=topnav) or the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings).

professor. In other words, if the production and dissemination of SSH research is decreasing globally (see, for example, Brinkley 2009), this trend is amplified by many folds in the Arab world.

A recent study compares the 2016 publication data for 16 Arab countries in the Scopus database, the world's largest database of peer-reviewed publications, with data for other countries (Bouri and Maalouf 2018). The average number of publications for all Arab countries per million population is 2,011, compared to 6,151 for Turkey and 4,682 for Iran, and to 64,474 for the UK, 46,758 for the US, 36,726 for France, 25,458 for Japan, and 3,263 for China (Figure 1).

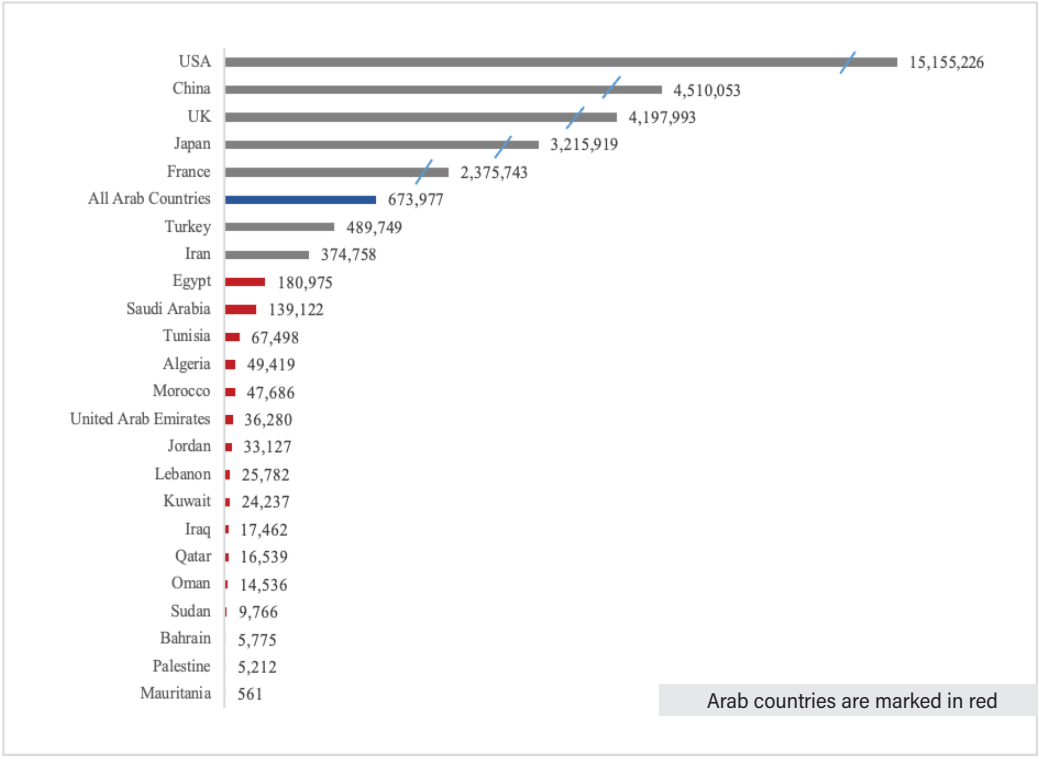
**Figure 1: Number of academic publications in the Scopus database per million habitants for 2016 in selected Arab and non-Arab countries**




*Source: Bouri and Maalouf 2018, 70–72.*

Looking at the total number of article publications per country, there were 673,977 articles published in all 16 Arab countries combined. These numbers compare to 489,749 for Turkey and 374,758 for Iran, and 15,155,226 for the US, 4,510,053 for China, 4,197,993 for the UK, 3,215,919 for Japan, and 2,375,743 for France.

**Figure 2: Number of academic publications in the Scopus database for 2016 in selected Arab and non-Arab countries**



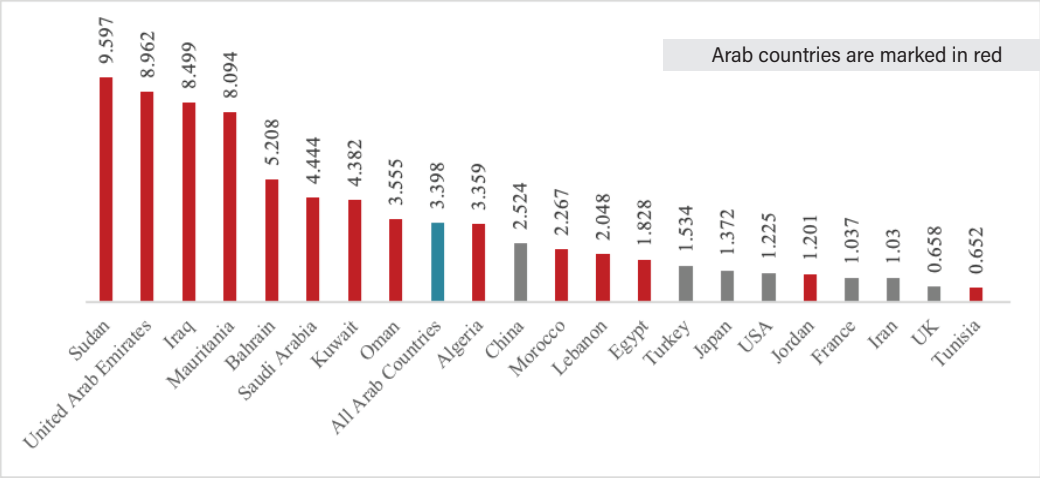

*Source: Bouri and Maalouf 2018, 70–72.*

Along the same lines, around 6,000 books are published annually in the Arab world compared to 102,000 in the US. And the total number of books translated into Arabic in the whole Arab world is equal to the number of books translated in Greece alone (Hanafi and Arvanitis 2013, 32).

To put figures 1 and 2 in context, the Arab world represents about 5% of the global population, but contributes to only 1.3% of the world's academic publications, and to 0.1% of the world's registered patents (Muslim World Science Initiative 2015).

If we look at the ratio of gross domestic product (GDP) to academic output in Scopus (Figure 3), the average for all 16 Arab countries is 3.398, well behind (i.e., above) all the other countries benchmarked in the study, with Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia scoring ahead of some non-Arab countries (Bouri and Maalouf 2018, 71).Gross domestic spending on research and development (R&D) is an important indicator of a country's commitment to supporting scientific research. The R&D spending share of GDP for higher education in Arab countries ranges from 0.2% to 0.4%, whereas it ranges between from 4% to 6% in industrialized countries (Bouri and Maalouf 2018, 72).

**Figure 3: Ratio of GDP (million $) to total academic publications in the Scopus database for 2016 in selected Arab and non-Arab countries**




*Source: Bouri and Maalouf 2018, 71.*

Figures 1, 2, and 3 reflect low levels of scientific research and production compared to other non-Arab countries in the region and the world. To be sure, general trends indicate a significant increase in publications in 2006–2015 compared to the previous decade (1996–2005). Specifically, Qatar increased its publications in this period by factor of 7.7, comparable to Iran (7.6), while most other Arab countries improved by a factor of 2 to 3. The total volume of publications in the Arab world grew at different rates in different countries, rising the most in Tunisia and other North African countries. Overall, the growth rate in Arab countries between 1995 and 2015 was above the world average. Still, the actual percentage share of publications in Arab countries compared to global publications remained roughly the same. The overall volume of publications, as well as the average number of publications per million population, remained very low (2,011 for the Arab countries, compared to 6,151 for Turkey) (Hanafi and Arvanitis 2015, 101).

Another way of gauging research productivity is by looking at the number of publications per researcher. In 2007, the total number of scientific publications in the Arab world was around 15,000, about 5,000 of which were in the social sciences and humanities. The number of articles published annually per 100 researchers ranges from 2 (in four Arab countries) to around 100 in Kuwait. The total number of employed university professors with PhDs in all scientific fields was around 180,000, and another 30,000 full-time researchers in specialized centers had similar qualifications. Thus, the estimated total number of researchers was 210,000, and they produced on average 5,000 academic papers per year in the social sciences and humanities. As such, 24 academic papers were published for each 1,000 university professors and full-time

researchers. Put differently, an average of 2.4 papers per year were published per 100 scholars (Hanafi 2012).

To be sure, the total volume of papers is not just a function of scholars' productivity but is also related to considerations by the publishing industry. Many publishers are reluctant to publish academic research because the market for such work is small. And once again, while these challenges echo global trends, the problems in the productivity and dissemination of SSH research are amplified in the Arab world.

How has the increase in the number of universities and the attendant increase in SSH research affected academic careers and research productivity? Or, more narrowly, is there a correlation between this increase, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the production of SSH research, both in terms of quantity and, to the extent that this can be gleaned from external indicators, in terms of quality?

Of central importance in this context is the perennial question of the relationship between scholarship and society: Should social relevance or even social activism be a factor in evaluating the quality of SSH research? And if so, how is such relevance to be measured? One of the key roles of universities beyond knowledge production is to cultivate a culture of inquiry and intellectual rigor within society. Can Arab universities (old and new) play such a role, not just by producing research that answers to social needs and local and international agendas, but also by modeling values such as meritocracy and informed and responsible citizenship? Here too, the increase in the number of universities and SSH departments is neither an automatic indicator of the social impact of these fields, nor is it evidence of a lasting qualitative impact of the SSH, even if the interpretive regimes of empirical data sound logical.

In this report, we seek to shed light on these persistent questions, mainly by looking at some of the structural contexts for SSH careers.

Factors that enable or facilitate a meaningful expansion of impactful SSH research might include the following: the degree to which university careers provide appropriate rewards as well as social status and mobility; the level of academic freedom and freedom of expression; the existence of a strong civil society that appreciates, promotes, benefits from, and engages with social science research outcomes; the interest of the state in the results of social science and humanities research and the extent to which this research informs state policies and decision making; the level of international political and academic interest in local developments in a country; and relatedly, the strength of the national/regional knowledge community's connections to global social sciences and humanities.

### *The Impact of Research Centers*

Any discussion of the societal impact of SSH research must consider the role of research centers in addition to that of traditional universities. Lebanon and Palestine house the largest number of SSH research centers (university and non-university based) relative to their population size (about 12 per million), followed by Algeria (8.8 per million), Qatar (6.2 per million), and Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia (about 5.0 per million each). The majority were established relatively recently; almost three-quarters after 2000 and just under half (43%) after 2010 (ASSM 2021b; ASSM 2021c). These centers also publish close to one-quarter of peer-reviewed SSH periodicals in the Arab world. Those published by universities (either directly or through a university research center) (1,225 periodicals) accounted for 70% of all peer-reviewed SSH periodicals published in the Arab world in 2021 (ASSM 2021d).[4]

So how can we explain the difference between the volume of publications coming out of universities versus from research centers? Specifically, is this difference due to the varying incentives provided in universities and research centers? More broadly, do research centers' funding sources influence their specific research agendas and the questions they explore? And if so, are we looking here at more civic activism but less free and independent research? Once again, while this report cannot possibly provide complete answers, it seeks to shed light on these questions.

If research agendas are influenced by research centers' funding sources, they are no doubt also influenced by state policies that play a decisive role in the expansion and direction of public higher education institutions in the Arab world. The flip side of this task is to gauge the extent to which SSH research influences policymaking, the overall relevance and impact of the social sciences and humanities on society, and whether research produced in research centers is more influential than research produced in universities or vice versa. In this report, we try to gauge, albeit in a preliminary fashion, the effects of state policies, interventions, and even wealth on the social sciences and humanities. We also try to compare the role of traditional and new private institutions of higher education as compared to public institutions.

Arvanitis and Hanafi's work strongly suggests that the initial reliance of Arab academic institutions and research centers on state support compromised their autonomy. The research produced in these institutions often served the role of validating existing national agendas rather than providing independent evidence to inform new ones (Hanafi and Arvanitis 2015; Arvanitis, Waast, and Al-Husban 2010). Currently, much of social science research caters to the demands of nonacademic (often international)

[4] Calculations by the author using data from the Arab Social Science Monitor databases (https://dataverse.theacss.org/dataverse/assm).

organizations seeking information that will help them understand or even influence certain social phenomena. On the other hand, there is not much room for pursuing SSH research for its own sake, and there seems to be less interest in theoretical and methodological questions—an interest that is essential to secure a standing for the Arab social sciences and humanities within global scholarly communities. In fact, much of the social science research in the Arab world today seems to be in response to the demands of either the state, as in the cases of Morocco and Algeria, or international organizations, as in the cases of Jordan and Lebanon (Arvanitis, Waast, and Al-Husban 2010, 72; Hanafi 2010, 115).

### *Participation in Global Academic Communities*

The intellectual integration of the Arab social sciences and humanities into international academic communities hinges on the ability of SSH researchers in the Arab region to systematically and competently incorporate theoretical discussions of these fields into the corresponding academic discourses in the Arab world, and to meaningfully contribute to the international repertoire of these fields of study. This type of integration is not examined in this report. Nonetheless, although there are no robust statistics on the structural integration expressed in such forms as external funding and scholarly exchange between Arab and Western countries, there is evidence that joint research projects locally, regionally, and globally are uncommon (see, for example, Hanafi and Arvanitis 2013, 39), and, by extension, that the dissemination of Arab SSH research findings in local and global academic networks is scant.

Furthermore, the increased interest by Western agencies in the social sciences in the Arab world—along with the resulting boost in funding—is not matched by comparable support from Arab governments and public institutions. This suggests that SSH research is increasingly dependent on foreign funding and is locally marginalized due to lack of state support. In this sense, rather than undermining intellectual autonomy, state support protects the independence of SSH research from overreliance on the agendas of international organizations. As such, these fields still need to be mindful of the potentially problematic relationship between the political sphere and the social sciences, whether such restrictive influence is driven by the self-serving agendas of the state or the political biases and interests of international funders.

The above further suggests a tension between universities' role of serving their societies and their need to remain globally competitive, meet the international academic standards of their respective fields and disciplines, and enrich global academic communities. This, in turn, raises the question of how to measure the contributions of Arab scholarship to the global social sciences and humanities, and how organizationally and academically integrated Arab social scientists and humanists are within global

academic and professional networks. Of relevance to these questions of autonomy is whether professional, academic communities and collective scholarly organizations are strong enough to self-regulate and to determine the types of research conducted by social scientists and humanists, or to set standards of research quality in their respective fields.

> There is a tension between universities' role in serving their societies and their need to remain globally competitive.

Other models that combine state support and autonomy exist, but the degree to which these models can be replicated is not self-evident. In the Gulf, the intentional state-driven push to build knowledge societies often translates into significant investment in autonomous institutions for the study of the exact sciences, culture, the humanities, and, to a lesser extent, the social sciences. The outcomes and long-term sustainability of some bold experiments in building institutions of higher education will vary depending on a range of choices that different countries make. But regardless of outcomes, these experiments are heavily subsidized and are out of reach for the vast majority of Arab countries (UNDP and MBRF 2009; Schlumberger 2010).

### *Career Prospects Outside the University*

An adequate assessment of the social status of social scientists and humanists, and by extension of the appeal of an SSH degree, depends on the professional track they are likely to occupy after receiving their degrees. Additionally, the social role and impact of the social sciences and humanities is precipitated through a wide variety of activities outside academia. Typically, those who work at universities hold a master's or doctoral degree, while other graduates are likely to work in a wide range of careers.

Employment possibilities for individuals with backgrounds in the social sciences or humanities vary depending on degree level and career-related experience. Numerous positions are entry level and do not require a higher degree, but often require some sort of certification, additional education, or on-the-job training. Other positions require a master's or PhD degree and the acquisition of more specialized skills related to the chosen profession. Aside from academic jobs, PhD holders often work in research, writing, publishing (academic, educational, or nonacademic), public service, consulting, advising, non-faculty higher education administrative positions, and many other roles. Moreover, corporations, governments, think tanks, and nonprofit organizations hire a variety of consultants to conduct detailed industry analysis, benchmark against comparable organizations, or devise strategic initiatives.

Career options for individuals holding SSH degrees include such positions as writer, author, freelance writer, technical writer, proofreader, publications translator, book/magazine editor, museum curator, museum technician, college professor, elementary and middle school teacher, secondary school teacher, education consultant, counselor, education administrator, special education teacher, academic advisor, career services officer, editor, public relations specialist, communications and development officer, librarian, archivist, bibliographer, art critic, artist, musician, singer, photographer, producer and director, travel agent/tour guide, entertainer, meeting/convention/event planner, gallery owner, archaeologist, print or media journalist, reporter, media specialist, interpreter/translator, research assistant, researcher, research historian, survey researcher and sociologist, analyst, diplomat, foreign service officer, government area specialist, political analyst, embassy attaché, financial analyst, banker, marketing and sales specialist, market research analyst, management consultant, entrepreneur, public administrator, manager, chief executive, human resources officer, public relations specialist, international business, international development (areas of international development can include foreign aid, governance, disaster relief, economic empowerment and microfinance, humanitarian aid, gender equality, education, environmental impact, health care, infrastructure, peace and conflict resolution, and alleviating poverty), community organizer, grassroots politician, social worker, social and community service worker, nonprofit organization consultant, grant writer, fundraiser, program evaluator, program developer, advisor, and freelance and independent worker (see Ward 2012).[5]

More research is needed to further explore these aspects of the SSH landscapes. However, focusing on the academic context will shed light on the social dynamics of SSH fields that shape both academic and nonacademic career trajectories and social impact more broadly. At a minimum, the expansion of SSH academic programs suggests an increased number of graduates holding bachelor's degrees in these fields. Numerous reports from several Arab countries about the increased levels of unemployment among scholars holding doctoral degrees, especially in the social sciences and humanities,[6] suggest that individuals with bachelor's degrees are more likely to be employed, while those who hold master's and doctoral degrees have limited employment opportunities in general and even fewer opportunities outside academia.

[5] For a list of frequently reported careers for people who majored in the social sciences, see Ward 2012. In an American context, the Community Survey data of the US Bureau of Labor Statistics is based on detailed annual surveys of 3,000,000 people.

[6] Reports of protests by unemployed PhD holders abound—for example, in Egypt, Jordan and Morocco (Latreche 2020).

As Assaad and O'Leary (2016) note,

> It is well-established that unemployment in MENA is essentially a labor market insertion phenomenon that primarily affects young new entrants. Graduates who aspire for formal sector employment, which is primarily available in the public sector, tend to remain unemployed for a while searching or queuing for such employment. Unlike advanced country economies where unemployment rates are highest among the unskilled, the pattern is reversed in MENA, with unemployment rates being highest among university graduates, reflecting their greater expectation to obtain formal sector jobs. The rapid increase in the number of graduates in recent years put upward pressure on the unemployment rate, but the decline in the chances of getting public sector employment reduced the incentive of graduates to queue for such jobs, contributing to a reduction in the unemployment rates.[7]

It is unclear, however, if seeking employment outside academia is in direct response to the demands of the labor market, and whether SSH professionals contribute to the rationalization of governance and management in Arab countries, or if they simply satisfy the nominal requirement of having a university degree to qualify for employment in the public sector. In fact, despite their reliance on the state for jobs and research support, the input from the sample of survey respondents with whom we conducted semi-structured interviews suggests that the state is often a barrier to research and that governments tend to marginalize social science researchers in the decision-making process. However, it is also notable that some governments employ social scientists to do research that informs and supports official decision making.

## 2. Methods and Tools: The ACSS Survey and Background Papers

This report aims to provide tentative answers to some of these questions based on a combination of empirical data and qualitative examination of the institutional contexts of social science and humanities careers. The empirical part of the ASSR3 is based on information collected through three instruments:

**1) A survey of Arab social scientists and humanists:** In spring 2019, the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) conducted an online survey of Arab social scientists and humanists from a wide range of fields, including multidisciplinary ones.

Some key questions that the survey attempted to answer related to the demographic characteristics of Arab social scientists and humanists; their academic and professional

[7] For additional discussion of unemployment as it affects university graduates with social science degrees, see Assaad and O'Leary 2016, 6. Their paper argues that unemployment rates in Jordan and Palestine are "somewhat" or "considerably lower for those with post-graduate degrees compared to those with bachelor degrees."

formation, careers, and mobility; and the volume and quality of their research output.

Given the absence of a comprehensive sampling frame of social scientists and humanists in various employment sectors in the Arab world, the study relied on a sample mainly composed of university-based professionals. The final study sample on which the statistical analysis was performed reached 1,121 individuals (three-quarters of whom were based at universities)[8].

Of note is that the number of holders of advanced degrees in the social sciences and humanities who are not affiliated with universities may in fact be larger than those with academic affiliation. The former may even exercise a more significant social impact than university-based academics if they are in positions where their academic training informs their professional practices. Assessing the impact—the success or marginality, as well as relevance or irrelevance—of academic training in the social sciences and humanities is much broader than a focus on academic career trajectories. While this report covers some aspects of social scientists' experiences outside universities, conducting a full survey of this professional population is an extremely challenging task that is beyond the scope of this report. Still, focusing on the academic context sheds light on the social dynamics of SSH fields that shape academic and nonacademic career trajectories and social impact more broadly. At a minimum, the expansion of SSH academic programs suggests a higher number of graduates.

**2) Three unpublished background papers that analyze the survey data:** In addition to performing its own internal analysis, the ACSS commissioned two background papers for further insight into the survey data: "Taqrir Tahlil Nata'ij Mash al-Marsad al-Arabi lil-Ulum al-Ijtima'iyya" by Abdelkader Latreche (2020) (in Arabic) and "Social Scientists and Social Science Careers in the Arab Region: An Analysis of the Characteristics of Arab Social Scientists and Humanists Survey 2019" by Maia Sieverding (2020). A third background paper, "Report on Phase II: Semi-Structured Interviews" by Cyrine Ghannouchi (2020), reported findings from semi-structured interviews with a random sample of survey respondents.

