

Middle East Critique



ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ccri20

Decolonizing Knowledge Production: Perspective on Promotion and Tenure Regulations in Palestine and beyond

Mudar Kassis, Rita Giacaman & Maher Hashweh

To cite this article: Mudar Kassis, Rita Giacaman & Maher Hashweh (2022) Decolonizing Knowledge Production: Perspective on Promotion and Tenure Regulations in Palestine and beyond, Middle East Critique, 31:2, 105-124, DOI: <u>10.1080/19436149.2022.2052466</u>

To link to this article: <u>https://doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2022.2052466</u>

© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 24 Mar 2022.

Submit your article to this journal 🗹

Article views: 3673



View related articles 🗹

🕨 View Crossmark data 🗹



Citing articles: 2 View citing articles



Decolonizing Knowledge Production: Perspective on Promotion and Tenure Regulations in Palestine and beyond

MUDAR KASSIS, RITA GIACAMAN AND MAHER HASHWEH Birzeit University, Birzeit, Palestine

ABSTRACT: Using the model of promotion and tenure regulations prevalent in Palestine as an impetus, this article argues that these regulations perpetuate neo-coloniality by localizing and reproducing hegemonic center-periphery relations in academia. This is especially true when it comes to using scientometric criteria in the evaluation of knowledge produced by Arab academics and which gives preference to English language over Arabic language publications, to journals over monographs, and when adopting Western assumptions about the form and substance of academic knowledge production. Consequently, Arab universities expand the reach of Western dominance and its control techniques.

KEY WORDS: Arab universities; Bibliometrics and scientometrics; Decolonial strategies; Knowledge production; Promotion and tenure

This article aims to deconstruct the neo-colonial and neo-liberal approaches embedded and reproduced in academic institutions in the Arab World, in part by using the prism of academic regulations for promotion and tenure, which perpetuate the reproduction of neo-coloniality. It was inspired by discussions among the three authors of this article, who are in the process of developing an online training platform on ethical research conduct in the context of the Arab World. We first had to identify and to conceptualize the fundamental principles and formulate the rules that should guide ethical research conduct in the Arab World, given that ethical research principles are universal, but their application is contextual. In the process, discussions came to the question of the need to ensure a conducive environment for ethical knowledge production. At Birzeit University (in Israeli-occupied Palestine), where the authors of this article are faculty members, this environment is shaped, inter alia, through promotion regulations,

Correspondence address: Mudar Kassis, Department of Philosophy and Cultural Studies and Muwatin Institute for Democracy and Human Rights, Birzeit University, Birzeit 627, Palestine; E-mail: mkassis@birzeit.edu; Rita Giacaman, Institute of Community and Public Health, Birzeit University, Birzeit, Palestine; E-mail: RITA@birzeit.edu; and Mahar Hashweh, Faculty of Education, Birzeit University, Birzeit, Palestine; E-mail: mhashweh@birzeit.edu

© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http:// creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. with questions arising about whether such regulations are ethical and why. Based on this discussion, we conducted a review of the international English language literature, framed around our experience as faculty members at Birzeit University, to support our main argument: Promotion regulations at Birzeit University, and in the Arab World, the non-English speaking world, and perhaps the world in general, must change toward more meaningful assumptions, methods, and processes, so that they can be termed ethical, i.e., can serve humanity. Ethical questions arise as to who guides science and technology? What are their motives? What techniques do they use in guidance, and whether they are democratic representatives of the scientific community or colonial proxies promoting the realization of external agendas?

One might assume that Palestinian researchers focus on questions of relevance and importance to their predicament: A people in danger, who are under Israeli colonial rule, imposed through a belligerent occupation, with no end in sight. They strive to expose what happens to a colonized people in chronic-warlike conditions, to document the injustices they endure, and to analyze the impact of the relentless violations of their human rights, including their rights to freedom, self-determination, health, education, work, and life. Yet, they struggle with university promotion regulations, because their research generally is incompatible with what these regulations assume faculty members should be producing, which is not locally informed knowledge that speaks to Palestinians' reality from a multi-disciplinary emancipatory perspective. However, such research does not help them in getting promoted, and they eventually realize that to get promoted and tenure they must abide by the regulations.