**3) Six background papers that help contextualize and qualitatively complement the survey data:** While the ASSR3 does not attempt to provide a history of the social sciences and humanities in the Arab world, nor a systematic analysis of the integration of the Arab social sciences and humanities into international scholarly communities, the following papers provided information that helped situate the quantitative data within qualitative contexts:

[8] In this report unless stated otherwise, university-based/affiliated/employed respondents refer to those working in universities and university-based research centers; non-university-based respondents work in any other type of institution.

- "Promotion Policies and Recruitment in Selective Key Universities in the Arab Region" by Kamal Abouchedid and Diane Nauffal (2019) reviews the diverse recruitment and promotion models in various universities in Arab countries.

- "Memoirs of Arab Intellectuals: An Archive of Intellectual Practices" by Fadi Bardawil (2019) provides glimpses of formative moments in the history of the social sciences and humanities through an exploration of Arab scholars biographies.

- "Transnational Academic Mobility: Experience of Arab Social Scientists" by Lea Bou Khater (2019) presents a snapshot of the career profiles of "transnational" Arab academics based outside the Arab world whose research in the fields of social sciences and humanities focuses on Arab countries.

- "Editorial Boards in the Arab Region" by Cynthia Kreichati (2019a) investigates the processes and academic rigor of editorial policies for select social science and humanities refereed journals.

- "Social Sciences in NGOs and Research Centers in the Arab Region" by Cynthia Kreichati (2019b) looks at the position and role of the social sciences in select NGOs and research centers in the Arab world.

- "National Research Strategies and University Strategic Plans in the Arab Region" by Diane Nauffal and Kamal Abouchedid (2019) contrasts the role of research as articulated in the mission statements and strategic plans of private and public universities with the actual measures instituted to support and enable research.

These papers underscore the fact that the present does not exist in a vacuum. As such, another aim of this report is to identify the foundational legacies as well as institutional continuities and ruptures in the history of the academic social sciences and humanities. The background papers also shed light on the way social scientists and humanists conceive of their own careers and the way they are viewed by society, as well as how these perceptions have changed over time. The papers highlight the historical and institutional structures and policies that have shaped the careers of social scientists and humanists in the Arab world and enabled or hindered their ability to conduct research.

## II. How Do Institutional Practices Shape Knowledge Production?

A host of factors—from political repression to inadequate research funding—hinder knowledge production across SSH disciplines in the Arab region. Based on the background papers, one can begin to better understand the current institutional landscape.

In an overview of the mission statements and strategic plans of 13 universities in Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, Qatar, Tunisia, Morocco, and Jordan, Abouchedid and Nauffal (2019) find that these institutions presented research, including SSH research, as a key priority, framing it as a key public good. Similarly, in their study of promotion policies at the same 13 institutions, Abouchedid and Nauffal (2019) note that, with some "subtle differences," a high value was generally placed on research as a driver for hiring and advancement.

**Table 1: Universities selected for study**

| Country | University | Year of Establishment |
|---|---|---|
| **Established before 1960 - Legacy universities** | | |
| Egypt | Al Azhar University | 972 |
| Egypt | Cairo University | 1908 |
| Lebanon | American University of Beirut | 1866 |
| Lebanon | Lebanese University | 1951 |
| Morocco | Mohammed V University | 1957 |
| **Established between 1960 and 1998 - Blossoming universities** | | |
| Jordan | University of Jordan | 1962 |
| Jordan | Al-Ahliyya Amman University | 1990 |
| Morocco | Al-Akhawayn University | 1995 |
| Palestine | Birzeit University | 1972 |
| Palestine | Al Najah University | 1977 |
| Qatar | Qatar University | 1977 |
| Tunisia | University of Tunis | 1960 |
| **Established after 1998 - Emerging universities** | | |
| Qatar | Doha Institute | 2014 |

*Source: Abouchedid and Nauffal 2019.*

Notably, Arab universities are not the only drivers of social science knowledge production and dissemination in the region. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), independent research centers, and UN agencies are also an important part of the research ecosystem. As Kreichati (2019b) writes in her study of NGOs and research centers, a significant amount of social science research is produced or published by independent research centers, most of which are located outside of universities. She also argues that there is no sharp dividing line between social science scholars who work in universities and those who work outside them. Rather, social science scholars in the Arab region often move between universities, NGOs, and research centers, sometimes inhabiting all spaces at once. Further, Kreichati's (2019a) study of social science journals' editorial boards across the region emphasizes the importance of research centers as key hubs of intellectual activity and debate.

### 1. The Role of Independent Research Centers

While Arab universities certainly play an important role in shaping and defining SSH disciplines across the region, research centers continue to produce a significant amount of social scientific knowledge. One study contends that more than 80% of social science research in the region is produced outside of universities, in either research centers or consulting agencies (Hanafi and Arvanitis 2016). As such, a substantial portion of social scientific knowledge is produced and disseminated outside campus walls.

The region's oldest social science research centers were founded in the 1960s and 1970s. These include the Institute for Palestine Studies (IPS, 1963) and the Center for Arab Unity Studies (CAUS, 1975), both of which have published influential social science journals. Both were established with explicitly political goals: IPS was founded with the objective of accompanying the Palestinian national struggle for liberation, while CAUS sought to foster Arab nationalism, although the institution has since moved away from this aim. Kreichati (2019b) identifies a second generation of Arab social science research centers that emerged in the early 2000s, around the time of the US-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, a period marked by an upswing of NGO funding into the region. A third phase began with the Arab uprisings of 2011, which spawned institutions such as the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS, 2010). Although some institutions, such as CAUS, have moved away from their original missions, sociopolitical transformations were key to the formation of all of these research centers.

These independent research centers publish a number of important Arabic-language social science journals. Kreichati (2019b) notes that while the journals' peer-review

processes may be well-developed on paper, they are not always rigorously applied in reality. Among the challenges journals faced were the lack of interest and time of referees and their small staffs.

In looking at why scholars choose to work at research centers, NGOs, and international agencies, Kreichati (2019b) suggests more prestige, better salaries, and greater stability working for research centers and international agencies as contributing factors, while also describing the work as more repetitive. These conclusions were based on life-history interviews Kreichati conducted with eight social scientists working at research centers. However, she emphasizes that there is no strict division between scholars working at universities and those at research centers and NGOs. As mentioned, many scholars work at both, with university professors sometimes taking on additional work at research centers to improve their income.

Yet while independent research centers produce a good deal of social science knowledge in the region, relatively few PhD-holders work at them full time. Moreover, according to Kreichati, most of these are graduates of European or North American institutions. Of the researchers Kreichati interviewed, only one was a graduate of an Arab institution. She writes, "In the present circumstances, it is still much more difficult for holders of PhDs from the Arab world to land similar job opportunities in well reputed research centers" (Kreichati 2019b, 20).

### 2. University Strategic Plans and Promotion Policies

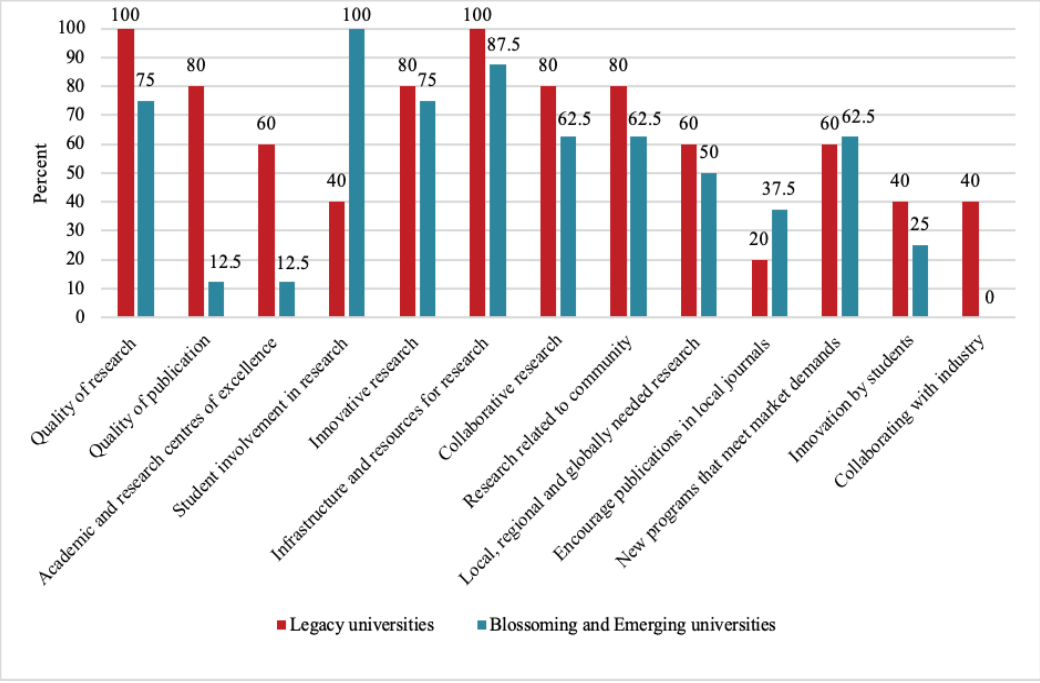
While a number of recently founded universities do not have programs in the social sciences or humanities, most of the universities examined by Nauffal and Abouchedid (2019) mentioned the significance of research, in addition to the importance of the university's service to society, in their mission statements or strategic plans. The publicly available strategic plans of nearly all the 13 selected universities emphasized the importance of research quality and innovation. However, the authors also note the gap between general pronouncements and mission statements, on the one hand, and the dedication of resources and adequate infrastructure, good governance models, and academic freedoms, on the other. This may explain the higher level of publishing in research centers, suggesting that while universities are the primary sites for the production of social science knowledge, they don't always provide adequate support for research.

This focus, Abouchedid and Nauffal contend, is reflected not only within mission statements and strategies, but also in the existence of research centers and in these universities, and their emphasis on enhancing existing research infrastructure.

Significantly, this emphasis is more pronounced at legacy universities established before 1960.

Meanwhile, the universities that Abouchedid and Nauffal referred to as "blossoming" or "emerging" (those established between 1960 and 1998 and those established after 1998, respectively) were focused on research innovation and the involvement of students in research as strategic initiatives. Nearly all universities highlighted the importance of relating research to the community and fostering collaborations between departments and with other institutions. Only two stressed collaborations with industry.

**Figure 4: Frequency of strategic initiatives in the national and institutional strategic plans of the 13 universities studied by type of university**




*Source: Nauffal and Abouchedid 2019.*

On an individual level, scholars valued research not only because of its intrinsic worth for society, but also because of the role that bibliometric indicators increasingly play in scientists' chances to win competitions for research grants, get promoted or tenured, or secure better positions. The emphasis on research as a requisite for recruitment and promotion has increased, Nauffal and Abouchedid assert, "because of global competitiveness brought about by the emergence of neoliberal policies, which have imposed numerous challenges on higher education" (Nauffal and Abouchedid 2019, 4).

While Abouchedid and Nauffal found markedly different patterns and procedures for promotion and recruitment across different countries and institutions, there was a "ubiquitous emphasis on research published in international outlets for promotion," a finding they said parallels global trends (Abouchedid and Nauffal 2019, 23). They also note that the demand for faculty to publish in internationally renowned foreign-language journals, mostly in English or French, has tremendously affected the production of research in the social sciences and humanities in the Arabic language on the local level (also see Hanafi and Arvanitis 2014). It is rarer for universities to recognize the importance of both local and international research and publications (Hanafi 2011), as is the case at Birzeit University in Ramallah, Palestine. Most universities' promotion policies assign a markedly higher value to publication in international, foreign-language journals. One effect of this trend to publish globally, the authors argue (along with Hanafi and Arvanitis 2016), is to reduce scholarship's local relevance. However, while it is clear that publishing in languages other than Arabic reduces local readership, and by extension reduces the likelihood that SSH publications would trigger public debate, influence policymaking, or have social impact, it is still possible to publish in foreign languages to meet international scholarly standards while being responsive to local social needs. Moreover, as the survey suggests, most social scientists and humanists know at least one foreign language.

Importantly, however, as Abouchedid and Nauffal (2019) note, most Arabic journals have no international recognition, and are not indexed in standards databases (also see Abouchedid and Bou Zeid 2019). Additionally, many journals are housed in university faculties, with a faculty dean serving as editor in chief and affiliated faculty members serving as contributing authors. In other words, the publishing process is self-referential, and the lack of clear conflict-of-interest policies raises questions about the credibility of the review process.

# III. What are the Characteristics of Social Scientists in the Arab Region?

This section presents a snapshot of the characteristics and career trajectories of social scientists and humanists, drawing on the results of the 2019 ACSS survey. The survey methodology and descriptive statistics of the dataset details can be found in the annexes.

## 1. Demographic Characteristics

### 1a. Region and Country of Citizenship

In terms of citizenship, Algerians made up the greatest share of the responding sample (35%), followed by Moroccans (16%), Egyptians (12%), Palestinians (7%), Iraqis (6%), and Jordanians (5%), with very limited representation for Arab Gulf countries (4% in total). For the purpose of the analysis, the following regional classification was adopted for country of citizenship and employment:

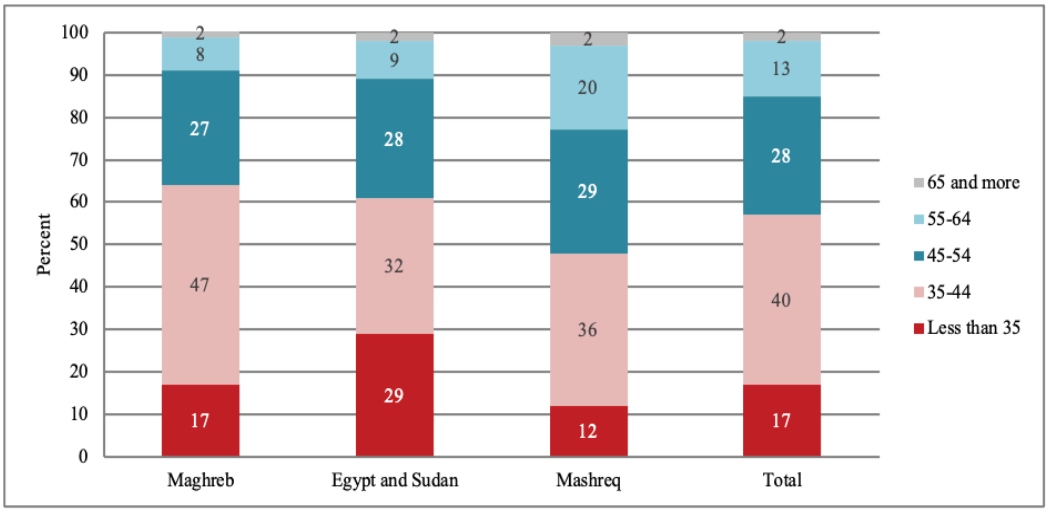
- Maghreb region: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, and Mauritania;
- Egypt/Sudan region: Egypt, Sudan, Djibouti, and Somalia (no respondents from Comoros);
- Mashreq region: Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, KSA, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and Yemen.

The highest number of respondents were thus from the Maghreb, at about 57% of the total sample (636 out of 1,121), 177 respondents (16%) were from the Egypt/Sudan region, and 305 (27%) were from the Mashreq.

### 1b. Age and Gender Distribution

Keeping in mind that the survey data are not representative and must be interpreted with caution, the results do suggest possible generational and gender shifts among social scientists and humanists in the Arab region. The distribution of respondents showed a relatively young profile of social scientists and humanists, with 17% under the age of 35, 40% aged 35–44, 28% aged 45–54, 13% aged 55–64, and only 2% aged 65 and above. Respondents based in the Mashreq were somewhat older than the average, with half of them being over age 45. In contrast, close to 60% of those in both the Maghreb and Egypt/Sudan regions were under age 45.

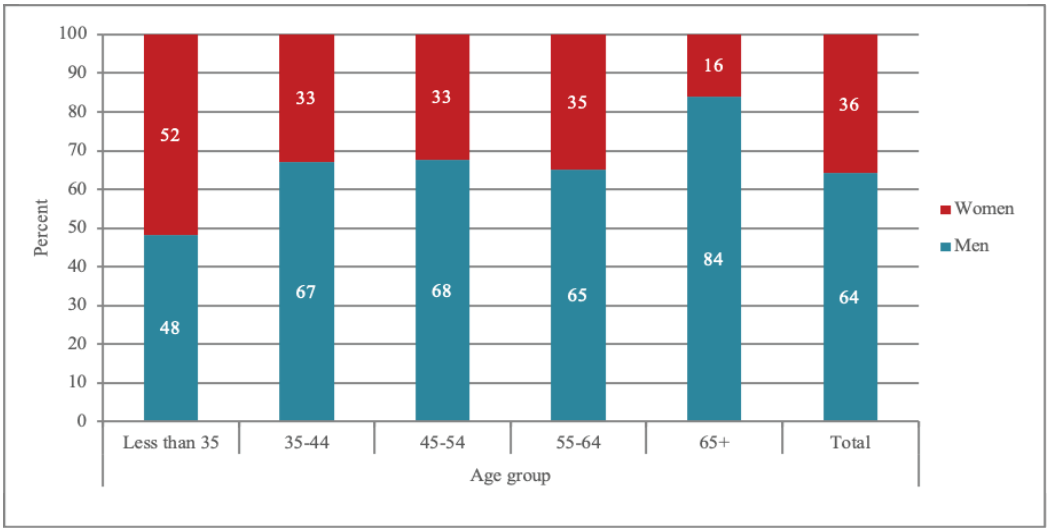
**Figure 5: Age distribution of respondents by region of employment**




*Source: Sieverding 2020.*

Interestingly, there was a strong age pattern to the gender distribution of respondents, suggesting a gradual feminization of the social sciences and humanities in the region. While male respondents amounted to about two-thirds (65%) of the sample, their percentage increased with increasing age brackets, while it decreased for women. Whereas over half (52%) of respondents under age 35 were women, this decreased to about one-third of the cohort aged 35–64 and to only 16% of those aged 65 and above. This means that the ratio of male to female respondents decreased more than fivefold between those aged less than 35 (1 to 0.9) and those 65 and above (1 to 5).

**Figure 6: Gender distribution of respondents by age**




*Source: Sieverding 2020.*

There is more than one possible interpretation of these trends (Figures 5 and 6). One possibility is that with increased university education for both genders, men are more likely to pursue professional degrees, whereas such degrees might not be as accessible to women. It could also be that young women do not face the same financial pressures as young men and therefore have more flexibility to choose university majors that do not lead to higher-paying jobs. This suggests that younger men's interest in the social sciences and humanities is decreasing, whereas women's interest is increasing.

Regardless of the reasons, if the respondent sample is representative of the larger population of social scientists and humanists, the share of women in these fields seems to be increasing.[9] This, in turn, might suggest a gradual move toward gender parity in these fields. If the current trends continue in the same direction, it is conceivable that before long there will be more women than men in social sciences and humanities fields.

The Maghreb region showed the most rapid feminization of the social sciences (16% of those aged 55–64 were women, increasing to over half for those under 35), followed by the Egypt/Sudan region, where the trend was noticeable but gradual (just under 30% of respondents aged 55–64 were women, increasing to 43% for both the 45–54 and 35–44 age groups and increasing further to 53% for the under 35 age group). This suggests that gender parity is more likely in some countries than others. These discrepancies might be driven by the limited availability of opportunities and not by choice.

The survey sample itself does not provide conclusive answers to these questions, but some research suggests that the social sciences and humanities disciplines are not university students' first choice in the Arab world.[10]

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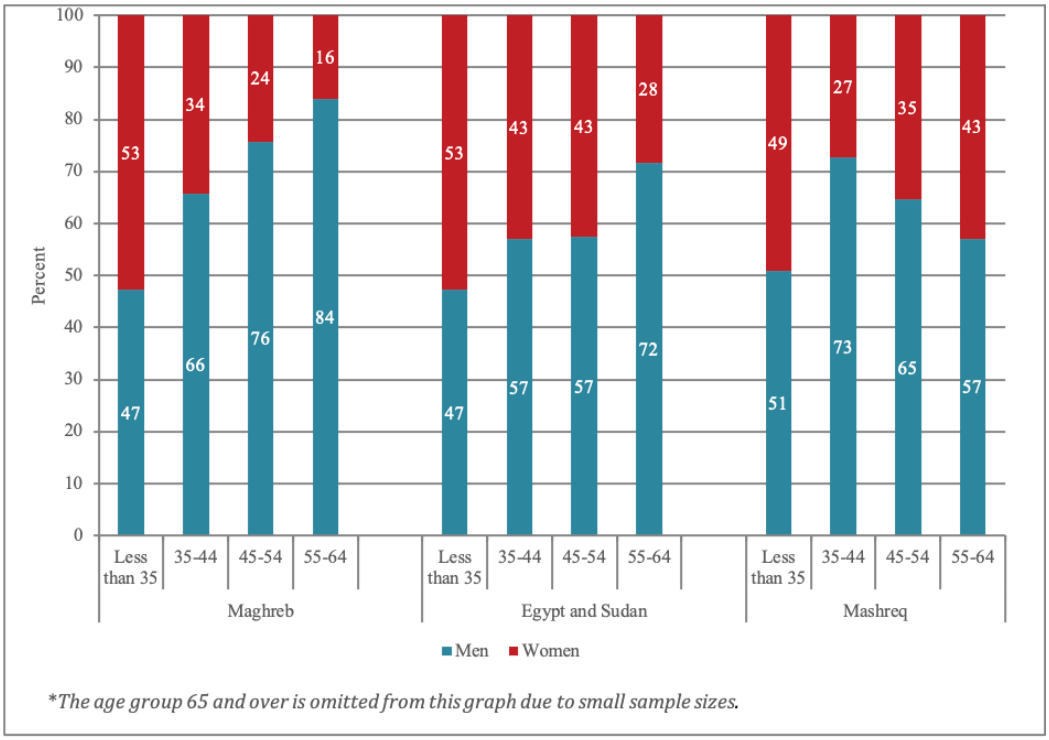
[9] Sieverding (2020) speaks of a "trend of feminization" among social scientists, "with women constituting increasingly larger proportions of both younger age groups and more recently granted social science degrees at all levels." This trend, she notes, is "particularly pronounced in the Maghreb, where the percentage of women among the oldest respondents were lowest." She adds that "the trend of feminization seen in the survey is broadly consistent with data from UNESCO (2020) that show that the share of women among tertiary education graduates in social sciences, journalism and information ranges between 60% and 77% in most of the countries of the region for which data were available. The only countries with lower shares of women among social science graduates were Egypt (41%), Morocco (56%), and Saudi Arabia (55%)." Latreche (2020) similarly argues for the feminization of the academic professions in various social sciences.