Such promotion regulations require particular research output defined to a significant extent by the prevailing mainstream literature, which frequently camouflages and reframes the Palestinian predicament and its causes, and is based on disciplinary frameworks. The discord, even at times glaring contradictions between what is published, largely in the English language, and Palestinian realities, prompted us to dispute how Palestinians are understood, framed, and studied, and to work toward decolonizing knowledge production and re-conceptualizing issues of importance either from the ground up, or by using alternative perspectives that can overcome the classical disciplinary frameworks and the neoliberal approaches that are embedded, partly and implicitly, in various indexes and rankings of higher education. This is particularly true for the social sciences, public health, and other disciplines where research questions aim to assist in societal development, or reframe understandings to suit local realities. Indeed, disciplinary frameworks impose certain embedded assumptions and empower 'disciplinary gate-keepers,' or support what Thomas Kuhn termed a 'disciplinary matrix.'¹ As Edward Said aptly put it:

One of the canonical topics of modern intellectual history has been the development of dominant discourses and disciplinary traditions in the main fields of scientific, social, and cultural inquiry. Without exceptions I know of, the paradigms for this topic have been drawn from what are considered exclusively Western sources.²

This article aims to stimulate discussions of needed changes in promotion policies and regulations in the Arab region toward what really matters because they define what is

¹ Thomas Kuhn (1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press), p. 182.

² Edward Said (1994) Culture and Imperialism (New York: Vintage Books), p. 41.

studied, the reason why we are conducting research, for whom we are writing, and what knowledge should be prioritized. We utilize the example of Birzeit University in Israelioccupied Palestine because we are familiar with it and are witnesses to its repercussions. To be sure, our primary task in research and teaching is to understand and make sense of the world in which we live; to make the purpose of research (and education) relevant to societal needs; and to contribute to the de-colonization of the production of knowledge worldwide by offering alternative views and frameworks.

Problems of Bibliometrics

Originally developed to help librarians decide on which journals to subscribe to,³ citation indexes (also called bibliometrics) and journal rankings are used for matters that were not part of the original reason for their establishment. Increasingly, they are being used for the promotion of journals, publishers, and institutions. Since the 1950s, a plethora of indexes have emerged defining what 'counts as "real" scientific knowledge,⁴ including the ISI Web of Knowledge, Web of Science, Scopus, Thomson Reuters Journal Citation Reports (JCR Impact Factor), the Annual Journal Citation Repots (IP), Article Influence Score, SCImago Journal Ranks (SJR), Source Normalization Impact Per Paper (SNIP), in addition to various discipline specific indexes, to generate information about journal quality, success, and prestige measures.⁵ Such indexes are being used for evaluating the merit of researchers' scientific publications, and in decisions on hiring and firing, in research assessments, and in promotion and tenure decisions related to 'individual' researchers. In essence, bibliometrics have become scientometrics, and evaluating the quality of knowledge production was transposed into evaluating the 'marketing' capacity of researchers and institutions. This is not to claim that bibliometrics do not reflect anything substantial. They do, just as IQ tests reflect something, but the assumption about what they reflect turns out to be misleading since 'a test that measures the Western conception of intelligence may be measuring something else, or, in a sense, nothing at all in a non-Western culture.⁶ The drawbacks of using bibliometrics as scientometrics are numerous, but what is of utmost concern in the context of the Global South is that 'an increased use of citation indicators in research evaluation and funding may imply less attention to such other research quality dimensions as solidity/plausibility, originality, and societal value.⁷⁷

To be sure, a critical body of literature is emerging that demonstrates the inappropriateness of using citation analysis in assessing research production and quality with a 'one hat fits all' approach, raising questions about technical problems associated with

³ Thorsten Gruber (2014) Academic Sell-out: How an Obsession with Metrics and Rankings is Damaging Academia, *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 24(2), pp. 165–177; and Stella Nkomo (2009) The Seductive Power of Academic Journal Rankings: Challenges of Searching for the Otherwise, *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 8(1), pp. 106–121.

⁴ Nkomo, Seductive Power of Academic Journal Rankings, p. 108.

⁵ Ted Brown (2011) Journal Quality Metrics: Options to Consider other than Impact Factors, *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 65(3), pp. 346–350; and Gaby Haddow & Paul Genoni (2010) Citation Analysis and Peer Ranking of Australian Social Science Journals, *Scientometrics*, 85(2), pp. 471–487.

⁶ Robert Sternberg, Elena Grigorenko & Donald Bundy (2001) The Predictive Value of IQ, Merrill Palmer Quarterly, 47(1), pp. 1–41, p. 27.