[10] Also see Assaad and O'Leary 2016.

**Figure 7: Gender distribution of respondents by age and region of employment***




*Source: Sieverding 2020.*

## 1c. Language Proficiency

A small number of respondents (3%) reported that they were not proficient in Arabic. On the other hand, around one-fourth of respondents reported that they operated only in Arabic and had no second language proficiency. Notably, a larger share of female respondents (76%) had at least one second language compared to male respondents (69%), and the gap was even larger between the share of female respondents who have proficiency in English (49%) versus the share of male respondents (40%). Overall, proficiency in English was slightly higher than in French, even though the majority of respondents were from the Maghreb, where French is the dominant second language in higher education. Of all survey respondents, 70% were proficient in either English or French and a small percentage were proficient in other languages. Clearly higher percentages of university-based social scientists and humanists (77%) were proficient in a second language in addition to Arabic compared to their non-university-based counterparts (48%). Among other things, these numbers might suggest that female respondents, who on average were younger than male respondents, were more focused on acquiring language skills, perhaps to enhance their chances of advancing their careers and to overcome structural professional biases and inequities.

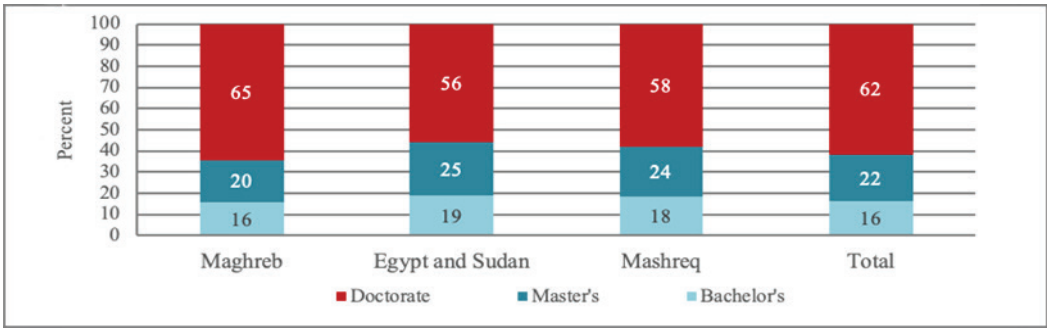
## 2. Educational Trajectories

### 2a. Education Level

#### *Highest Degree Obtained*

62% of all survey respondents had a doctorate in an SSH field, 22% had a master's degree, and less than one-fifth had a bachelor's only. The percentages of social scientists and humanists holding doctoral degrees was higher among men than among women (65% vs. 55%) and in the Maghreb compared to both the Mashreq and Egypt/Sudan regions, as shown in figure 8.

**Figure 8: Highest SSH degree obtained by region of citizenship**




*Source: Analysis by the ASSM of the survey data.*

Respondents aged 45 and above were also significantly more likely to have doctoral degrees (76% compared to 61% in the 35–44 age category and 26% for those under 35). Of note, only one-fifth of those aged 35 and below had completed doctorates, whereas two-fifths in this age group were simultaneously enrolled in doctoral programs and working, which "suggests that many social scientists in the region combine Doctoral studies with employment. This may be due to lack of or insufficient funding for exclusive Doctoral studies. Dual employment and Doctoral studies may also explain why 13% of 35-44 year-olds were also still in the process of pursuing a Doctorate" (Sieverding 2020).

#### *Patterns of Degree Obtainment*

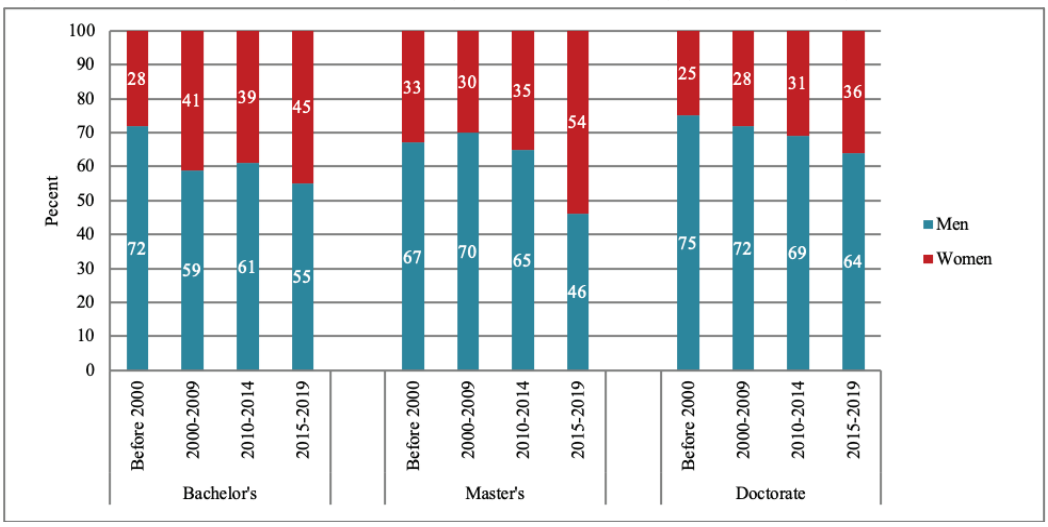
85% of respondents received their highest SSH degree after the year 2000. The number of individuals graduating every year with a bachelor's degree increased steadily until 2005 and seems to have declined rapidly since. Interestingly, the number of people receiving master's degrees has decreased over the last 10 years, although the drop has not been as steep, with their number remaining clearly larger than those graduating with bachelor's degrees. However, the number of individuals obtaining doctoral degrees has increased.

The lower number of respondents reporting a bachelor's degree in the social sciences or humanities as their highest degree in the last 15 years, and the increasing portion of those opting to pursue doctoral studies, might be due to the fact that the majority of respondents worked in universities (or comparable secure jobs that cannot be secured with a bachelor's or even a master's degree), which are increasingly recruiting individuals with higher degrees. These numbers also correspond with the increasing number of local universities that offer doctoral degrees, which makes access to such degrees easier. However, the data may also suggest that entry into SSH fields is decreasing, perhaps due to lack of sufficient career opportunities. Once again, if this trend is representative of the larger field, and if it continues, the number of social scientists and humanists will decrease gradually, but the percentage of doctoral degree holders within this cohort will increase.

Gender-wise and in line with the trend previously discussed, the data also indicate a growing presence of women among degree holders at all levels (considering all SSH degrees, not only the highest), but with slightly slower growth at the doctoral level.

> From under a third of bachelor's recipients prior to 2000, the proportion of women receiving SSH Bachelors increased to 39-45% between 2000-2019. Women's share of Master's degrees fluctuated between 30-35% prior to 2014, but 2015-2019 Master's degree recipients were 54% women. Meanwhile, women's share of Doctoral degrees grew more slowly, from a quarter of degrees prior to 2000 (although sample sizes of women Doctorate recipients are very small in this time period and should be interpreted with caution), and gradually increasing to 36% of those receiving Doctorates in 2015-2019. (Sieverding 2020).

**Figure 9: Gender distribution of degrees obtained by year and degree level**




*Source: Sieverding 2020.*

*Paths to an SSH Degree*

The vast majority of respondents commenced their academic interest in SSH at the bachelor's level. Only 6% of them were first enrolled in an SSH program at the master's level and less than 1% at the doctoral level. The choice to pursue a degree at the bachelor's level is necessarily less deliberate than the more mature choice to pursue advanced degrees at the master's or doctoral level. Yet, regardless of the initial motivation to pursue academic training in SSH, the early entry into these fields seems to be a primary factor in the pursuit of SSH degrees at the more advanced levels.

Of doctoral degree holders in SSH, 83% studied the same major at all three levels of higher education (bachelor's, master's, and doctoral). It should be noted that many public national universities discourage changes in major and will not admit students into master's or doctorate levels from other majors. A small share, 8% and 7%, changed their major (within SSH) at each of the master's and doctoral levels, respectively. 6% moved out of SSH at the master's level, and this figure dropped to 2% at the doctoral level. Also, more than 40% of individuals who pursued a non-SSH area of specializations after their SSH bachelor's degree returned to SSH for their doctoral degree. Shifts in degree majors might be attributed to the desire to receive a more professional degree, choosing from a limited number of higher degree programs that are conveniently accessible to the respondent, or experimenting with combinations of SSH majors either due to intellectual curiosity or simply in the hope of meeting market demands.

## 2b. Fields of Study

Overall, the largest percentage of respondents (27%) had their highest SSH degree in sociology, followed by political science (15%) and then economics and psychology (10% each). The rates of specialization in fields like literature, history, and geography were about 6–7% each. Male respondents were more likely than female respondents to specialize in fields like philosophy, geography, history, political science, economics, and religious studies, while female respondents tended to specialize more in such fields as gender studies, archaeology, literature, psychology, demography, development studies, and anthropology. At first look, it seems that there is a broad distribution of interests across fields and demographic profiles in the surveyed sample. Although sociology and related fields (anthropology, demography, gender studies, geography, and psychology) were most common across age categories, younger academics were increasingly likely to study economics, political science, and related fields (development studies and regional studies) compared to their older colleagues. The latter fields were also more common among respondents from the Egypt/Sudan region and the Maghreb. This suggests more interest in the professional or practical social sciences among younger generations. The survey responses also suggest a much higher interest in traditional, well-defined SSH disciplines than in interdisciplinary fields of study. There

also seems to be a correlation between the popularity of a discipline and the previously noted consistency of interest at all degree levels (bachelor's, master's, and doctoral).

**Table 2: Educational background by age**

| | | Major of highest SSH degree (%) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Sociology and related fields** | **Economics, politicalscience, and related fields** | **Humanities** | **TOTAL** |
| **Age** | **Under 35** | 48 | 30 | 22 | 100 |
| | **35–44** | 47 | 31 | 22 | 100 |
| | **45–54** | 50 | 26 | 24 | 100 |
| | **55 and above** | 55 | 21 | 24 | 100 |

*Source: Analysis by the ASSM of the survey data.*

On the other hand, the share of humanities degrees (archaeology, cultural studies, history, literature, philosophy, and religious studies) was significantly lower than social science fields[11] among doctorates compared to bachelor's. Anecdotal accounts suggest that majoring in the humanities is a last and least appealing resort for students who do not have strong academic records that allow them to pursue professional degrees. In their exploration of the humanities' status in higher education and the job market in Egypt, Assaad and Abdalla (2018) describe majoring in the humanities as the "default" option for students who simply need a degree to secure government employment. Another reason might be the lack of financial resources to pursue more costly degrees; it is common knowledge that professional degrees like medicine, engineering, and business are most competitive, hardest to enroll in, and more expensive (for additional evidence, see Assaad and Abdalla 2018, 49–71). It also may be that there are fewer career opportunities—such as university employment—for holders of higher degrees in the humanities than their counterparts in the social sciences. Another possibility might be that students in the humanities have fewer academic credentials that qualify them to pursue higher degrees in their fields (Carnevale, Cheah, and Hanson 2015, 11).[12] Last but not least, the anticipated economic value of an academic major is no doubt a factor in students' choices.

[11] "Social sciences" refer here to sociology, economics, political science, and related fields, mentioned in the previous paragraph.

[12] A 2015 study based on analysis by the US Census Bureau breaks down the share of college graduates aged 25–59 by seven major subgroups. The highest number of issued degrees was in business (26.1%), followed by STEM (19.6%), education and service (14.5%), art, humanities, and liberal arts (13.4%), career-focused degrees (11.9%), health (7.5%), and finally, the social sciences (6.9%). Available data for the Arab world do not provide sufficient information to compare the number of recipients of university degrees in various fields, but based on the survey, the share of the social scientists is about four times that of humanists. This contrasts with the US, where the share of the humanities graduates is twice than those in the social sciences. It is also noteworthy that the likelihood of pursuing a doctoral degree in the humanities is significantly lower than in the social sciences.

It is commonly assumed that the chance of securing a financially rewarding career is higher for university graduates with professional degrees. In the US, graduates with SSH degrees aged 25–59 earn less than the average university graduate, and the average wages earned by humanities graduates are almost at the bottom of the wage scale (Carnevale, Cheah, and Hanson 2015, 9). The highest earners are STEM, health, and business graduates, in this order. Assaad and Abdalla's (2018) findings for Egypt are similar; indeed, humanities graduates generally earn less than graduates from other fields, whether theoretical or practical, in both the public and private sectors (up to 14% and 21% less, respectively). The survey offers no indicator to corroborate this trend, but the follow-up semi-structured interviews with a sample of survey respondents as well as the background papers suggest that the situation is more pronounced in the Arab world than in the US, and offer some hints on the drives behind choosing to major in SSH. It is rather certain that the economic value of a degree cannot be the key motive to choose a major in the social sciences or humanities.

When assessing the educational tracks of social scientists and humanists, it is useful to look beyond the number of students graduating with SSH degrees. In particular, exposure to SSH does not take place exclusively through majoring in these fields, but could also occur through course offerings that fulfill core curricular requirements. For example, it is not unusual in some universities to have a small number of students majoring in SSH but a much larger number taking required core courses or electives in these fields. This is significant because the faculty needed to cover these courses would translate into more university careers in the social sciences and humanities. However, a general core requirement without the option of obtaining a degree also means that some fields are not being reproduced by graduating sufficient numbers of students with promising career paths in these fields. Moreover, we know that many Arab universities do not require a general education core curriculum and tend to provide segregated specialized education. Although we don't have specific information at our disposal, this is more likely to be the case in universities following the specialized European (especially French) higher education model.

### 2c. Study Location

#### *Geographic Patterns*

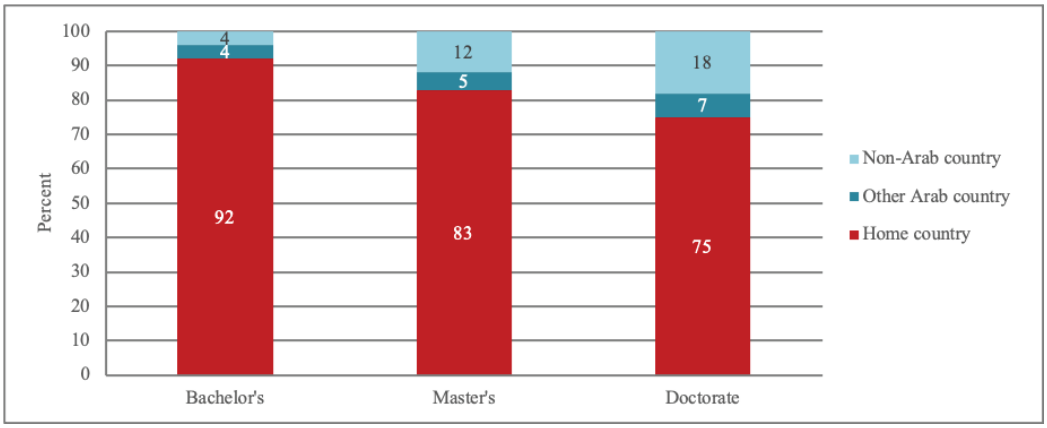
Roughly one-quarter of respondents received an SSH degree outside their home country. Only 8% of all respondents received their bachelor's degrees outside their home countries (a slightly higher percentage of these from a non-Arab country). Numerically, the largest number of those studying outside their home countries majored in political science, followed by geography, economics, and sociology. Of these four

fields, a majority of those who received a bachelor's in geography outside their home countries studied in another Arab country, whereas the majority of those who majored in the other three fields outside their home countries studied in non-Arab countries.

At the master's level, less than one-fifth of respondents studied outside their home countries. Of these, more than two-thirds studied in non-Arab countries, most in sociology, followed by economics and then political science.

At the doctoral level, one-quarter of respondents obtained their degree outside their home countries: 7% in another Arab country and 18% in a non-Arab country. The largest number of students who received their doctoral degrees from a non-Arab country majored in sociology, political science, or economics.

**Figure 10: Location of SSH study by degree level**




*Source: Analysis by the ASSM of the survey data.*

A key conclusion from this is that a majority of degrees at all levels, including the doctoral level, are received either from the student's home country or from another Arab country. Therefore, SSH students are unlikely to travel outside the region to pursue their education. Historically, many Arab countries provided state-sponsored scholarship programs for students pursuing higher degrees. It is likely that the interest in studying abroad, especially at the bachelor's level, decreased with the establishment of many new Arab universities, and with the opening of several branch campuses of Western universities in the Arab world (especially in the Gulf). However, it is unclear from the survey data whether the educational needs of SSH students are met within the Arab world or if most students simply do not have the means to travel and study outside their home countries. Either way, it is safe to conclude that most social scientists and humanists based in the Arab region are likely to operate within local or regional scholarly networks and are less likely to be integrated within international scholarly networks.

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### *Determinants of Geographic Mobility*

Survey results also pointed to significant correlations between some other factors and the likelihood of studying outside the home country. Indeed, younger respondents mostly studied in their home countries, and this too may be related to the increase in the number of local universities that offer higher degrees in the social sciences and humanities. On the other hand, unlike at the bachelor's and master's levels, where gender was not a factor, men were more likely than women to study abroad at the doctoral level. There were also regional variations: respondents from the Maghreb were less likely to study outside their home countries across all degree levels, especially in Algeria, with the largest number of survey respondents and with the largest number of universities in the Arab world that offer SSH doctoral degrees (ASSM 2021a); when they did, however, they were more likely to opt for non-Arab countries compared to their counterparts from other Arab regions (particularly the Mashreq). Last but not least, studying in a non-Arab country was more common for students studying economics, political science, and related fields (development studies and regional studies) than for those studying a traditional sociology-related field (anthropology, demography, gender studies, geography, psychology, and sociology) who largely remained within the Arab world. This pattern was seen at all degree levels.

### *Destination Countries for Studies Abroad*

In the Arab world, 57% of those who pursued a bachelor's degree in the social sciences or humanities outside their home countries went to the Arab Gulf (mostly KSA, UAE, and Qatar) but the share shrank to less than 15% (the vast majority of them in Qatar) at the master's level and 0% at the doctoral level. Egypt constituted the destination of choice of 40% those who decided to stay in the region for their master's and doctoral studies, followed by Jordan, Iraq, Sudan, and Tunisia.

Outside the Arab world, Europe had the largest share of study in a non-Arab country at all study levels, with France and UK accounting for about two-thirds of cases, followed by the US and then Asia, although study in Asian countries dropped by more than half after the bachelor's level.

### *Type of University Attended*

According to the ACSS databases (ASSM 2021a), 51% of universities in the Arab region offering SSH degrees are private and the remaining 49% are public. Most if not all universities offering SSH degrees are public in some countries, such as Algeria (100% public), Libya (94%), and Saudi Arabia (81%). In other countries, the vast majority of universities offering SSH degrees are private: 97% in Lebanon, 93% in UAE, and about 75% in Kuwait, Yemen and Qatar. However, 84% of all universities in the Arab region offering doctoral programs in SSH are public.