⁷ Dag Aksnes, Liv Langfeld & Paul Wouters (2019) Citations, Citation Indicators, and Research Quality: An Overview of Basic Concepts and Theories, *SAGE Open*, pp. 1–17, at p. 11.

citation data, disciplinarity, language, and knowledge production problems, and how journals work to increase their citation indexes to maintain themselves in the 'high quality' tier. This critical literature, written by scholars from both northern and southern countries, points to the near universal and unvielding reliance on journal impact rankings and citations to evaluate research quality, despite continuing protests about the inadequacy of this method for evaluating journals, institutions and researchers.⁸ There are indications that journal coverage in such databases is incomplete,⁹ not objective, and lacking transparency and consistency noted in the ranking process. For example, a comparison between SCImago SJR and IF indicates that they use different scientific databases as the source of citation.¹⁰ Others have noted that differences in publication assessments reflect different approaches and different methods used in such assessments.¹¹ An evaluation of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) with SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) confirmed the impossibility of conducting a one-to-one comparison because of differences in the number of journals included in assessments.¹² Thus, in addition to questions of the applicability of metrics for judging the quality and utility of research production, a set of secondary questions arise vis-à-vis the choices university management make of one citation index over another when it is not clear which is better, and how they account for the disparity in assessments between different indexes, and among different disciplines.

The second problem pertains to bias in favor of science, engineering, technology and medicine.¹³ For example, the coverage of humanities and the social sciences in Thomson Reuter's Impact Factor (IF) is much less comprehensive than it is for what is called the hard sciences.¹⁴ An Australian study reported that citation data might not be the most appropriate method of evaluating social science journal outputs, because such titles attract a relatively low percentage of citations to allow for meaningful assessments of articles.¹⁵ Furthermore, research topics in the social sciences usually are linked to locale, or place, making them relatively less likely to be cited by others.¹⁶

⁸ Nkomo (2009) Seductive Power of Academic Journal Rankings, pp. 109–110.

⁹ Per Seglen (1998) Citation Rates and Journal Impact Factors are not Suitable for Evaluation of Research, *Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica*, 69(3), pp. 224–229; Haddow & Genoni, Citation Analysis and Peer Ranking; Péter Jacsó (2012) The Problems with the Subject Categories Schema in the Eigen Factor Database from the Perspective of Ranking Journals by their Prestige and Impact, *Online Information Review*, 36(5), pp. 758–766.

¹⁰ Matthew Falagas, Vasilios D. Kouranos, Ricardo Arencibia-Jorge & Drosos E. Karageorgopoulos (2008) Comparison of SCImago Journal Rank Indicator with Journal Impact Factor, *The FASEB Journal*, 22(8), pp. 2623–2628.

¹¹ C. Michael Hall & Stephen J. Page (2015) Following the Impact Factor: Utilitarianism or Academic Compliance? In: *Tourism Management*, 51(3), pp. 309–312; Haddow & Genoni, Citation Analysis and Peer Ranking.

¹² Zahiruddin Khurshid (2014) Measuring the Quality of Contributions of Saudi Authors to LIS Journals Using Journal Impact Factor (JIF), SCImago Journal Rank (SJR), and Google Scholar Metrics (GSM), *The Serials Librarian*, 67(1), pp. 81–98.

¹³ Roland Waast & Pier-Luigi Rossi (2010) "Scientific Production in Arab Countries: A Bibliometric Perspective, *Science, Technology and Society*, 15(2), pp. 339–370; Haddow & Genoni, Citation Analysis and Peer Ranking; Mustafa Özbilgin (2009) From Journal Rankings to Making Sense of the World, *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 8(1), pp. 113–121.

¹⁴ John Cox (2009) As I See It! Impact Factors and Usage Factors: Testing Alternative Metrics, Against the Grain, 21(6), pp. 74–76.

¹⁵ Hall & Page, Following the Impact Factor.

¹⁶ Sari Hanafi (2011) University Systems in the Arab East: Publish Globally and Perish Locally vs Publish Locally and Perish Globally. In: *Current Sociology*, 59(3), pp. 291–309.

In other words, low index scores cannot be judged as lacking quality,¹⁷ which is what happens when relying on such indexes for quality evaluation. Even with the development of ranking methods for economics and the social sciences, the problem of the lack of clear justification for using one ranking method over the other remains.¹⁸

A third and key problem is the language effect, with data bases biased toward the English language.¹⁹ The application of standard bibliometric indicators and constructing rankings based on such indicators have been shown to underestimate dramatically language effects for Germany and France, for example, with non-English publications reducing the impact of non-English speaking countries,²⁰ and consequently reducing the impact of journals and researcher production. Others from Spain protest the adoption of such indicators to evaluate scientific activity maintaining that such an approach favors English language journals, and that works published in English show a higher degree of citation.²¹ Similar protests come from South Africa,²² Central Asia,²³ Taiwan,²⁴ and elsewhere, and from the Arab World.²⁵ Southern colleagues are excluded from mainstream scholarly publication because of this language barrier,²⁶ among other exclusions, and because journals are published mostly in North America and Western Europe in English,²⁷ not to mention that more than 85 percent of publications in pure sciences are published in English.²⁸ Yet, the quality of an article should not be judged based on the fact that it is in English, as quality work can be published in any language. Indeed, the problem of language goes beyond the question of which language(s) counts. Language is a crucial element in understanding and 'performing' culture. For this reason, the question of language, especially in the humanities but also in the social sciences, is not one of a choice that is predicted on knowledge dissemination. The value of scholarship in humanitarian knowledge (and in the social sciences)

²¹ Gregorio González-Alcaide, Juan Carlos Valderrama-Zurián & Rafael Aleixandre-Benavent (2012) The Impact Factor in Non-English-Speaking Countries, *Scientometrics*, 92(2), pp. 297–311.