**Table 3: Highest offered SSH degree by type of university**

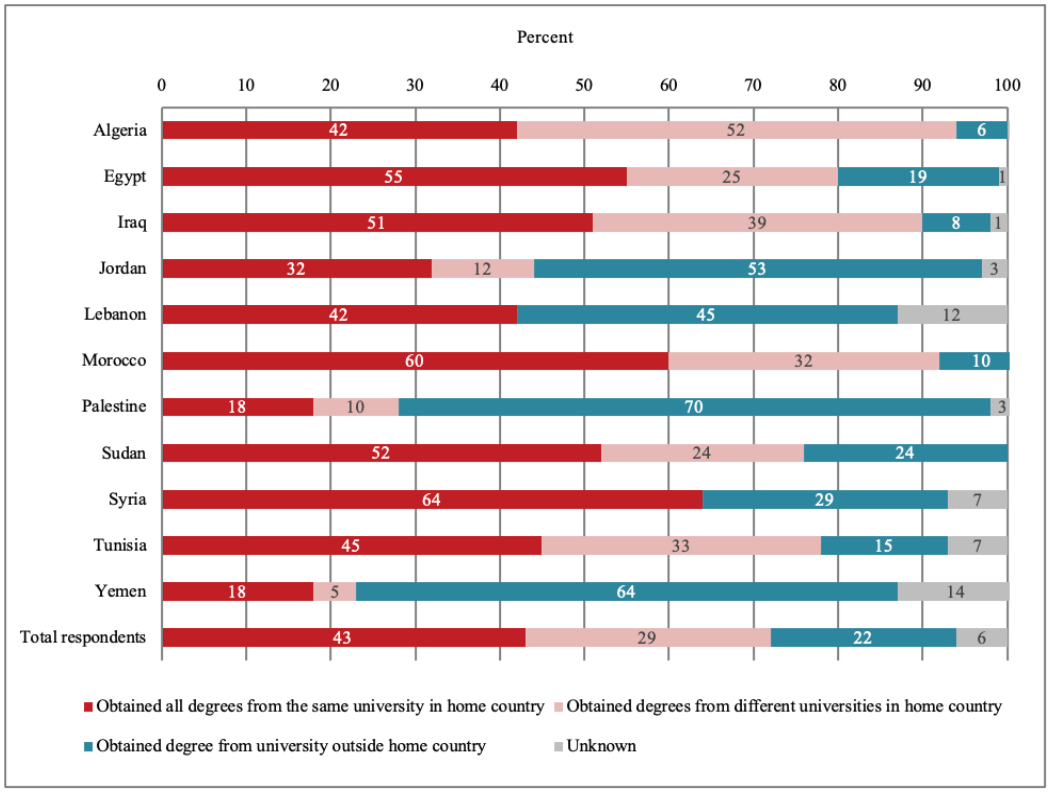
| | Highest offered SSH degree | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Bachelor's | | Master's | | Doctorate | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| **Private university** | 179 | **83** | 101 | **68** | 38 | 16 |
| **Public university** | 38 | 17 | 48 | 32 | 201 | **84** |
| **Total** | **217** | **100** | **149** | **100** | **239** | **100** |

*Source: ASSM databases (dataverse.theacss.org/dataverse/assm).*

In the survey, the vast majority of respondents received their SSH degrees from public universities (95% of bachelor's and master's degrees and 97% of doctoral degrees). Almost all bachelor's and master's degrees in Algeria, Morocco, Iraq, and Tunisia were received from public universities, and almost all doctoral degrees in Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Iraq, and Tunisia were received from public universities. Predictably, with a high number of public universities offering SSH degrees and the largest number of survey respondents, Algeria had the largest share of respondents who studied in public universities. Compared to the respondents from the Maghreb, 100% of whom received their degrees from public university, 93% of all respondents in Egypt received their degrees from public universities, and a sizeable percentage of respondents from Lebanon, Oman, and Palestine received some of their degrees from private universities. Given the predominance of public-sector institutions at higher levels of SSH academic training, it would be interesting to gauge the proportional influence of public and private higher education institutions and examine whether and why some institutions exercise a disproportionate influence, regardless of the actual numbers of their graduates.

Another major observation is that 60% of respondents who completed multiple SSH degrees (bachelor's, master's, and/or doctoral) in their home country attended the same university while 40% went to more than one.

**Figure 11: Attended universities for SSH study by citizenship**




*Source: Latreche 2020.*

Hence, SSH students from Arab countries tend to complete multiple degrees in their home country (often in the same university); this may be because all the educational needs are met locally or due to the lack of means to travel and enrich one's educational background. To be sure, students can move between universities when there is no relevant higher degree program in the institution of their first degree. Students may also move from new provincial universities to legacy universities with stronger and more established and specialized degree programs. In some cases, the primary movement between degrees is to universities outside the home country. However, the motivations for such movement may not be exclusively academic; the choice might also be driven by political or economic instability in the home country, and might be a stepping stone toward immigration. Apparently, the preference for staying in the same country or in the same university is also reflected in employment within the Arab region, as elaborated in the next part of this report.

## 3. Career Trajectories

### 3a. Field of Employment

More than three-quarters of respondents were employed in SSH fields at the time of the survey. This percentage varied moderately across age groups but was clearly higher among those working in universities and university-based research centers compared to those employed outside them (87% vs. 56%). Moreover, 59% of respondents reported that their last three jobs (of up to three jobs reported)[13] were all in SSH fields, 22% reported a mix between SSH-related and unrelated jobs, and only 19% reported that none of their last three jobs were related to SSH. Of those working in an SSH field at the time of the survey, 12% reported working in a field different from that of their highest SSH degree. The above figures suggest a solid level of continuity between educational formation and employment.

#### *Working Outside SSH*

Around half of respondents who were not working in an SSH-related field at the time of the survey reported working in education, both in and outside universities (governmental schools and ministries of education in this case), followed by administration, media, and communication. Employment in linguistics, law, and business management was also more reported in universities, while administration, media, and communication were more common outside the university setting. In sheer numbers, the largest number of respondents working in non-SSH jobs had their highest SSH degrees in sociology, followed by psychology, political science, and geography. University-based respondents more often came from a psychology, literature, or economics background, while the opposite was true for political science and geography.

However, the likelihood of working in a non-SSH field, measured as a percentage of respondents in any one field, was highest among respondents who had their highest SSH degrees in cultural studies, followed by religious studies, psychology, literature, development studies, then political science, gender studies, geography, regional studies, sociology, philosophy, and demography. The respondents who were least likely to work outside their fields were archeologists and anthropologists, followed by historians and

[13] Asked to indicate their last three main job positions, half of all respondents reported only one, more than one-third reported two, and 13% reported three. It is not clear whether respondents reported on a "job" as a position title or an institution, but based on the relatively long average times in jobs reported (12 years), it seems to be the latter, in which case promotions within a same institution were not considered as different job positions by respondents and were thus not reported separately. That some respondents may have reported their entire employment in an institution (irrespective of the different ranks held in it) as one position might explain the limited proportions of those who reported two and three jobs.

economists. Overall, these numbers are small, and no conclusive results can be drawn from them. However, it is safe to conclude that education is a natural destination for many holders of SSH degrees. Some of the other non-related jobs, such as in media and communications, are also logical employment destinations. Another reasonable conclusion is that, with variation among different Arab countries, some SSH fields are less recognized than others. As such, relevant employment opportunities for graduates of fields like cultural studies are less common than for other more established fields

**Table 4: Employment outside SSH by educational background**

| Highest SSH degree | Number of respondents with their highest SSH degree in the field | Percent working outside SSH |
|---|---|---|
| **Anthropology** | 39 | 8 |
| **Archeology** | 29 | 7 |
| **Cultural studies** | 21 | 57 |
| **Demography** | 18 | 17 |
| **Development studies** | 21 | 24 |
| **Economics** | 108 | 13 |
| **Gender studies** | 15 | 20 |
| **Geography** | 64 | 20 |
| **History** | 63 | 10 |
| **Literature** | 80 | 26 |
| **Philosophy** | 43 | 19 |
| **Political sciences** | 161 | 21 |
| **Psychology** | 106 | 28 |
| **Regional studies** | 10 | 20 |
| **Religious studies** | 11 | 36 |
| **Sociology** | 291 | 20 |

*Source: Analysis by the ASSM of the survey data.*

**Table 5: Field of employment and educational background of respondents working outside SSH**

| | Employment field | % | SSH educational background | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **University-based respondents** | Education | 52 | Sociology | 20 |
| | Languages or Linguistics | 12 | Psychology | 18 |
| | Administration | 9 | Literature | 16 |
| | Law | 6 | Political sciences | 12 |
| | Media/Communication | 6 | Economics | 10 |
| | Business Management | 5 | Other | 24 |
| | Other | 10 | | |
| **Non-university-based respondents** | Education | 42 | Sociology | 34 |
| | Administration | 23 | Political sciences | 19 |
| | Media/Communication | 10 | Psychology | 10 |
| | Other | 15 | Geography | 10 |
| | | | Other | 27 |

*Source: Analysis by the ASSM of the survey data.*

### *Working in SSH without a Field-Specific Degree*

Less than 10% of respondents reported working in an SSH field they had no degree in, and this was more common among women than men. The largest percentages (though not actual numbers) had their highest SSH degrees in anthropology or development studies (both at 31%). However, the most popular destination for SSH employment outside one's field of specialization was also in development studies, suggesting a disconnect between academic training and employment opportunities in this particular field. The respondents who were least likely to work outside their specific fields had their highest degrees in psychology, philosophy, history, economics, archeology, and political science. Once again, the numbers are small and do not allow for definitive conclusions. Yet, since most respondents were based in universities, the results predictably suggest that there is little mobility across disciplinary lines within higher education institutions.

### *Moving between SSH Fields*

Only 8% of respondents reported working in different SSH fields over their last three jobs (up to three reported). The most common shift was between development studies and economics, which makes sense given the affinity of these two fields. However, the

overall number of such shifts remains low, suggesting that SSH career paths, at least in universities, follow inflexible trajectories.

### 3b. Country of Employment

A majority of all respondents (95%) working in the social sciences or humanities at the time of completing the survey were employed in their home countries, while 5% were working in another Arab country. This percentage increased with age and was higher for men than women (6% vs. 3%) as well as for those not affiliated with universities compared to their affiliated counterparts (9% vs. 4%). A slightly higher number of respondents (9%) reported that at least one of their last three SSH-related jobs (up to three jobs reported) were outside their home countries: 6% in another Arab country and 2% in a non-Arab country. Interestingly, women were more likely to have previously worked in the social sciences or humanities in a non-Arab country compared to men (2.4% vs. 1.5%). As for work location outside home country, 85% of those who opted for another Arab country were employed in GCC countries, specifically in Saudi Arabia, followed by Qatar and the UAE. On the other hand, the US was the main destination for those who had previously worked in the social sciences or humanities outside the Arab region (45%), followed by Europe (40%).

These numbers are too small to make definitive conclusions, but they suggest that the fortunes of social scientists and humanists in the Arab region are largely tied to home country, and that efforts to bolster career opportunities must be homegrown. Additionally, the long periods that respondents spent in the same job (12 years on average) suggests low job mobility and, by extension, that there are not many more appealing alternatives available to social scientists and humanists, whether in or outside academia. Further examination is needed to better assess academic job security.

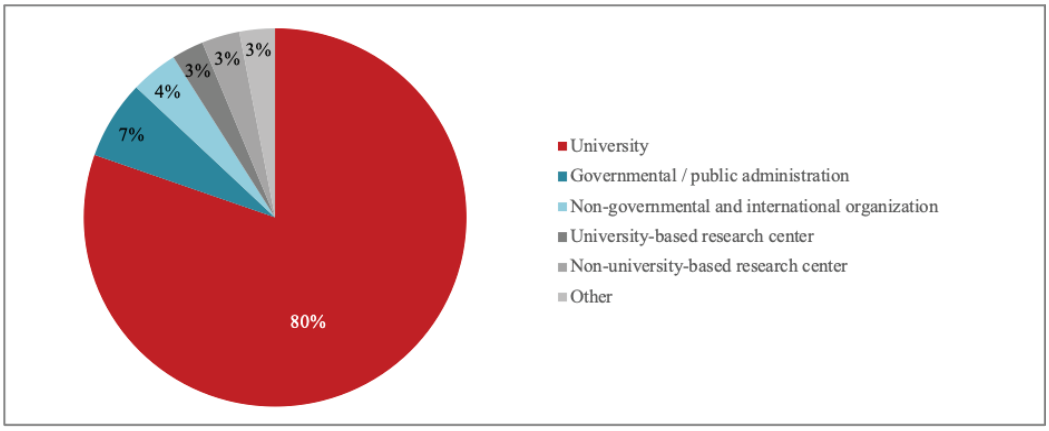
The fortunes of social scientists and humanists in the Arab region are largely tied to home country, and efforts to bolster career opportunities must be homegrown.

### 3c. Employing Institutions

Of respondents working in SSH at the time of the survey, 83% were university-based (80% in universities and 3% in university-based research centers), followed by 7% in government and public administrations, then 3% in non-university-based research centers. Very small numbers reported working at national, regional, and international NGOs as well as international organizations (1% in each). Although 83% of all respondents worked in public institutions (including public universities), and only 17% worked in private institutions (including private universities and NGOs), the share of

government and public administration employment seems relatively low. If this figure is representative, then it suggests that SSH training does not sufficiently inform or rationalize governance and policy.[14]

**Figure 12: Employing institutions for respondents working in social sciences or humanities**




*Source: Analysis by the ASSM of the survey data.*

### *Demographic Determinants*

The survey reveals several determinants of the distribution of employing institutions for social scientists and humanists.

Looking at SSH employing institutions by age, respondents working in universities were generally older than respondents employed in other sectors. 88% of respondents in the age bracket 45–64 have standard teaching jobs in universities, along with 80% of those ages 35–44. However, only 71% of those ages 65 and above, and 61% of those under 35 work in universities. On the other hand, the percentage of those working in research centers didn't exceed 5% across all age categories and was highest for those under 35 and 65 and over (5%). Along similar lines, government employment is highest for those under age 35 and decreases steadily with age (until 64). These numbers suggest that most surveyed respondents prefer to work in universities, but the share of university positions is smaller for younger social scientists and humanists and increases with age and experience. As such, employment in government or research centers seems to be the second-best option for respondents while they try to secure a standard teaching university appointment.

[14] Additionally, if, as Latreche (2020) argues, the public sector (including state universities and research centers) is the natural employment destination for social scientists, then it is reasonable to measure the success of the social sciences against the success of state projects. If so, then to some extent the failure of the state is a reflection of the failure of the social sciences in rationalizing and guiding state policies.

**Table 6: Employing institution for respondents working in SSH by age**

| | | Employing institution (%) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | University | University-based research center | Non-university-based research center | Government or public administration | Other | Total |
| Age | Under 35 | 61 | 5 | 4 | 15 | 15 | 100 |
| | 35–44 | 80 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 100 |
| | 45–54 | 88 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 100 |
| | 55–64 | 88 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 100 |
| | 65 and over | 71 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 14 | 100 |

*Source: Analysis by the ASSM of the survey data.*

Moving to employing institutions by education level, 88% of respondents with doctoral degrees working SSH-related fields were employed at universities at the time of the survey (compared to only 4% in research centers, whether university/non-university-based),[15] whereas higher percentages of master's degree holders worked at non-university-based research centers (7% compared to 2–3% for those with a bachelor's and doctorate). Beyond academia and research, only 1% of holders of SSH doctoral degrees who worked in the field were employed in NGOs, compared to 7% and 8% of those whose highest degrees were bachelor's or master's. This suggests that a standard teaching university position may be preferable to working at research centers or other settings for doctoral degree holders compared to those with lower degrees.

**Table 7: Employing institution for respondents working in SSH by education level**

| | | Employing institution (%) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | University | University-based research center | Non-university-based research center | NGO/ international organization | Other | Total |
| Highest SSH degree | Bachelor's | 72 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 15 | 100 |
| | Master's | 54 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 28 | 100 |
| | Doctorate | 88 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 100 |

*Source: Analysis by the ASSM of the survey data.*

[15] In the employment section and unless stated otherwise, research centers refer to university- as well non-university-based ones.

On the other hand, 68% of respondents who received at least one SSH degree outside the Arab world and who were working in the field at the time of the survey were employed at universities, compared to 82% of those who received all their degrees in their home country and 86% of those who received at least one degree from another Arab country. Of those who received at least one degree from outside the Arab world, 9% worked in research centers, 6% in NGOs, and 7% in governmental public administration positions. In comparison, of those who received at least one degree from another Arab country, 11% worked in research centers, and 2% in governmental public administration positions, while none reported working in NGOs. As for those who only received degrees from their own home countries, 5% worked in research centers, 1% in NGOs, and 7% in governmental public administration positions. These figures suggest that national universities are more likely to hire graduates from other Arab universities or from national universities than graduates with at least one degree from a non-Arab university. On the other hand, graduates who received at least one degree from another Arab country or a non-Arab country were more likely to work in research centers. Additionally, those who held at least one degree from a non-Arab country were also more likely to work in NGOs and in governmental public administration positions. As such, given the earlier conclusion that university employment is the most attractive form of employment, social scientists and humanists who hold a degree from outside the Arab world appear to be at a disadvantage, but they occupy a significant position in research centers and NGOs.

To be sure, employment patterns also vary by country. Of countries with statistically significant cohorts of respondents, Algeria had the largest percentage of SSH employment in universities at 94%, followed by Iraq (92%), Tunisia (83%), Saudi Arabia (83%), Sudan (80%), Jordan (79%), Palestine (78%), Morocco (68%), Lebanon (68%), and Egypt (58%). This obviously means that these countries provide university employment opportunities in this order. However, this could also suggest that the countries with lower percentages offer viable alternative employment opportunities. In fact, 15% of respondents in Egypt reported working in research centers, which is clearly higher than the 6% average for the whole Arab world, and 13% reported working in NGOs. Additionally, a high percentage of respondents working in SSH-related fields in governmental public administration were in Morocco (16%) and Egypt (12%).

SSH employment opportunities in universities also varied by field. Against a total average of 80% university employment across fields, only 20% of those holding a degree in development studies were employed in universities, followed by 41% in gender studies and 44% in religious studies. On the other hand, 88% of sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists were employed in universities, with above-average percentages in geography, demography, literature, and history.

### *Moving between Different Types of Institutions*

Overall, respondents who were the least likely to have had professional experiences in different types of institutions over their last three jobs (of up to three reported) were those who last worked in universities and government administrations.[16] Indeed, 37% and 22% of those currently working in universities and governmental administrations, respectively, reported a previous job in a different type of institution (mostly in governmental administrations/schools for the former and in universities for the latter). Conversely, the probability was noticeably higher for those who were last employed in research centers (59%, mostly coming from NGOs/universities) and NGOs (40%, mostly from universities and research centers). Movements between different types of NGOs were also seen. Given that respondents reported spending an average of 12 years in their current jobs and that the majority of them graduated after the year 2000, one can assume that social scientists and humanists tend to consider universities and governmental administrations at the beginning of their professional careers and/or that opportunities elsewhere are scarce following graduation.

Importantly, the above observations were replicated when analyzing all reported jobs irrespective of working field as well as when analyzing SSH-related ones exclusively. However, mobility figures were two to three times lower when SSH-related employment was looked at alone (15% for universities, 7% for governmental administrations, 33% for research centers, and 27% for NGOs); this suggests that transitions between institutions are often accompanied by a change in from an SSH field (in universities mostly as highlighted in the "Employment Field" paragraph) to a non-SSH field (outside universities) or vice versa.

It is also worth noting that 15% of all respondents reported holding two jobs simultaneously in different institutions (with this percentage being slightly lower among the university-based sample at 12%).

## 3d. University Faculty Ranks

In terms of professional ranks, one-quarter of the university-based respondents were full professors, 14% associate professors, about one-third assistant professors, and another one-third lecturers or instructors (Table 8). This parallels an international trend in higher education institutions where around 30% are lecturers or adjuncts. Despite some inconsistencies in reporting, it is possible to make some general conclusions

[16] It is likely that respondents working in governmental schools often selected governmental administration as employing institution (as almost half of non-university-based ones working in governmental administrations reported education as their employment field).

about professorial ranks. 70% of university-based respondents indicated that they held core professional appointments in universities (full professor, associate professor, assistant professor) while 30% of university educators did not occupy core professorial positions. The lower percentage of associate professors is cause for concern. Associate professors are active members of universities who typically maintain an active research agenda, benefit from relative job security, and play a vital role in administrative university services.

**Table 8: Academic rank of university-based respondents**

| | | All university-based respondents | | University-based respondents currently working in an SSH position | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | # | % | # | % |
| **University rank** | Full professor | 189 | 25 | 170 | 26 |
| | Associate professor | 105 | 14 | 96 | 15 |
| | Assistant professor | 237 | 32 | 190 | 29 |
| | Lecturer/instructor | 216 | 29 | 198 | 30 |
| | Total | 747 | 100 | 654 | 100 |

*Source: Sieverding 2020.*

Women (who constituted close to one-third of the university-based sample) had 30% lower odds of holding a high-ranking position than men. There is a clear gender imbalance in the academic social sciences and humanities, translating to, among other things, lower employment numbers and higher rates of part-time employment for female social scientists and humanists than their male counterparts.[17] Respondents with a doctoral degree and those who obtained their highest degree before 2000 were more likely to hold high-ranking positions compared to those with lower degrees and those who graduated after 2010, respectively. On a separate note, 12% of university-based respondents indicated that they held second jobs, but the responses are not sufficient to draw generalizable conclusions. Nonetheless, it is safe to assume that having a second job distracts both students and academics from dedicating their full energy to proper teaching and research.

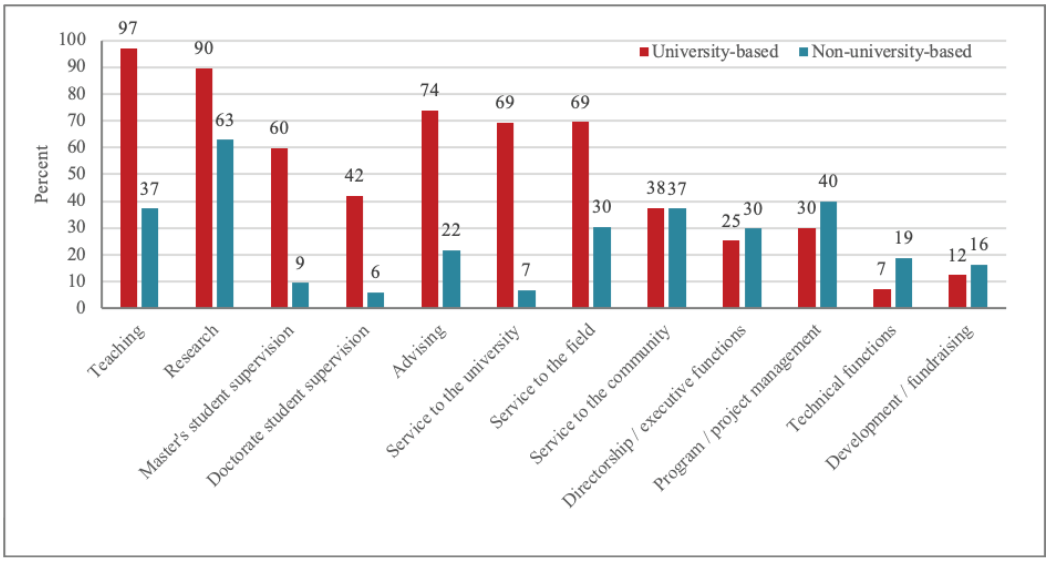
[17] Women have lower rates of transition to faculty jobs after graduate school, lower rates of promotion/tenure, and longer durations to promotion than men (Ginther and Kahn 2004; Wolfinger et al. 2008; Misra et al. 2012).

More broadly, given the focus of the survey sample on university-based social scientists and humanists, and since the majority of respondents from universities were educators, their ranks are measures of career success and in fact of job security. Needless to say, the second measure of the success of social scientists and humanists is research productivity and knowledge production, as reflected primarily in the quantity and quality of publications.

### 3e. Professional Responsibilities

Almost all respondents who were employed in the social sciences or humanities at universities or university-based research centers (97%) reported that their professional duties included teaching, and 90% reported research as part of their work. Respondents outside universities reported far lower proportions of teaching (37%) and research (63%) duties. University-based respondents also reported high rates of participation in advising and mentorship (74%), service to the university (69%), service to the field of specialty (69%), master's student supervision (60%), doctoral student supervision (42%), and service to the community (38%). In comparison, those who were not based in universities more commonly participated in project management, technical activities, and fundraising.

**Figure 13: Job duties of university-based and non-university-based respondents working in SSH**




*Source: Analysis by the ASSM of the survey data.*

That said, multiple factors appear to affect the nature of the job duties fulfilled by university-based social scientists and humanists.

### *By Gender*

Rates of university teaching, research, and general student advising were comparable for male and female respondents, but male respondents were more likely to occupy supervisory and executive positions, serve as directors or department chairs, and be involved in service functions that come with increased authority and influence. Also, a larger percentage of male respondents provided service to their field of specialty and to the community. Moreover, a lower percentage of female respondents were involved in advising students working on their master's (54% female, 63% male) or doctoral theses (37% female, 46% male).

### *By Age*

The proportions of respondents involved in certain functions varied also with age. While the portion of respondents involved in teaching and research were comparable for all age brackets, and the portion of respondents engaged in research peaked slightly for respondents aged 45–54 at 92% compared to the overall average of 90%, the portion of respondents who engaged in student mentoring was slightly higher for those under 35 and decreased from 79% for this age bracket to 76% (ages 35–44), 73% (age 45–54), and 66% (age 55 and over). Junior faculty should be protected from administrative tasks as they build their careers rather than shouldering demanding tasks that do not contribute significantly to their professional advancement.

More significant (but also expected) is the difference in rates between age groups in advising master's and doctoral theses. The proportion of respondents under 35 who advised master's theses was 26% and it dropped to 10% for doctoral thesis advising. For the 35–44 age bracket, this proportion jumps to 59% for advising master's theses and to 40% for doctoral advising. The percentage increases steadily for the next two age brackets, reaching for 70% for those over 55 for master's thesis advising and 55% for doctoral thesis advising. Similarly, the portions of respondents engaged in service to the university, to their fields, and to the community increased gradually for increasing age brackets from 54% to 76%, 55% to 77%, and 35% to 51% in each of these respective areas of service.

### *By Education Level*

University duties also varied as a function of education level, but with some unexpected results. The only areas of academic service that seem to follow a logical pattern are student mentorship and master's and doctoral thesis advising. Respondents whose highest degree was a bachelor's reported a lower share of mentorship (67%) than those with a master's (73%) or doctorate (75%). The share of bachelor's-holding

respondents seems a bit elevated, since it is hard to imagine how students with a bachelor's degree would be involved in mentoring fellow students studying for the same degree level, unless by mentoring we understand some sort of peer support.[18] Respondents whose highest degree was a master's reported a much lower share of master's thesis supervision (24%) than those whose highest degree was a doctorate (74%). As for doctoral thesis supervision, respondents with a master's degree effectively reported no doctoral thesis supervision, whereas 55% of respondents whose highest degree was a doctorate reported doctoral thesis supervision.

On the other hand, respondents whose highest degree was a bachelor's or a doctorate reported comparable levels of teaching (97% and 98%, respectively), but respondents whose highest degree was a master's reported a lower level (91%). The same pattern repeats in research (89% for bachelor's, 91% for doctorates, and 85% for master's); service to the university (69% for bachelor's, 72% for doctorates, and 49% for master's); service to the profession (64% for bachelor's, 75% for doctorates, and 42% for master's); and community service (36% for bachelor's, 40% for doctorates, and 26% for master's). These results are surprising and require explanation. Specifically, it is not clear why respondents whose highest degree was a master's, who are significantly more qualified than those whose highest degree is a bachelor's, would do less teaching, research, and service to the university and the profession. Aside from a plausible over-reporting tendency by bachelor's degree holders, given that more than 60% of master's degree holders were pursuing doctoral studies at the time of the survey (compared to one-fifth of bachelor's degree holders who were pursuing master's studies), one explanation could be that master's degree holders pursuing a doctoral degree might not be inclined to expend much effort on any tasks aside from their studies.

### *By Country of Employment*

Duties also varied by country, which might explain some of the above anomalies. The vast majority of respondents (97%) with SSH degrees who were based at universities were involved in teaching. Only respondents from Lebanon were clearly below the average, at 92%. Country differences for research are larger. The average involvement in research for all Arab countries was 90%. The countries above this range were Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Sudan, and Tunisia. The countries below this average were Iraq (84%), Palestine (79%), Lebanon (77%), and Saudi Arabia (71%).[19]

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[18] Surprisingly, respondents whose highest degree was a bachelor's also reported some master's and even doctoral thesis advising (10% and 5%, respectively). These figures must have resulted from some error in understanding the survey question. More reasonable are the answers of respondents whose highest degrees are a master's or doctorate.

[19] Only countries with more than 20 respondents were included in this analysis; the countries that are not referenced here all had fewer than 20 relevant respondents.

Student mentorship also varied by country. The average share of involvement by university-based respondents working in an SSH field was 74%. Respondents from Algeria, Egypt, Palestine, and Saudi Arabia reported higher-than-average figures, whereas lower-than-average figures were reported by respondents from Jordan (71%), Iraq (70%), Morocco (68%), Sudan (63%), Tunisia (56%), and Lebanon (54%). Variations were even more pronounced for master's and doctoral thesis supervision. For master's thesis supervision, the overall average was 60%. Percentages were above average for Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia. Respondents who reported below-average figures were from Algeria (57%), Sudan (50%), Saudi Arabia (48%), Lebanon (46%), and Palestine (43%). For doctoral thesis supervision, the average was 42%, with only Algeria, Egypt, and Morocco reporting figures above average, and the following countries reporting below-average figures: Iraq (37%), Lebanon (31%), Sudan (23%), Tunisia (23%), Jordan (23%), Saudi Arabia (14%), and Palestine (7%). The very low figure for Palestine is perhaps due to the difficult conditions of Palestinian higher education institutions under occupation.

Respondents also reported different figures for service beyond immediate teaching and research functions. For service to the university, the average was at 69%. Respondents from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan reported above-average figures, whereas below-average figures were reported for Iraq (68%), Palestine (68%), Morocco (56%), Tunisia (56%), and Lebanon (54%). Service to the field/profession also varied by country, with an average of 70%. Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Sudan were above average. Respondents reported below-average shares in Egypt (69%), Iraq (68%), Tunisia (59%), Palestine (55%), and Saudi Arabia (52%). Finally, for service to the community, the average was 38%; Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Sudan were above average, while only Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and Tunisia were below average at 33%, 22%, and 21%, respectively.

Of interest in the above figures is that Algeria is close to the average in one case but otherwise always above average, whereas Lebanon is always below average. The only figures that were equal or above average for Lebanon were service to the field (77%) and to the community (39%). It may be that, with a large number of private universities compared to the population size, Lebanese universities can afford to hire social scientists and humanists without requiring as many teaching or research duties from them. It is also interesting that respondents from Lebanon reported the lowest share of service to the university, in addition to the consistent lower-than-average responses for university-based teaching and research functions, but had an inflated sense of their service to the profession or community. Among other things, these results suggest that, with occasional exceptions, it is not possible to assume that private university education is of a higher quality than education in public universities.

### *By Academic Field*

Another variable that affected duties performed in universities and university-based research centers was field of study. The overall proportion of respondents who worked in the social sciences or humanities in universities and reported teaching was at 97%, research at 90%, student mentoring at 74%, master's thesis advising at 60%, doctoral thesis advising at 42%, service to the university at 69%, service to the profession at 69%, and community service at 38%. If we drill down to the level of individual discipline, some of these functions are subject to structural factors that can only be surmised from anecdotal evidence but cannot be empirically validated from available data. For example, it makes sense that the proportions of doctoral thesis supervision are lower when there are not as many doctoral programs in a particular field. In fact, the small number of respondents in some fields and disciplines suggests that these fields may not have high representation in universities, and in all cases, the small numbers reduce our ability to make statistically valid conclusions for these fields.

With the above in mind, we can divide the fields for which the respondents reported work in university setting into three groups. The first includes the four fields for which we have the largest number of respondents (in the following decreasing order of prevalence): sociology, political science, economics, and psychology. It is safe to assume that these fields have the largest representation in universities, if not in terms of number of departments and programs, at least in terms of the numbers of respondents with degrees or working in these majors. Of the total number of survey respondents, the shares who reported working in universities in these field were 92% for sociology, 89% for psychology, 83% for political science, and 78% for economics (Table 9). As the most standard and traditional social science field, the high proportion of sociologists working in universities is predictable. On the other hand, economics is the most recent programmatic addition to universities, but the high proportion of university employment in this field is a function of its popularity, which in turn is a function of the position it occupies on the border between the social sciences and the professions. University-based respondents in all four fields reported close-to-average teaching duties (95–100% compared to a 97% average) and higher-than-average research activities (91–96% compared to a 90% average). Respondents in these four fields also reported close to or higher-than-average proportions of student mentorship, master's and doctoral thesis advising, and service to the university, profession, and community.

The second group includes traditional disciplines that constitute the backbone of academic social sciences and humanities and for which the number of respondents is not as high as the first four, but sufficiently high as to be statistically instructive.

This group includes the following fields (in order of prevalence): literature, history, geography, philosophy, anthropology, and archeology.

Of the total number of survey respondents, the shares who reported working in universities were highest for anthropology (92%), geography (87%), literature (86%), and history (84%), followed by philosophy (79%) and archeology (74%). University-employed respondents in four of these fields (archeology, geography, history, and philosophy) reported close to/higher-than-average teaching duties (96–100%), but only philosophy and geography reported close to/higher-than-average research activities (97% and 90%, respectively, compared to the 90% average). The proportions of researchers among respondents in the other fields were 86% for anthropology, 83% for literature, 80% for archeology, and 77% for history. The ranges for teaching and research for most of these fields are close to average, which makes sense for fields and disciplines that enjoy the advantage of being traditional and well established in academia, but also fields that offer fewer employment opportunities outside universities. The only two anomalies are the proportions of university-employed respondents involved in research in philosophy and history. At 97%, philosophy's share in research is well above the 90% average. This may be due to the fact that this field has little practical application outside academic research. On the other hand, it is somewhat surprising that the proportion of university-employed historians reporting research activities was lower than the average (77% compared to 90%). This may suggest that many universities employ historians to provide basic teaching functions in service courses but do not offer as many opportunities for research and advanced degree training.

In both of the above groups of fields, there is a direct correlation between research and master's and especially doctoral advising. Most respondents in fields reporting higher-than-average research activities also reported higher-than-average thesis advising. Similarly, most respondents in fields reporting lower-than-average research also reported lower than average thesis advising. For example, in the above two (statistically significant) groups of fields, the proportion of respondents in philosophy who reported the highest research activity (97% compared to 90% average) also reported the highest proportion of doctoral thesis advising (57% compared to the 42% average). On the other hand, the proportion of respondents in history who reported the lowest research activity (77% compared to 90% average) also reported the lowest proportion of master's and doctoral thesis advising (43% and 21%, respectively, compared to 60% and 42% averages). Additionally, while the proportions of respondents reporting student mentorship are close to or higher than the average for most of the above fields, the proportion is at its lowest in the field of history (60%, compared to a 74% average), as are the proportions for service to the university (62%, compared to a 69% average) and service to the profession (55%, compared to a 69% average). The

proportion of university-employed historians reporting community service is also low (28%, compared to a 38% average), although the proportions are lower for archeology (25%), philosophy (23%), and literature (17%).

**Table 9: Job duties of university-based social scientists and humanists by field**

| | Employed in universities | | Percent of university-employed respondents fulfilling each job duty | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Work field** | **Number** | **Percent of all respondents employed in the field** | **Teaching** | **Research** | **Student mentoring** | **MA advising** | **PhD advising** | **Service to university** | **Service to profession** | **Service to community** |
| **All SSH fields** | 712 | 83 | 97 | 90 | 74 | 60 | 42 | 69 | 69 | 38 |
| **Group 1** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sociology | 207 | 92 | 95 | 91 | 74 | 64 | 49 | 69 | 72 | 36 |
| Political science | 105 | 83 | 99 | 90 | 77 | 56 | 38 | 66 | 69 | 35 |
| Economics | 76 | 78 | 97 | 96 | 75 | 61 | 45 | 68 | 68 | 42 |
| Psychology | 68 | 89 | 100 | 93 | 74 | 59 | 51 | 76 | 79 | 49 |
| **Group 2** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Literature | 53 | 91 | 94 | 83 | 83 | 60 | 28 | 66 | 64 | 17 |
| History | 47 | 84 | 100 | 77 | 60 | 43 | 21 | 62 | 55 | 28 |
| Geography | 41 | 89 | 98 | 90 | 76 | 66 | 39 | 78 | 68 | 61 |
| Philosophy | 30 | 79 | 97 | 97 | 67 | 57 | 57 | 73 | 73 | 23 |
| Anthropology | 22 | 92 | 95 | 86 | 77 | 59 | 32 | 68 | 59 | 45 |
| Archeology | 20 | 74 | 100 | 80 | 75 | 60 | 40 | 80 | 80 | 25 |
| **Group 3** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Demography | 13 | 93 | 92 | 92 | 77 | 62 | 54 | 62 | 77 | 46 |
| Gender studies | 8 | 47 | 88 | 88 | 50 | 38 | 25 | 50 | 50 | 63 |
| Cultural studies | 7 | 78 | 100 | 100 | 57 | 71 | 29 | 57 | 57 | 43 |
| Development studies | 7 | 28 | 100 | 71 | 29 | 71 | 43 | 71 | 43 | 71 |
| Regional studies | 4 | 80 | 100 | 100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 75 | 50 | 25 |
| Religious studies | 4 | 44 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 50 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 25 |

*Source: Calculations by the author based on the survey data.*

These figures suggest that, compared to other traditional SSH disciplines, historians in Arab universities are more teachers and less researchers, and that they are least invested in academically and professionally reproducing their field. This also raises the question: Who is writing national and regional histories? More broadly, are Arab historians engaged in writing global histories from the perspective of the Arab world?

The third group of fields includes SSH disciplines that tend to be more recent additions to university academic programs (and, as such, are not as widely represented among them) and for which we have the lowest number of respondents: demography, gender studies, cultural studies, development studies, regional studies, and religious studies. The small numbers (10–21 overall respondents, and only 4–13 university-employed respondents, in each field) greatly limit the conclusions that we can confidently draw about these relatively new multidisciplinary fields of study (both inside and outside universities).

## 4. Research and Knowledge Production

The dramatic increase in the number of Arab universities in the last two decades has had different effects on different disciplines and fields, with newly introduced fields presumably providing new employment opportunities. But what is the effect of the increased number of universities and the attendant increase in SSH research on academic careers and research productivity? To further focus the question, is there a correlation between the large increase in the number of universities and SSH departments on the one hand, and the production of SSH research, on the other, in terms of both quantity and—to the extent that this can be gleaned from external indicators—quality? We will explore some of these questions in the qualitative sections of the report, but first, let's see what we can learn from the survey.

### 4a. Who Is Involved in Research?

Of all respondents, 93% reported involvement in research in the last 10 years. This percentage dropped to 86% for SSH research exclusively. Merely 7% of the latter were operating in fields not related to any of their degrees.

The highest regional proportions for engagement in SSH research in the last ten years were in the Egypt/Sudan region (91%), followed by the Maghreb, where proportions were equal to the average (86%), and then the Mashreq at 83%. Most countries with a high number of responses (more than 50) reported research proportions close to or higher than the average: Iraq at 96%, Tunisia at 94%, Egypt at 93%, Palestine at 91%, Sudan at 90%, Algeria and Morocco at 85% each, and Jordan at 83%. Most countries

with smaller numbers of respondents reported lower proportions. For example, out of 33 respondents from Lebanon, 58% reported conducting research in an SSH field; and out of 22 respondents from Yemen, 64% reported such research (Table 10).

**Table 10: Involvement in SSH research by country of citizenship**

| | Involvement in SSH research in the past 10 years | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | # | % | *Out of* |
| **Algeria** | 272 | 85 | *320* |
| **Bahrain** | 1 | 100 | *1* |
| **Egypt** | 123 | 93 | *132* |
| **Iraq** | 66 | 96 | *69* |
| **Jordan** | 50 | 83 | *60* |
| **Kuwait** | 2 | 67 | *3* |
| **Lebanon** | 19 | 58 | *33* |
| **Libya** | 6 | 75 | *8* |
| **Mauritania** | 1 | 50 | *2* |
| **Morocco** | 146 | 85 | *171* |
| **Oman** | 1 | 100 | *1* |
| **Palestine** | 74 | 91 | *81* |
| **Saudi Arabia** | 7 | 64 | *11* |
| **Somalia** | 0 | 0 | *3* |
| **Sudan** | 35 | 90 | *39* |
| **Syria** | 11 | 85 | *13* |
| **Tunisia** | 51 | 94 | *54* |
| **United Arab Emirates** | 1 | 100 | *1* |
| **Yemen** | 14 | 64 | *22* |

*Source: Analysis by the ASSM of the survey data.*

The percentage of respondents involved in SSH research increased somewhat with age: 83% for those under 35, 85% for ages 35–44, 88% for ages 45–64, and 87% for those 65 or older. Male respondents reported higher percentages of SSH research involvement (88%) than female respondents (81%). Also, the percentage of involvement in research in SSH in the last 10 years was predictably highest for respondents whose terminal SSH degree was a doctorate (92%), compared to 77% for those with master's degrees and

75% for those whose highest degree was a bachelor's. A plausible explanation for this pattern could be the higher proportion of employment outside universities and research centers among master's degree holders, especially that some terminal master's degrees are geared toward enhancing employment opportunities (what is often referred to as a professional master's degree) and do not necessarily have a research focus.

On the other hand, a higher percentage of university-based respondents, including in university-based research centers, were involved in SSH research (89%), compared to those who were not affiliated with universities or university-based institutions (76%). Although their numbers are not high in comparison to university-based social scientists and humanists, respondents working in non-university-based research institutions reported the highest percentage of research involvement in the last 10 years (94%), higher than the percentage reported by respondents employed at university-based research centers (73%). After university employment, the second-largest group of respondents was employed in governmental or public administration, and the percentage of those who reported involvement in SSH research was 73%. This percentage was lower for the much smaller number of social scientists and humanists employed in an international agency or organization (63%). The percentages of respondents reporting research involvement who were employed by national or international NGOs were 83% and 84%, respectively—much higher than those employed by regional NGOs (64%). As such, the highest percentages of respondents involved in research were employed at non-university-based research centers, followed by universities.

There also seems to be some correlation between the country from which at least one SSH degree is obtained and the likelihood of involvement in SSH research. The average percentage for those who received their degrees from their home countries was 85%, followed by 89% who received at least one degree from a non-Arab country. The highest percentage was for those who received at least one degree from an Arab country other than their own home country (92%). This suggests that obtaining a degree in another Arab country exposes the respondents to accessible regional venues for conducting research and publishing. However, it is hard to make solid conclusions based solely on these figures.

### 4b. Geographical Scope of Research

Comparable proportions of male (68%) and female (64%) respondents indicated that their research had a national focus, in most cases meaning their own country of citizenship (94%). Those whose research had a global focus also reported comparable percentages (male 36% and female 35%). However, different proportions were reported for male and female researchers whose research had a regional focus (male 56% and female 41%). Among those who reported that their research had a regional focus, 60% covered North

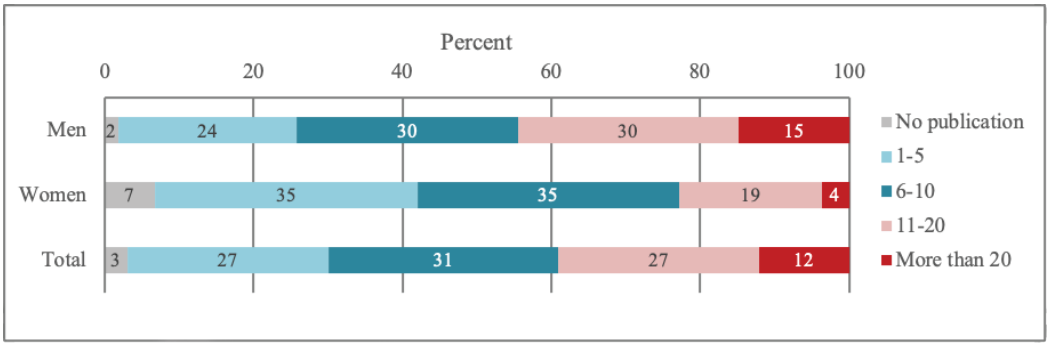
Africa and 17% Western Asia. Of the specific countries studied, those in North Africa were the most covered (Morocco 46%, Tunisia 45%, Algeria 45%, Egypt 43%), followed by Jordan (26%), Saudi Arabia (22%), Palestine (21%), Syria (20%), Lebanon (20%), Iraq (20%), Libya (19%), UAE (15%), Qatar (14%), Sudan (14%), Mauritania (14%), Kuwait (13%), Yemen (11%), Oman (11%), Bahrain (9%), Somalia (5%), Djibouti (2%), and Comoros (2%). Female respondents were two to four times less likely to conduct research on Arab Gulf countries, Libya, and Mauritania; they were, however, more likely to study Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria.

Of the respondents who reported doing national research, about 6% reported working on countries other than their own country of citizenship. The highest numbers were from Egypt (7 respondents total, amounting to 8% of Egyptian respondents), Morocco (6, 6%), Algeria (5, 3%), Iraq (5, 11%), and Jordan (4, 13%). 29% of respondents reported working on another region. The highest numbers were from Jordan (23 total, amounting to 70% of Jordanian respondents), Egypt (21, 31%), Palestine (20, 54%), Sudan (16, 73%), Iraq (9, 29%), Morocco (8, 9%), Yemen (5, 56%), and Tunisia (4, 16%). As such, Arab socials scientists and humanists primarily conduct research on local topics, and there is a definite shortage in regional and international research. This is probably due to the lack of resources or opportunities for international collaborations to support fieldwork outside respondents' home countries.

### 4c. Publication Volume

Of the 876 respondents involved in SSH research in the past 10 years, 97% published their findings at least once. This figure was higher for men compared to women (98% vs. 93%). Of those who published their findings, 62% reported 10 publications or less, whereas 38% reported more than 10 publications. Total publication volume neared 9,000 publications over this period. Figure 14 shows a more detailed distribution of publication volume.

**Figure 14: SSH publication volume over the past 10 years by gender**




*Source: Analysis by the ASSM of the survey data.*

A more instructive approach to measuring research output would be to assess the distribution of publication volume across age, gender, country of citizenship, employing institutions, highest received degree, location of highest degree, and, perhaps most importantly, the field of research.

Publication volume varied by age. Expectedly, the proportion of respondents reporting more than 10 publications in the last 10 years was lowest for those under 35 at 17%. The proportion increased by age, with 33% of those ages 35–44 and about 50% for those above age 45 reporting more than 10 publications. The proportion of female respondents who had more than 10 publications in the last 10 years was 23%, compared to 45% for male respondents. This may be due to the higher proportion of female respondents in the lower age brackets.

Country-wise, the proportions of respondents who had more than 10 publications in the past 10 years were highest in the Egypt/Sudan region (44%), followed by the Mashreq (41%), and was lowest in the Maghreb (35%). For countries that had significant numbers of respondents, the highest proportions above the 38% average were for Jordan (60%), Iraq (54%), Sudan (54%), Morocco (42%), and Egypt (41%). The countries that reported below-average proportions were Algeria (32%), Tunisia (31%), Palestine (22%), and Lebanon (21%). The numbers of respondents from other countries were too small to allow for reliable statistical conclusions.

Of university-based respondents, 43% produced more than 10 publications in the past 10 years, compared to only 24% for those working outside universities. Proportions also varied by the highest degree level. 37% of respondents whose highest degree was a bachelor's reported more than 10 publications in the last 10 years. The proportion drops to 11% for respondents whose highest degree was a master's, and increases to 44% for respondents whose highest degree was a doctorate. The higher doctorate share is commonsensical, but the large gap between the bachelor's share (37%) and master's share (11%) calls for explanation. It might be that some respondents whose highest degree is a bachelor's and who are employed by academic and research institutions are more likely to publish in outlets that do not require high academic standards. It is also possible that those whose highest degree is a master's opted for this degree in order to enhance their professional opportunities. Alternatively, if the respondents with master's degrees are continuing their studies and preparing for doctoral degrees while also working to make a living, then it is very likely that such respondents do not have time to do anything other than doctoral thesis research. Finally, it is possible that respondents with master's degrees are more familiar with the standard requirements for academic publication and are therefore reluctant to rush into publishing without meeting these standards. Interestingly, irrespective of the level of the highest obtained degree, respondents who had earned their degree outside the Arab region reported significantly fewer publications compared to their Arab region–based counterparts.

In terms of research field, respondents in philosophy and development studies were the most likely to report more than 10 publications in the past 10 years (63% and 53%, respectively). This percentage was also above average for economics and political science (45% each), close to average (38%) for geography, history, and psychology, and clearly below average for the all remaining research fields, including sociology (33%) (Table 12).

### 4d. Publication Outlets

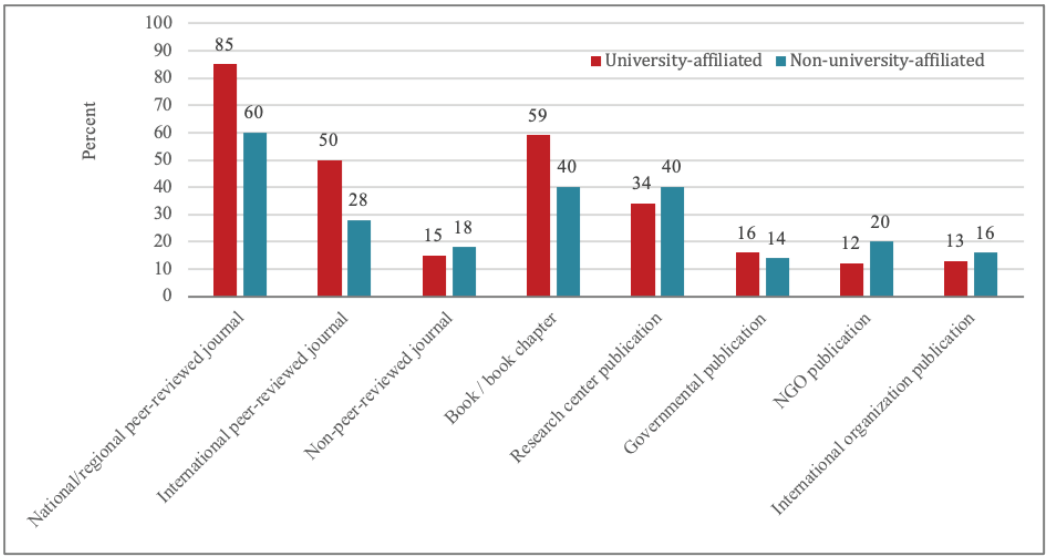
Survey respondents most commonly published their SSH research findings in national or regional peer-reviewed journals (79% of respondents), books (54%), international peer-reviewed journals (44%), and research center publications (36%).

#### *Peer-Reviewed Journals*

Publication in peer-reviewed journals is perhaps the most recognized criterion for measuring the quality of knowledge production. Of survey respondents involved in SSH research in the past 10 years, 79% reported publishing in national or regional peer-reviewed journals. The proportions varied by age, with 65% of those under age 35, 79% of those ages 35–44, 83% of those ages 45–54, and 84% for those above 55. The gender differential is also clear, with 82% of male respondents compared to 71% of female respondents reporting publishing in national or regional peer-reviewed journals. In terms of region, the highest percentage of respondents who reported publishing in these outlets were in the Maghreb at 85%, with a notable decrease to 72% for respondents in the Egypt/Sudan region and 71% for respondents from the Mashreq. Moreover, 74% of respondents whose highest degree was a bachelor's reported publishing in national or regional peer-reviewed journals. The percentage drops to 56% of respondents whose highest degree was a master's, and increases again to 86% of respondents with doctoral degrees. Once again, it seems that compared to respondents whose highest degree was a bachelor's or a doctorate, those whose highest degree was a master's might be too busy working on their dissertations, or perhaps even working while studying, with little time left to publish in peer-reviewed journals. Moreover, 85% of university-affiliated respondents reported publishing in these competitive outlets, compared to 60% of those who did not have a university affiliation. Last, only 78% of all respondents whose main research interest was in the social sciences reported publishing in national or regional peer-reviewed journals, compared to 82% of those who specialize in humanities fields.[20]

[20] In this section, the "humanities" refers to the fields of history, archaeology, philosophy, literature, cultural studies, and religious studies while all other reported publication fields are grouped under "social sciences" (sociology, demography, anthropology, psychology, geography, gender studies, economics, political science, development studies, and regional studies).

**Figure 15: Publication outlets among university-based and non-university-based SSH researchers**




*Source: Analysis by the ASSM of the survey data.*

Of particular interest is publishing in international peer-reviewed journals, which, among other things, suggests meeting more stringent publication standards, and is also indicative of the level of integration within international scholarly networks. A total of 390 respondents reported international peer-reviewed journal publications, compared to a total of 693 respondents who reported publishing in national or regional peer-reviewed journals. Both figures are much higher than the number of respondents who reported publishing in journals that were not peer-reviewed (140). Again, these numbers gain added significance because although a majority of respondents were educated and employed in their home countries, close to half saw value in publishing in an international outlet. The proportion of university-affiliated respondents who published in international peer-reviewed journals (50%) was much higher than those who did not have a university affiliation (28%), suggesting that at least part of the reason to publish internationally is connected to university requirements or expectations. An average of 44% of all respondents reported publishing in an international peer-reviewed journal, including 32% of those under age 35, 43% for the 35–44 age bracket, 48% for the 45–54 age bracket, and 52% for those ages 55 and over. The proportions of male and female respondents publishing in international peer-reviewed journals were comparable, at 45% and 44%, respectively.

Regionally, respondents in the Mashreq were most likely to publish in international peer-reviewed journals (48%), followed by respondents in the Maghreb (45%) and then in the Egypt/Sudan region (37%). It is not clear if this means that social scientists and humanists in the Maghreb and Mashreq are more integrated into international networks,

or if there are more alternative local publication outlets available to respondents in the Egypt/Sudan region. In terms of the highest degree, respondents with a doctorate predictably reported the highest proportion (52%) of publishing in international peer-reviewed journals, but as noted earlier for publication in general, those whose highest degree was a bachelor's reported a higher proportion (37%) of such publications than those with a master's (22%).

This gap is especially noteworthy because it suggests that respondents with bachelor's degrees are already familiar with the publication requirements of international journals and, for some reason, are more likely to publish in these outlets than respondents with a master's degree. Moreover, the proportion of respondents in the humanities who reported publishing in international peer-reviewed journals (45%) was almost the same as the proportion of those in the social sciences (44%). Within the social sciences, those researching in sociology and related fields (anthropology, demography, gender studies, geography, and psychology) reported higher proportions than those in economics, political science, and related fields (development studies and regional studies) (46% vs. 41%). Finally, respondents who received their highest degree outside the Arab world as well as those proficient in English were significantly more likely to publish in international peer-reviewed journals. As reflected in those results, a sizeable proportion of Arab social scientists and humanists recognize the particular importance of publishing in international peer-reviewed journals, despite the relative challenges of getting published internationally. These challenges include, among others, the need to familiarize oneself with the diverse editorial criteria of various international journals, the long waiting periods that are often encountered when publishing in these journals, and the difficulty of convincing international journals to publish on specialized regional topics, often considered outside the mainstream.

The combined number of respondents who reported publishing in peer-reviewed journals (1,083) is almost eight times the number of those who reported publishing in non-peer-reviewed journals (140). However, if we add some of the other publications that are unlikely to be peer reviewed (books or book chapters, non-peer-reviewed journals, governmental and NGO publications), the overall cumulative numbers are comparable. Additionally, as we will see later in the report, the rigor of the peer-review process varies across regional outlets and institutions, and in some case appears to be nominal and marred by serious flaws. In contrast to the proportions reported for international peer-reviewed journals, the proportion of respondents who reported publishing in national or regional peer-reviewed journals was highest in the Maghreb (85%), then in the Egypt/Sudan region (72%), and lowest for the Mashreq (71%). It is also noteworthy that while the proportions of male and female respondents reporting international peer-reviewed journal publications were almost the same (45% vs. 44%), the proportion of male respondents reporting national or regional peer-reviewed publications (82%)

was higher than the proportion of female respondents (71%). Equally significant is the fact that the proportion of male respondents reporting non-peer-reviewed publications (18%) was substantially higher that the proportion of female respondents (11%). These figures suggest that a higher proportion of female social scientists and humanists seek to publish in the most demanding outlets and avoid publishing in less scrutinizing outlets, which in turn suggests that female social scientists and humanists hold themselves to higher academic standards than their male counterparts, perhaps to counter inherent gender biases in the workforce.

**Table 11: Determinants of SSH research publication in peer-reviewed journals and books**

| | | Publication outlet (%) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | National/regional peer-reviewed journals | International peer-reviewed journals | Books/ book chapters |
| **Age** | Under 35 | 65 | 32 | 37 |
| | 35–44 | 79 | 43 | 52 |
| | 45–54 | 83 | 48 | 60 |
| | 55 and over | 84 | 52 | 65 |
| **Gender** | Men | 82 | 45 | 55 |
| | Women | 71 | 44 | 52 |
| **Citizenship** | Maghreb | 85 | 45 | 59 |
| | Egypt/Sudan region | 72 | 37 | 49 |
| | Mashreq | 71 | 48 | 48 |
| **Highest SSH degree** | Bachelor's | 74 | 37 | 53 |
| | Master's | 56 | 22 | 38 |
| | Doctorate | 86 | 52 | 59 |
| **Main research interest** | Sociology and related fields | 80 | 46 | 56 |
| | Economics, political science and related fields | 74 | 41 | 49 |
| | Humanities | 82 | 45 | 58 |
| **Employing institution** | Not affiliated with a university | 60 | 28 | 40 |
| | Affiliated with a university | 85 | 50 | 59 |

*Source: Analysis by the ASSM of the survey data.*

### *Books and Book Chapters*

The second-largest category of publications is books and book chapters. The number of respondents publishing in this category (477) is almost half the combined number of those reporting publishing in national, regional, and international peer-reviewed journals (1,083). Although the percentages across categories are smaller, the trends within each category are similar to those for national and regional peer-reviewed journal publications. The proportion of respondents publishing books and book chapters was highest in the Maghreb (59%), followed by the Egypt/Sudan region (49%) and the Mashreq (48%). The proportion of male respondents (55%) was slightly higher than that of female respondents (52%). Age-wise, the proportion of respondents publishing books and book chapters was 37% for those aged under 35, and increased to 52% for ages 35–44, 60% for ages 45–54, and 65% for those aged 55 and over. As in other cases we have seen so far, the proportion of respondents whose highest degree was a bachelor's was 53%; this proportion decreased to 38% for respondents whose highest degree was a master's, and then increased to 59% for respondents holding doctoral degrees. Finally, the proportion of respondents who reported publishing books and book chapters in the social sciences (53%) was slightly lower than those who published in the humanities (58%).

### *Research Center Publications*

The number of respondents with research center publications was almost as high as for international peer-reviewed publications, but the trends within this category were different. To start with, the proportion of those reporting research center publications who were not affiliated with universities (40%) was higher than those affiliated with universities (34%). Additionally, and expectedly, the proportion of research center publications in the social sciences (37–40%) was much higher than in the humanities (29%). Also, the proportion of male respondents reporting research center publications (39%) was higher than for female (27%). Conversely, the variation by age was negligible, with the proportions ranging between 35% and 37% in all age brackets. Furthermore, unlike the other publication categories, the differences in the proportions reporting research center publications by degree are small, ranging from 35% for those whose highest degree was a bachelor's to 33% for those with a master's and 37% for those with a doctorate. At the regional level, the highest proportion of those reporting research center publications was in the Egypt/Sudan region (40%), followed by the Maghreb (36%) and Mashreq (33%).

### *Governmental Publications*

The number of respondents reporting governmental publications was relatively low (137), given that, after universities, governments employed the second-largest share of respondents; their proportion was slightly higher among university-based ones (16%)

compared to non-university affiliated ones (14%).

### *NGO Publications*

The number of respondents with NGO publications (119) was also notably low. The proportion was higher among those who were not affiliated with universities (20%) than those affiliated with universities (12%). Age-wise, the highest proportion of respondents who reported NGO publications was for those under 35 (16%), and lowest was for those older than 55 (11%). At 15%, the proportion of male respondents was higher than that of females (11%). The highest proportion of respondents by degree was for those whose highest degree was a master's. Compared to the lower percentages in the other categories, those whose highest degree was a master's were slightly more likely to find appointments in NGOs. To put it differently, it seems that NGOs were more likely to hire individuals with a terminal master's degree. Predictably, respondents from social science fields reported higher proportions of NGO publications (14–15%) than respondents from humanities fields (10%). However, the most important observation is that a much larger proportion of respondents in the Mashreq (19%) reported NGO publications than in the Egypt/Sudan region (12%) or the Maghreb (11%).

### *Non-Peer-Reviewed Journals*

For respondents who reported publishing in non-peer-reviewed journals, the lowest proportions were for those in the 35–44 and 45–54 age brackets (14% and 15%, respectively). The proportions were slightly higher for those under 35 years old and highest for those 55 or older. This suggests that the need to publish in peer-reviewed journals is least pressing for respondents above 55, who tend to have more job security. Predictably, the proportion of respondents reporting non-peer-reviewed journal publications was lower for those with university affiliation (15%) than for those who did not have such affiliation (18%). Also, the proportion of respondents in the Maghreb (18%) was higher than those in the Mashreq (15%) and lowest in the Egypt/Sudan region (11%). The proportion was also higher for the humanities (18%) than for the social sciences (15%). Among other things, peer-reviewed publications are important for promotion. As such, the tendency to publish in non-peer-reviewed journals suggests that such publications are more likely to count toward promotion in some institutions and regions than in others. However, higher proportions of publications in non-peer-reviewed outlets may indicate a broader, unspecialized readership outside of academic institutions.

### *Publication Outlets by Research Field*

To examine the correlation between publication outlets and research fields, let us consider one more time the latter as per the same the grouping used earlier in the report to analyze SSH job duties in university settings and listed in the following table.

## Table 12: Publication of SSH research by field

| Main research field | Number of respondents who reported publications in the past 10 years | Percent of respondents who reported more than 10 publications over the past 10 years | Percent of respondents who published in each type of publication outlet | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | National/regional peer-reviewed journal | International peer-reviewed journal | Non-peer-reviewed journal | Research center | Int'l organization | Government | NGO or network | Book/book chapter |
| **All SSH fields** | 875 | 38 | 79 | 44 | 16 | 36 | 13 | 16 | 14 | 54 |
| **Group 1** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sociology | 217 | 33 | 80 | 44 | 13 | 41 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 59 |
| Political science | 128 | 45 | 88 | 33 | 16 | 48 | 7 | 10 | 13 | 55 |
| Economics | 79 | 45 | 62 | 58 | 19 | 29 | 23 | 27 | 18 | 43 |
| Psychology | 71 | 38 | 86 | 49 | 13 | 17 | 14 | 14 | 6 | 54 |
| **Group 2** | | | | | | | | | | |
| History | 59 | 40 | 86 | 47 | 15 | 32 | 3 | 19 | 8 | 54 |
| Literature | 54 | 39 | 78 | 44 | 20 | 15 | 0 | 9 | 4 | 54 |
| Geography | 53 | 42 | 92 | 55 | 15 | 43 | 8 | 17 | 9 | 51 |
| Anthropology | 36 | 29 | 67 | 47 | 17 | 25 | 17 | 14 | 25 | 53 |
| Philosophy | 35 | 63 | 91 | 40 | 29 | 49 | 14 | 17 | 9 | 80 |
| Archeology | 26 | 28 | 85 | 62 | 12 | 15 | 19 | 12 | 8 | 31 |
| **Group 3** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Development studies | 38 | 53 | 55 | 37 | 16 | 34 | 32 | 16 | 21 | 47 |
| Cultural studies | 24 | 29 | 71 | 38 | 13 | 29 | 17 | 17 | 21 | 75 |
| Gender studies | 24 | 13 | 54 | 33 | 13 | 54 | 25 | 13 | 21 | 54 |
| Demography | 14 | 21 | 86 | 50 | 21 | 43 | 21 | 29 | 14 | 50 |
| Religious studies | 12 | 33 | 67 | 25 | 17 | 50 | 0 | 17 | 33 | 58 |
| Regional studies | 5 | 0 | 80 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 0 | 40 | 0 | 0 |

*Source: Calculations by the author based on the survey data.*

Respondents from the first two groups, with only two exceptions, reported comparable or higher-than-average proportions of publications in national and regional peer-reviewed journals. Higher-than-average proportions were reported by respondents specializing in geography (92%), philosophy (91%), political science (88%), psychology (86%), history (86%), demography (86%), and archeology (85%). The two fields for which respondents reported lower-than-average proportions of publishing in national or regional peer-reviewed journals were anthropology (67%) and economics (62%). However, both fields make up for this shortage with higher-than-average proportions of publications in international peer-reviewed journals (58% in economics and 47% in anthropology, compared to the overall average of 44%). This might reflect a greater interest from international journals in publishing specialized regional studies in these two particular fields. In general, publishing in international journals is often a challenge for scholars working on regional-scope studies. Alternatively, there may not be sufficient regional journals for these relatively new additions to Arab universities, thus providing added incentive to pursue publication in international journals.

Similarly, with only two exceptions, respondents from the first two groups also reported average or higher-than-average proportions of publication in international peer-reviewed journals. Compared to the overall average of 44%, the proportions of respondents publishing in international peer-reviewed journals were as follows: archeology (62%), economics (58%), geography (55%), psychology (49%), history (47%), anthropology (47%), sociology (44%), and literature (44%). The higher-than-average proportions might be necessitated by the insufficient number of specialized regional journals in some fields. The two fields in which respondents reported below-average percentages were political science (33%) and philosophy (40%). The low figure for political science is especially puzzling, given international academia's disproportionate focus on the politics of the Arab world. One can only wonder if overt biases and polarization in this field make it harder for voices from the region to be expressed in international academic outlets.

In the third group of fields, respondents working in demography reported above-average proportions of publishing in national or regional as well as international peer-reviewed journals (86% and 50%, respectively). Respondents whose research area was regional studies reported an average proportion of publishing in national or regional peer-reviewed journals (80%), but the proportion of international peer-reviewed publication was much lower (20%) than the average. Respondents from all other fields reported lower-than-average proportions in both national or regional and international peer-reviewed journals, suggesting that academic standards and expectations within these fields are still being formulated.

In addition to peer-reviewed journal publications, the second-largest category of publications was books and book chapters. Again, this is clearly connected to the fact

that these three types of publications carry most weight in academia. Respondents in most fields reported near-average (54%) proportions of books and book chapter publications. Respondents in the fields of philosophy or cultural studies reported notably higher-than-average proportions of 80% and 75%, respectively, perhaps because of wider generalist readership for these fields. Respondents in the fields of archeology, economics, and development studies reported lower-than-average proportions of 31%, 43%, and 47%, respectively, possibly because specialists in these fields are more inclined to publish in specialized journals than in books. Perhaps for similar reasons, respondents in the field of philosophy reported the highest percentage of publications in non-peer-reviewed journals (29%, compared to the 16% average).

Most fields were close to the 36% overall average for reported research center publications. Fields such as literature and archeology that are unlikely to be covered in research centers reported lower percentages (15% each), but more relevant are the fields that reported higher-than-average percentages: gender studies (54%), religious studies (50%), philosophy (49%), and political science (48%). The interest of research centers in three of these fields is understandable, but it is not clear what interest research centers would have in a field like philosophy.

Given the low average percentages in the remaining publication categories, the actual number of respondents is as relevant as the proportions of respondents reporting publications in these outlets. The highest numbers of respondents who reported governmental publications were in the fields of sociology (33), economics (21), political science (13), history (11), psychology (10), geography (9), development studies (6), and philosophy (6). With the exception of the political scientists, all of these respondents reported proportions of governmental publications above or close to the 16% average (economics 27%, history 19%, philosophy 17%, geography 17%, development studies 16%, sociology 15%, and psychology 14%). These numbers reflect a range of topics that are of interest to governmental organizations.

Similarly, the highest numbers of respondents who reported international organization publications were in the fields of sociology (32), economics (18), development studies (12), psychology (10), political science (9), anthropology (6), and gender studies (6). With the exception of political scientists, all of these respondents reported proportions of international organization publications above the 13% average (development studies 32%, gender studies 25%, economics 23%, anthropology 17%, sociology 15%, and psychology 14%). These numbers reflect the range of topics that are of interest to international organizations.

Finally, the average percentage of respondents who reported NGO publications was 14%. Within this category, the highest numbers of respondents reporting NGO

publications were in the fields of sociology (34), political science (16), economics (14), anthropology (9), and development studies (8). All of these respondents reported NGO publications equal to or above the average for this category (anthropology 25%, development studies 21%, sociology 16%, economics 14%, and political science 13%).

There is clearly a level of overlap in the types of fields that are of interest to international organizations, governmental organizations, and NGOs, but the divergences are just as significant. Perhaps of note is that governmental publications' interest in history is not paralleled in international organizations or in NGOs.

### *Publication Outlets in University Settings*

Overall, university-affiliated respondents reported publishing their SSH findings in peer-reviewed journals, both local or regional and international, and published books and book chapters at much higher rates than respondents who did not have university affiliation. The proportion of respondents with university affiliation publishing in peer-reviewed national or regional journals was 85%, compared to 60% of those who did not have a university affiliation. The proportion of respondents publishing in international peer-reviewed journals was 50% for university-affiliated respondents and 28% for those without affiliation. As for the proportion of those publishing books and book chapters, it was 59% for university-affiliated respondent and 40% for those without university affiliation. These three publication categories are the most relevant for a university career and count more than any other form of publication in the evaluation and promotion process. As such, academic standards seem to influence the choice of publication outlet for most university-based social scientists and humanists, whereas such standards seem to carry less weight for researchers based outside the university. In all other categories of publication outlets (except governmental organizations), the proportions of respondents who were not university affiliated were higher than the proportions for those who were university based.

# IV. Personal Narratives of Academic Life

## 1. Higher Education in the Arab World: Individual and Institutional Transformations

Over the course of the twentieth century, higher education systems across the Arab world underwent radical changes. At the beginning of this period, when the region was breaking from earlier educational traditions and new higher education institutions were being established, social and political systems were also experiencing major transformations, and the demands made on higher education institutions by populations and governments were changing. Toward the second half of the twentieth century, a wave of rapid institutional expansion increased expectations that universities would be responsive to wide-ranging regional social change, and would at the same time be capable of competing on a global stage.

From the early to mid-twentieth century, traditional institutions of higher learning across many Muslim-majority countries were quickly replaced by modern institutions modeled after European universities. The expansion of imperial European powers meant that universities became state institutions in Europe and, at the same time, in their colonies (Bou Khater 2019). The impact of these changes on the social sciences and humanities can be traced through the lives of individual scholars.

Bardawil's (2019) reading of 13 scholars' autobiographies sheds light on changes in university life over the past century, as well as scholars' changing views of themselves, their administrations, their colleagues, and their students. Some of the examined authors started their intellectual journeys before the establishment of new university systems, and recount the evolutions they witnessed as they transitioned between the old and the new systems. Some traveled to Europe, where their academic careers were shaped, and then returned to their countries to play a pivotal role in giving shape to the new systems of higher education.

The vein of life-writing Bardawil examines begins with Egyptian scholar Taha Hussein's *The Days*, the first part of which was serialized in the mid-1920s, and which was published in book form in 1929. The last in the chronology is Egyptian scholar and novelist Radwa Ashour's *Heavier Than Radwa*, published in 2013, reflecting the impact of the mass uprisings that began in 2011. These autobiographies reflect views as diverse as those of Sayyid Qutb, Egyptian architect of the Muslim Brotherhood, who wrote *A Child from the Village* (1946), to Moroccan feminist scholar Fatima Mernissi, author of *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood* (1994).

The autobiographies provide insight into how individual Arab scholars fit into institutions of production, transmission, and circulation of knowledge in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and how they changed and were changed by them. The autobiographies and memoirs Bardawil examined took several forms. Some were framed as a coming-of-age tales, while others fit the mold of self-critique in the wake of a period of disenchantment, or the recovery or discovery of a particular identity. In all cases, the autobiographies reflect the authors' sense of change in themselves and in the systems they inhabited as scholars.

### *From Rote Learning to Critical Thinking*

Early twentieth-century scholars such as Egyptian Taha Hussein (1889–1973) and even later ones, like Moroccan Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri (1935–2010), began their studies at traditional, religiously affiliated institutions. Hussein started out as a student at Al-Azhar, an Egyptian higher education institution founded in the tenth century. In his popular memoir, *The Days*, Hussein sharply and humorously contrasts his education at Al-Azhar with his later studies at Cairo University, and yet later at the University of Montpelier and the Sorbonne. Hussein's account of his experience of moving from a traditional religious institution to a secular university is important not only because it documents university life in this foundational period, but also, as Bardawil notes, because *The Days* was an "ur-memoir," one that many other scholars read and patterned their own memoirs after, either consciously or unconsciously.

In *The Days*, Hussein contrasts his dissatisfaction with the methods of learning at Al-Azhar with the instruction he received from the professors at Cairo University. At Al-Azhar, Hussein (2001) depicts a world of rote learning and instructors who don't wish to be challenged: "The Azhar upbringing had nurtured me in the sort of talent it required: I had become competent to understand what the shaikhs repeated" (Bardawil 2019, 10). Hussein described the teaching methods at Cairo University as entirely different. "How altogether strange and new it all was," Hussein writes, "exciting my mind and revolutionising my whole way of thinking" (Bardawil 2019, 10). Hussein and many later intellectuals who were influenced by his "ur-memoir" expressed their disenchantment with the traditional systems of learning and portrayed themselves as the embodiments of the needed ruptures and new forms of intellectual intervention and production. In their writings, the transformations they imagined had social and political ramifications, but were also guidelines for the needed changes in the structure of academic institutions. The ills of society require the intervention of intellectuals, social scientists, and humanists, whose redemptive capacity derives from the fact that they broke with traditional modes of education and were taught within the new, Western system. And yet, the sheer contempt the authors express for teachers and students of the lingering traditional institutions highlights the dichotomy between their grand visions and the bleak realities within which they operate.

Three of the scholars whose memoirs Bardawil highlights experienced both traditional and new educational systems: Taha Hussein (1889–1973), Hussein Mruwwah (1908/1910–1987), and to a lesser extent Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri (1935–2010). Others had parents who studied in traditional settings. Throughout the memoirs, these scholars depict the movement away from a traditional education as entirely positive. While Bardawil does not mention any early scholars who regretted the loss of traditional modes of learning, he does note that Hussein emphasized it was not only foreign teachers who made his time at the new university worthwhile:

> There were Egyptian professors, too, who added to its appeal and its fascination enormously...They strengthened and established my Arab, Egyptian personality, in the context of all the wide learning brought to me by the orientalists which could easily have engrossed me totally in European values. But these Egyptian teachers enabled me to cling to a strong element of authentic eastern culture, and to hold together congenially in a balanced harmony the learning of both east and west. (Hussein 2001)

### *Scholarly Mobility and the Shifting Relationship to the West*

In these memoirs of Arab intellectuals born in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Bardawil finds that "the authority of the Western canon is very palpable." Several of the scholars chose to write on canonical Western authors and themes, and several reported scorning their parents' tastes. Both Jalal Amin and Edward Said contrast their dislike for Arab music with their appreciation for opera and other classical Western forms. Leila Ahmed echoes Edward Said's critique of Um Kulthum as "endless monotonous wailing" (Bardawil 2019, 42).

Yet later, Bardawil notes, diasporic intellectuals such as Leila Ahmed and Edward Said, who "in their youth were very much exposed to Metropolitan cultures, and were later the subject of its racializing powers, turned the question of the West into an object of critical research inquiry." While Edward Said's memoirs look at his personal awareness of being seen as "an Oriental," Leila Ahmed's retrace her early encounters with US-based white, imperialist feminists.

In contrast to the majority of scholars, the authors of the 13 memoirs Bardawil studied were unusually mobile. This is not a new phenomenon—scholarly mobility has always been an important aspect of academia. As Bou Khater (2019) notes, it was also a part of the medieval scholarly landscape. Yet the power relations between Arab scholars and European or North American institutions were remade during colonial rule. This was followed by the expansion of European and North American universities, which

aimed to attract international scholars, first as students and then also as instructors.

Bou Khater's in-depth interviews with 15 Arab scholars whose careers have taken them across borders show different pathways of mobility. She notes several global shifts that affected academic mobility and migration in the last half-century: the end of the Cold War, the rise of the European Union, and the global "War on Terror" (also see Kim 2009). Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Arab scholars in the social sciences and humanities were more likely to move to another Arab country, heading to institutions in Cairo, Damascus, and Baghdad. Some Arab regimes fostered and actively funded this type of regional mobility. In regimes allied with the Soviet Union, young people went to study in the USSR. After the 1970s, the crisis of the progressive nationalist model hindered this type of intraregional mobility, and students were no longer supported in going to the USSR. Instead, colonial centers in Europe were increasingly favored as a destination.

Increasing job opportunities in countries such as the US, the UK, and Canada were often coupled with rising academic precarity and job insecurity in the Arab region. Bou Khater's interviewees identified limited opportunities for permanent lectureship or professorship in the Arab region as one of the core motives of academic migration. Although there was prestige to be found in working in North American and European higher education institutions, many Arab scholars also found academic precarity there as well.

### *Limits on Academic Freedom*

In *The Days*, Taha Hussein describes how Egyptian students studying abroad were required to have their dissertations approved by their Egyptian university prior to submitting them to a foreign institution. This atmosphere of surveillance did not ease after the end of British colonial rule in 1952. Instead, Bardawil notes, the authors of the memoirs report an atmosphere of rising suspicion in higher education institutions.

Abdel Rahman Badawi's *Sirāt Hayātī* offers a harsh condemnation of the stifling structure of national educational institutions and even idealizes the elite world of colonial education. Jalal Amin, Leila Ahmed, and Radwa Ashour also underscore the threats to academic autonomy with various descriptions of the constant monitoring of the teaching, writing, and public activities of students and professors.

Similar issues of surveillance and lack of academic freedom are echoed in several of Bou Khater's interviews. While several interviewees, including scholars from Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria, reported that the main reason they left their home institutions was conflict and violence in their country of origin, others mentioned limitations on speech and other freedoms as a reason for departure.

Jalal Amin and Hisham Sharabi also offer critiques of the power dynamics within public and private universities alike—the authority and power of the administration in relation to faculty, as well as the professor in relation to students—and blame this dynamic for stifling autonomous, critical thinking and even for fostering "intellectual laziness," to use Sharabi's words (Bardawil 2019).

### *The Role of Gender in Academic Careers*

One of the major changes highlighted by the ASSR3 interviews is the growing number of Arab women entering the social sciences and humanities. For the most part, the female scholars whose memoirs Bardawil includes in his study addressed how gender shaped their access to opportunities and their identities as academics. By contrast, none of the male scholars wrote about how their gender affected their life or scholarship.

According to Bardawil, the women's "works expose how the private sphere, which is less discussed overall by male authors, is saturated with power relations" (Bardawil 2019, 5). Bou Khater makes a similar observation about her interviewees' views of gender and scholarly mobility; while female scholars perceived gender as shaping their choice of field as well as their trajectory within it, male scholars were unlikely to mention gender as a factor. In the ASSR post-survey interviews by Ghannouchi, interviewees remarked that "motherhood is never seen as a barrier to [obtaining] higher education" (Ghannouchi 2020, 11) Yet gender was seen as a factor once scholars in the social sciences and humanities began their careers, both among survey respondents and in Bou Khater's in-depth interviews. She notes, "Women often find themselves unable to pursue transnational mobility mainly due to dual family careers as well as family obligations, as child rearing remains heavily centered around women" (Bou Khater 2019, 6).

## 2. Scholarly Career Trajectories: Class, Gender, and Mobility

Many Arab SSH scholars—whether highly mobile geographically or working in their home country, men or women, or at the beginning or end of their careers—reported similar interests and concerns. However, there were also marked differences apparent from the post-survey interviews conducted by Ghannouchi with 26 scholars who took part in the online survey for the third ASSR, and Bou Khater's and Kreichati's (2019b) interviews with mobile scholars and scholars at independent research centers, respectively. Interview subjects also spoke about core terminology differently. While the autobiographers read by Bardawil and Bou Khater's interviewees discussed "mobility" in terms of movement from Arab countries to Europe or North America, the 26 post-survey interview subjects described "mobility" as movement not only between countries in the region, but also from a rural environment to a city, or a smaller city to a

larger one. Notably, Ghannouchi's interviewees identified themselves as belonging to lower- and middle-class families. Although Bou Khater doesn't tell us about the class background of her interviewees, their access to social and cultural capital suggests a wealthier overall background among mobile scholars.

**Table 13: Overview of Phase II, semi-structured interviews conducted**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Targeted geographical scope** | 19 countries |
| **Total number of invitations sent** | 387 (excluding reminders) |
| **Final geographical scope** | 12 countries |
| **Countries with no response** | 7 countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Somalia, and Mauritania) |
| **Targeted number of interviews** | 20 |
| **Final number of interviews** | 26 (including 6 written submissions) |
| **Total duration of live interviews** | 910 minutes |

*Source: Ghannouchi 2020.*

Other differences were in the emphasis laid on the core challenges in Arab universities. Bou Khater's interviews highlighted limitations on speech and other freedoms as key motives behind the scholars' departure from their home countries. However, Ghannouchi's interviewees laid greater emphasis on nepotism, kinship, and clientelism (*"wasta"*) as key barriers to recruitment and promotion. They also mentioned the importance of "being close to power" or "being passive and obedient," apparently putting the stress on the individual scholar rather than on government or social systems curtailing freedom. Although Ghannouchi's interviewees did mention the state, they emphasized a lack of governmental support and marginalization of the role of researchers as key frustrations. Censorship was mentioned as a barrier to research, but greater emphasis seemed to be placed on having connections than on fearing crackdowns or violence.

### *Academic Origin Stories*

The apparently divergent class backgrounds of Ghannouchi's and Bou Khater's interviewees leave a mark on their varied origin stories. Although Ghannouchi's interviewees came from a wide range of countries, she notes that the social scientists and humanists with whom she conducted her semi-structured interviews identified themselves as coming from either lower- or middle-class families. Bou Khater, by contrast, does not directly mention the class backgrounds of the scholars she interviewed. However, it seems that most had early access to foreign-language studies and enrolled at foreign institutions. She notes that, when asked about the most vital enablers of their migration from Arab universities to universities in the Global North:

> Most interviewed participants cited the importance of cultural and social capital as being the key enablers that facilitated their mobility. Most interviewed scholars have at least one degree from an international institution. This international exposure played a key role in achieving their transnational mobility. Another related factor is their fluency in a foreign language that is considered as a sine qua non condition for their mobility. (Bou Khater 2019, 4)

Ghannouchi's interviewees, meanwhile, represented two different entryways into the social sciences and humanities. One group of interviewees mentioned an early event in their social or cultural environment, while a second group located their decision during their undergraduate studies, when their interest was sparked through classwork. Ghannouchi notes that the former was mostly the case of "social scientists from zones of conflict (Syria, Palestine) or conservative environments (the village and its social specificities) or exceptional nationwide socio-political patterns (the case of Lebanon)."

In Ghannouchi's post-survey interviews, respondents mentioned financial challenges as they worked toward their degree, as well as the difficulty of balancing their academic work with their family responsibilities. Notably, women interviewees reported few additional challenges when working toward a degree, with the exception of a Palestinian interviewee who had to bring her mother along as a guardian when she traveled to Egypt for her PhD. Ghannouchi further wrote that "motherhood is never seen as a barrier to higher education."

One particular problem highlighted by Ghannouchi's interviewees, but not mentioned by Bou Khater, was a lack of commitment and involvement on the part of advisors. Scholars mentioned this as especially true when they were working on their theses, but said it was also the case throughout their scholarly career. While Bou Khater's interviewees noted the importance of a social and academic network of scholars, they did not seem to lay any particular stress on either the presence or absence of academic advisors.

### *Gender-Specific Challenges*

The ACSS survey reveals a gradual increase in the number of women pursuing the social sciences and humanities. And while women and men seem to report comparable career trajectories up to the point of receiving a doctoral degree, once working in universities, women are more likely to hold lower-ranking positions than men. Ghannouchi's interviewees did mention gender-based challenges during their education; however, they strongly suggested that institutional gender-based bias was more prevalent during the academic career phase.

In addition to the shared challenge of too few employment opportunities in these fields, Arab women in the social sciences and humanities faced their own specific challenges. Early-career social science scholars, whether in Arab countries, Europe, or the US, all faced varying challenges of precarity. Bou Khater notes that mobile Arab scholars "tend to first encounter precarious mobility and not necessarily the purported secure one," while Ghannouchi's interviewees reported unemployment as endemic to the first phase of their careers post-PhD.

Bou Khater notes that female academics were less transnationally mobile than their male colleagues. Her interviews reveal that mobile female Arab academics were often disadvantaged and constrained in their mobility due to double-career families. Mobile female Arab academics tended to follow their male partners, to benefit their partners' professional mobility, at the expense of their own academic paths. Women also reported fewer chances to participate in conferences or other opportunities because their families did not want them to travel without a guardian.

It is also noteworthy that Ghannouchi's interviewees, when mentioning the role of their parents in offering guidance and an encouraging educational environment, almost exclusively refer to fathers. The figure of the father, Ghannouchi writes, "is predominant and omnipresent while that of the mother is nearly absent," with the exception of one interviewee from Egypt.

### *Employment Opportunities and Obstacles*

One theme that arose across the groups of interviewees was the necessity of networking, and access to opportunities for conferences and funding, in order to progress in their careers. However, while the mobile scholars interviewed by Bou Khater mentioned "being employed by two or more institutions simultaneously in transnational research projects and with different types of tailored contracts," and that "short-term contract researchers are jammed in this precarious type of modality and overwhelmed with several affiliations," for Ghannouchi's interviewees, the phase directly after completion was linked not to overemployment, but rather underemployment or unemployment.

Overall, among respondents to the ACSS survey, around half had peer-reviewed publications in international journals, but the most common publication outlets were national or regional peer-reviewed journals. Ghannouchi's interviewees referred to barriers to research and publishing as core challenges, mainly due to lack of funding and the absence of regional publishing outlets that are considered for tenure. Bou Khater's interviewees, on the other hand, remarked that while they had better access to funding and publishing outlets, this also exacerbated power imbalances with scholars back in their home countries. One interviewee maintained that the international

experience and funding opportunities available in the US intensified inequality with her Iraqi colleagues, making work with them more difficult; in her words, "I have way more access to grants, fellowships and all kinds of resources and my academic life is very comfortable" (Bou Khater 2019, 5).

### *Meanings of Mobility*

While Ghannouchi's and Bou Khater's interviewees may conceptualize it differently, mobility featured highly for both. Ghannouchi notes that her interviewees spontaneously reflected on their trajectories, from childhood to the present day, in geographic terms, "with a clear awareness and distinction of specific scales (rural vs. urban or the village vs. the city but also from one country to another). The transition from one environment to another is clearly a milestone around which life phases and consequent life choices are articulated." While this geographic mobility was important in framing a life trajectory, the vast majority of survey respondents, and of Ghannouchi's interviewees, were employed in their home countries. Mobility, or lack thereof, was also encompassed by their ability to attend conferences and in access to international networks.

Bou Khater's interviewees had additional concerns around mobility. One was ecological, as interviewed scholars suggested that "people were obsessed with conferences" without taking into account their environmental impact, and another was that excessive mobility may hinder publication. Also, among Bou Khater's interviewees, there was near-consensus on the importance of fostering South-South academic mobility, rather than solely privileging movement between Arab countries and Western metropoles. Bou Khater and her interviewees recommended undertaking a "mapping and identification of potential key partners in the Global South, such as Latin America" with the purpose of fostering knowledge production on and from the Global South.

## V. Conclusion: The Present and Future of the Social Sciences and Humanities in the Arab World

Despite the marked rise in the number of universities and SSH departments in the Arab world over the past few decades, social scientists and humanists in the region continue to face challenges to establishing successful careers. These challenges in turn impact research and knowledge production. The survey results presented in this report, along with the data and analysis from the background papers, highlight several factors that would help the social sciences and humanities flourish in the Arab world. High among these is the availability of employment opportunities in universities that provide adequate financial support, respectable social status, and academic and social mobility. Although hard to quantify, academic freedom is another significant factor for the flourishing of these fields, as is the existence of a civil society that appreciates these sciences, promotes and benefits from them, and relates to their findings. Equally important is the disposition of the public sector to benefit from the findings of these sciences and to embrace policies that are guided by these results. And finally, the strength of the social sciences and humanities depends on the strength of the relationships between local and regional communities of knowledge and the international networks of social scientists and humanists.

An examination of academic programs and professional dynamics inside universities sheds much light on the professional trajectories of social scientists and humanists, and on the graduates of social science and humanities programs who are professionally shaped in these universities but go on to work outside of them. The latter group might even have more influence than university-based individuals, especially if their academic specialization is the basis of and directly informs their careers outside academia. Needless to say, the increase in the number and diversity of academic programs correlates with the increase in the number of graduates who work in various sectors in society.

The survey results give us some indications of the characteristics of the emerging generation of social scientists and humanists. An important finding from the analysis of the age and gender composition of the pool of respondents is that the social sciences and humanities in the region used to be male-dominated, but newer generations of scholars are much more gender balanced. This change is particularly notable in the Maghreb and less so in the Mashreq. Women have comparable access to international peer-reviewed journals to disseminate their research findings. However, the imbalance between men and women with regard to professional rank and publication volume remains in favor of the former.

The survey also shows that younger SSH scholars are increasingly likely to complete their studies in their home countries. This could be the result of the greater number of universities, as well as the establishment of many European and American branch campuses in the region. This might explain the limited proportion of respondents who studied outside the Arab region. However, the survey does not provide conclusive answers to the question of education quality, nor does it indicate if there is intellectual and educational self-sufficiency in the region or whether the reduction of the proportion of scholars pursuing study outside the Arab world is a result of the lack of the financial resources needed for study abroad. It is also possible to assert with reasonable confidence that a majority of social scientists and humanists in the Arab region operate within local and regional networks, and that their associations with international networks outside the Arab world are weaker. English-language proficiency is a critical factor that affects social scientists' and humanists' ability to connect to international networks and to publish in international journals.

In addition to being more feminine and homegrown, the youngest social scientists and humanists seem more geared toward fields related to economics and political science than sociology-related ones compared to their older colleagues. Professionally, they are equally attached to their educational background when it comes to employment field, even though they are more likely to work outside the university setting. Moreover, they display an appreciable motivation for university, field, and community service despite their limited experience in the first two activities relative to older university faculty. Their commitment to research and publishing in international peer-reviewed journals also remains as strong, but with a lesser inclination towards publishing books or book chapters.

Both in terms of field of specialization and geographically, the academic trajectories of Arab social scientists and humanists were marked by continuity. SSH students tended to stay within the same field of study from the bachelor's to master's to doctoral levels. This continuity can also be seen in the close relationship between educational training and employment, as social scientists and humanists were likely to work in the same field as their university specialization. With regards to country of employment, only a small portion of social scientists and humanists worked outside their home countries in the region.

Since the fortunes of social scientists and humanists in the region are closely tied to their home countries, it follows that increasing opportunities for their employment depends on initiatives emanating from within their own countries. However, it is important to note that the survey results suggest that the chances for such initiatives are slim and cannot be taken for granted. In fact, there is evidence of high levels of unemployment even

among holders of master's and doctoral degrees (Assaad and O'Leary 2016). In addition, there is evidence of low job mobility, suggesting that there are not many appealing alternatives available to social scientists and humanists whether in or outside academia. Further examination is needed to better assess academic job security in SSH fields.

Research and knowledge production are key measures of success for social scientists and humanists, especially those based in universities. There are multiple ways to assess research output, but in this study, the primary measures are the quantity and quality of publications. As we saw earlier in the report, most respondents published no more than 10 times over 10 years. The volume of SSH publication was significantly higher for men, university-based respondents, and those with doctoral degrees. As for the quality of research output, a very high proportion of respondents published in some type of peer-reviewed journal. Since international peer-reviewed publications are smaller in number and publish less frequently than national or regional peer-reviewed journals, it is safe to assume that, overall, publications of the highest quality appear in international peer-reviewed journals with rigorous editorial standards. Those who earned their highest degree abroad were significantly more likely to produce high-quality publications, but they also had a smaller volume of publications. This suggests a "quality-quantity trade-off in publication" (Sieverding 2020). The ability to publish in international journals is likely facilitated by familiarity with international academic circles (advisors and professional academic networks), an understanding of these journals' publication requirements, and proficiency in English.[21]

The increase in the number of universities and SSH programs in the Arab world also raises questions about the wider influence of ideas and findings from the social sciences and humanities on society at large. While social scientists and humanists working outside universities are underrepresented in this study, there are indeed important employment sectors through which the social impact of the social sciences and humanities can be traced. The presence and social impact of these fields is important and deserves separate study. It is equally important to assess the extent to which the social sciences and humanities guide and rationalize public policies and management, and even society, and to assess in this context the seeming contradiction between abiding by global academic and intellectual standards and the local deployment of social scientific and humanistic knowledge in the service of local society— between the localization of impact and universality of intellectual standards and theoretical frameworks of analysis.

[21] Sieverding (2020) argues that whereas "proficiency in English may afford respondents greater access to international publication outlets than French," there seems to be no evidence that proficiency in English is more important than proficiency in French when it comes to employment rank.

This report does not attempt to provide a history of the social sciences and humanities in the Arab world, nor does it provide a systematic analysis of the integration—or lack thereof—of these fields in international research networks. Rather, the hope of this report is to help identify some of the priorities for supporting the professional trajectories of individuals, particularly those working in universities, and to recommend additional criteria for monitoring and gaining a deeper understanding of the professional realities of social scientists and humanists. In other words, the aim is to discern strategies for supporting social scientists and humanists and for fortifying their material conditions so they can pursue their research agendas with relative independence and freedom.

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# ANNEXES

## Annex 1: Survey Methodology

### Study Population

The target population of the survey was social scientists and humanists who were citizens of any of the 22 member countries of the League of Arab States, holding at least a bachelor's degree in a social sciences/humanities (SSH) field and based in the Arab region at the time of the survey.

Fields considered SSH: anthropology, archeology, cultural studies, demography, development, economics, gender studies, geography, history, literature, philosophy, political science, psychology, regional/international studies, religious studies, and sociology. Countries of the League of the Arab States: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

### Sampling

The sampling frame for the survey was developed primarily based on two established and regularly maintained databases held by the ACSS: the ASSM social sciences/humanities database (for higher education institutions, university-based research centers, non-university-based research centers, and professional societies in the Arab region) and the ACSS database of grantees. The former was used to identify institutions that listed their SSH faculty and working staff online. On this basis, contact details of 17,074 university faculty members were compiled and another 1,591 email addresses were added for social scientists and humanists affiliated to research centers and professional societies. In addition, 3,925 email addresses were added from the ACSS database of grantees, 1,064 from the ACSS mailing list, and 278 from a previous survey of early-career researchers in the Arab region conducted by an ACSS fellow. This yielded a total of 23,932 email addresses. After removing duplicate email addresses and screening the compiled mailing list for invalid emails (using an email verification and cleaning service), the survey was sent to 14,635 email addresses.

### Questionnaire

The questionnaire contained five modules covering (1) personal information: gender, year of birth, citizenship, and current country of residence; (2) higher education: obtained degrees at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels, university location and public/private status, field of study, and graduation year; (3) employment: job title, type and location of employing institution, professional duties, and year of starting the job; (4) engagement in research: fields and themes of research, geographic scope of research, publication outlets, and number of publications; and (5) language proficiency in English, Arabic, and French.

**Response Rate**

1,854 respondents submitted complete responses (12.7% response rate), with 733 responses excluded because they did not meet the target population criteria. More specifically, those excluded were not citizens of an Arab country, were not based in an Arab country, and/or did not have a degree in one of the above-specified social sciences and humanities fields. The resulting analysis sample comprised 1,121 eligible respondents (7.7% eligible response rate), with three-quarters of them being university-based.

## Annex 2: Distribution of Survey Sample and Response Rate by Country

| | Number of questionnaires sent | Number of complete responses | Number of eligible responses | Eligible response rate (per 100) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Algeria** | 3,246 | 577 | 395 | 12.2 |
| **Libya** | 184 | 14 | 8 | 4.3 |
| **Mauritania** | 15 | 5 | 2 | 13.3 |
| **Morocco** | 741 | 308 | 176 | 23.8 |
| **Tunisia** | 697 | 115 | 55 | 7.9 |
| **MAGHREB REGION** | **4,883** | **1,019** | **636** | **13.0** |
| **Comoros** | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| **Djibouti** | NA | NA | 0 | NA |
| **Egypt** | 1,931 | 200 | 135 | 7.0 |
| **Somalia** | 12 | 6 | 3 | 25.0 |
| **Sudan** | 474 | 61 | 42 | 8.9 |
| **EGYPT/SUDAN REGION** | **2,419** | **267** | **180** | **7.4** |
| **Bahrain** | 24 | 4 | 1 | 4.2 |
| **Iraq** | 1,245 | 103 | 72 | 5.8 |
| **Jordan** | 736 | 95 | 61 | 8.3 |
| **Kuwait** | 42 | 3 | 3 | 7.1 |
| **Lebanon** | 748 | 67 | 34 | 4.5 |
| **Oman** | 9 | 3 | 1 | 11.1 |
| **Palestine** | 750 | 158 | 82 | 10.9 |
| **Qatar** | 237 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| **Saudi Arabia** | 890 | 20 | 12 | 1.3 |
| **Syria** | 92 | 39 | 14 | 15.2 |
| **UAE** | 249 | 3 | 2 | 0.8 |
| **Yemen** | 122 | 56 | 23 | 18.9 |
| **MASHREQ REGION** | **5,144** | **551** | **305** | **5.9** |
| **Non-Arab country** | 116 | 17 | 0 | 0.0 |
| **Unknown** | 2,073 | NA | NA | NA |
| **TOTAL** | **14,635** | **1,854** | **1,121** | **7.7** |

## Annex 3: Personal Information and Language Proficiency (n = 1,121)

| | # | % |
|---|---|---|
| **Citizenship** | | |
| Algeria | 395 | 35.2 |
| Bahrain | 1 | 0.1 |
| Egypt | 135 | 12.0 |
| Iraq | 72 | 6.4 |
| Jordan | 61 | 5.4 |
| Kuwait | 3 | 0.3 |
| Lebanon | 34 | 3.0 |
| Libya | 8 | 0.7 |
| Mauritania | 2 | 0.3 |
| Morocco | 176 | 15.7 |
| Oman | 1 | 0.1 |
| Palestine | 82 | 7.3 |
| Saudi Arabia | 12 | 1.1 |
| Somalia | 3 | 0.3 |
| Sudan | 42 | 3.7 |
| Syria | 14 | 1.2 |
| Tunisia | 55 | 4.9 |
| UAE | 2 | 0.2 |
| Yemen | 23 | 2.1 |
| **Gender** | | |
| Male | 728 | 64.9 |
| Female | 393 | 35.1 |
| **Age** | | |
| Under 35 | 193 | 17.2 |
| 35-44 | 450 | 40.1 |
| 45-54 | 307 | 27.4 |
| 55-64 | 125 | 11.2 |
| 65 and over | 46 | 4.1 |
| **Language proficiency** | | |
| Not proficient in Arabic | 32 | 2.9 |
| Arabic only without French or English | 292 | 26.0 |
| Arabic and English without French | 321 | 28.6 |
| Arabic and French without English | 316 | 28.2 |
| Arabic, English and French | 150 | 13.4 |
| Arabic, English, French and at least a fourth language | 10 | 0.9 |

## Annex 4: SSH Education

| | | # | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Highest obtained degree in SSH (n = 1,121)** | | | |
| | Bachelor's | 190 | 16.9 |
| | Master's | 242 | 21.6 |
| | Doctoral | 689 | 61.5 |
| **Stage of initiation of SSH studies (n = 1,121)** | | | |
| | Bachelor's | 1,049 | 93.4 |
| | Master's | 63 | 5.6 |
| | Doctoral | 9 | 0.8 |
| **Major of highest obtained degree in SSH (n = 1,121)** | | | |
| | Anthropology | 42 | 3.7 |
| | Archeology | 29 | 2.6 |
| | Cultural studies | 22 | 2.0 |
| | Demography/population studies | 19 | 1.7 |
| | Development studies | 22 | 2.0 |
| | Economics | 113 | 10.1 |
| | Gender studies | 15 | 1.3 |
| | Geography | 66 | 5.9 |
| | History | 67 | 6.0 |
| | Literature | 81 | 7.2 |
| | Philosophy | 44 | 3.9 |
| | Political sciences | 168 | 15.0 |
| | Psychology | 108 | 9.6 |
| | Regional studies | 10 | 0.9 |
| | Religious studies | 14 | 1.2 |
| | Sociology | 300 | 26.8 |
| | Other - social sciences | 1 | 0.1 |
| **Obtained at least one SSH degree outside home country (n = 1,121)** | | | |
| | No | 875 | 78.1 |
| | Yes, from another Arab country only | 75 | 6.7 |
| | Yes, from a non-Arab country | 171 | 15.3 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Obtained a bachelor's in SSH outside home country (n = 1,049)** | | | |
| | No | 972 | 92.7 |
| | Yes, from another Arab country only | 37 | 3.5 |
| | Yes, from a non-Arab country | 40 | 3.8 |
| **Obtained a master's in SSH outside home country (n = 904)** | | | |
| | No | 748 | 82.7 |
| | Yes, from another Arab country only | 45 | 5.0 |
| | Yes, from a non-Arab country | 111 | 12.3 |
| **Obtained a doctorate in SSH outside home country (n = 689)** | | | |
| | No | 522 | 75.8 |
| | Yes, from another Arab country only | 45 | 6.5 |
| | Yes, from a non-Arab country | 122 | 17.7 |

## Annex 5: SSH Employment

| | | # | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Field of current job is SSH related** | | 862 | 76.9 |
| **SSH field of current job (n = 862)** | | | |
| | Is different than the major of the highest SSH degree | 99 | 11.5 |
| | Is different than the majors of all SSH degrees | 70 | 8.1 |
| **Fields of last 3 jobs (up to 3 reported, n = 1,101)** | | | |
| | All are SSH related | 652 | 59.2 |
| | None is SSH related | 204 | 18.5 |
| | Are mixed between SSH and other fields | 245 | 22.3 |
| **SSH fields of last 3 jobs (up to 3 reported, n = 897)** | | | |
| | At least one is different than that of highest SSH degree | 159 | 17.7 |
| | At least one is different than those of all SSH degrees | 123 | 13.7 |
| | At least one shift between SSH fields | 68 | 7.6 |
| **Current SSH job is in a non-home Arab country (n = 862)** | | 42 | 4.9 |
| **At least one of last 3 SSH jobs is outside home country (up to 3 reported, n = 897)** | | | |
| | No | 829 | 92.4 |
| | Yes, in another Arab country only | 52 | 5.8 |
| | Yes, in a non-Arab country | 16 | 1.8 |
| **Employment institution of current SSH job (n = 862)** | | | |
| | University | 691 | 80.2 |
| | University-based research center | 23 | 2.7 |
| | Non-university-based research center | 28 | 3.2 |
| | National nongovernmental organization/association | 11 | 1.3 |
| | Regional nongovernmental organization/association | 9 | 1.0 |
| | International nongovernmental organization/association | 4 | 0.5 |
| | Professional association | 1 | 0.1 |
| | International agency/organization | 6 | 0.7 |
| | Governmental/public administration | 58 | 6.7 |
| | Corporation | 6 | 0.7 |
| | School | 5 | 0.6 |
| | Other | 20 | 2.3 |

| Duty(ies) of current SSH job (n = 862) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Teaching | 748 | 86.8 |
| | Research | 733 | 85.0 |
| | Supervision of theses at master's level | 440 | 51.0 |
| | Supervision of theses at doctoral level | 309 | 35.8 |
| | Advising students/mentorship | 558 | 64.7 |
| | Service to the university | 504 | 58.5 |
| | Service to the field of specialty | 541 | 62.8 |
| | Service to the community | 323 | 37.5 |
| | Directorship/executive functions | 224 | 26.0 |
| | Program/project management | 272 | 31.6 |
| | Technical functions | 79 | 9.2 |
| | Development (donor relations)/fundraising | 112 | 13.0 |

## Annex 6: SSH Research and Knowledge Production

| | | # | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Research activity (n = 1,024)** | | | |
| | Was involved in research in the last 10 years | 955 | 93.3 |
| | Main research field is SSH related (n = 955) | 880 | 92.1 |
| **Field of SSH research (n = 880)** | | | |
| | Is different than the major of the highest SSH degree | 86 | 9.8 |
| | Is different than the majors of all SSH degrees | 61 | 6.9 |
| **Geographical scope(s) of SSH research (n = 875)** | | | |
| | No geographical scope | 117 | 13.4 |
| | National | 585 | 66.9 |
| | Regional | 451 | 51.5 |
| | Global | 310 | 35.4 |
| **Main country of interest for SSH research is different than citizenship (n = 585)** | | 34 | 5.8 |
| **Main region of interest for SSH research (n = 451)** | | | |
| | Northern Africa | 270 | 59.9 |
| | Middle Africa | 9 | 2.0 |
| | Southern Africa | 4 | 0.9 |
| | Eastern Africa | 15 | 3.3 |
| | Western Africa | 9 | 2.0 |
| | Central Asia | 9 | 2.0 |
| | Southern Asia | 14 | 3.1 |
| | Southeastern Asia | 9 | 2.0 |
| | Eastern Asia | 16 | 3.5 |
| | Western Asia | 77 | 17.1 |
| | Northern Europe | 6 | 1.3 |
| | Southern Europe | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Eastern Europe | 2 | 0.4 |
| | Western Europe | 6 | 1.3 |
| | Northern America | 2 | 0.4 |
| | Central America | 1 | 0.2 |
| | South America | 1 | 0.2 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Arab country(ies) covered by regional SSH research (n = 451)** | | | |
| | None | 17 | 3.8 |
| | Algeria | 204 | 45.2 |
| | Bahrain | 39 | 8.6 |
| | Comoros | 10 | 2.2 |
| | Djibouti | 11 | 2.4 |
| | Egypt | 195 | 43.2 |
| | Iraq | 90 | 20.0 |
| | Jordan | 116 | 25.7 |
| | Kuwait | 57 | 12.6 |
| | Lebanon | 89 | 19.7 |
| | Libya | 87 | 19.3 |
| | Mauritania | 64 | 14.2 |
| | Morocco | 209 | 46.3 |
| | Oman | 50 | 11.1 |
| | Palestine | 96 | 21.3 |
| | Qatar | 65 | 14.4 |
| | Saudi Arabia | 100 | 22.2 |
| | Somalia | 23 | 5.1 |
| | Sudan | 64 | 14.2 |
| | Syria | 91 | 20.2 |
| | Tunisia | 203 | 45.0 |
| | UAE | 68 | 15.1 |
| | Yemen | 49 | 10.9 |
| **Number of SSH publications over the last 10 years (n = 876)** | | | |
| | None | 28 | 3.2 |
| | 1 to 5 | 238 | 27.2 |
| | 6 to 10 | 274 | 31.3 |
| | 11 to 20 | 234 | 26.7 |
| | 21 and more | 102 | 11.6 |

*Annex 6 (Continued)*

| | | # | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Publication outlet(s) of SSH research (n = 880)** | | | |
| | National/regional peer-reviewed journals | 693 | 78.8 |
| | International peer-reviewed journals | 390 | 44.3 |
| | Non-peer-reviewed journals | 140 | 15.9 |
| | Research centers publications | 316 | 35.9 |
| | International organizations publications | 117 | 13.3 |
| | Governmental publications | 137 | 15.6 |
| | Non-governmental organizations or network publications | 119 | 13.5 |
| | Books/book chapters | 477 | 54.2 |
| | Never published | 28 | 3.2 |

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