²² Nkomo, The Seductive Power of Academic Journal Rankings.

¹⁷ Henk F. Moed (2014) SNIP Journal Impact Indicator Accounts for Differences in Citation Characteristics and Database Coverage Between Properly Defined Subject Fields, in *Against the Grain*, 22(4), pp. 34–38.

¹⁸ Ignacio Palacios-Huerta & Oscar Volij (2014) Axiomatic Measures of Intellectual Influence, in International Journal of Industrial Organization, 34, pp. 85–90.

¹⁹ Per Seglen (1998) Citation Rates and Journal Impact Factors are not Suitable for Evaluation of Research.

²⁰ Anthony Van Raan, Thed N. Van Leeuwen & Martijn S. Visser (2011) Severe Language Effect in University Rankings: Particularly Germany and France are Wronged in Citation-based Rankings, *Scientometrics*, 88(2), pp. 495–498.

²³ Sarah Amsler (2007) The Politics of Knowledge in Central Asia: Science between Marx and the Market (London: Routledge).

²⁴ Hui Tzu Min (2014) Participating in International Academic Publishing: A Taiwan Perspective, *Tesol Quarterly*, 48(1), pp. 188–200; Xiaoli Jiang, Erik Borg & Michaela Borg (2017) Challenges and Coping Strategies for International Publication: Perceptions of Young Scholars in China, *Studies in Higher Education*, 42(3), pp. 428–444.

²⁵ Hanafi, University Systems in the Arab East.

²⁶ Françoise Salager-Meyer (2008) Scientific Publishing in Developing Countries: Challenges for the Future, *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 7(2), pp. 121–132.

²⁷ Suresh Canagarajah (1996) "Nondiscursive" Requirements in Academic Publishing, Material Resources of Periphery Scholars, and the Politics of Knowledge Production, *Written Communication*, 13(4), pp. 435–472.

²⁸ Wael Benjaloun (2017) Scientific Research and Arab Universities. In: Universities and Academic Research in the Arab World, pp. 49–67 (Beirut: Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies), p. 58 (in Arabic).

involves a variety of language embedded nuances that reflect aesthetical values, emotions, humor, etc. The drive to publish in English or any other foreign language might end up distorting embedded knowledge.

A fourth problem is the dominance, and acceptance of the conceptualizations and discourse driven by the West,²⁹ and specifically English language journals, resulting in what is called English linguicism, that is, language based discrimination. This reduces research production to what is subjugated to particular paradigms and knowledge traditions prevalent in English-speaking countries, which constitutes the mainstream (together with a certain dose of alterations that are referred to as 'alternative'). As has been noted: 'It is not that center journals do not publish a range of alternative opinions on a given subject; it is that the range of opinions will be within a range tolerable to center interests.'³⁰ Thus, the assumption that journal requirements are non-ideological and non-political, and therefore non-discriminatory, is in itself a suppressive ideology, as 'pluralism and societal relevance tends to be suppressed to create papers of interest to the gatekeepers of high impact: English-language journals.'³¹

Hidden assumptions underlying publishing rules are implicated in the intellectual hegemony of developed nations.³² where generally. Western conventions delegitimize the knowledge of Third World scholars, describing it as inferior and backward. Surely, 'If in the colonial past, academic imperialism was maintained via colonial power, today academic neo-colonialism is maintained via the condition of academic dependency.'33 Foucault noted that subjugated knowledge includes 'a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity.³⁴ He further emphasized that it is through the reappearance of disqualified knowledges described as 'particular, local, and regional knowledge, a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity, that criticism performs its work,³⁵ which seems to be unheeded. The domination of largely English language journals then creates a center-periphery scientific output dichotomy, dividing the scientific world.³⁶ It also reduces, and sometimes even removes the originality and diversity of the drivers of discourse in the West.³⁷ This consolidates the diffusion of knowledge by English language journals³⁸ whereby even the substance of what is considered

²⁹ Canagarajah, "Nondiscursive" Requirements in Academic Publishing; Francis Adyanga Akena (2012) Critical Analysis of the Production of Western Knowledge and its Implications for Indigenous Knowledge and Decolonization, *Journal of Black Studies*, 43(6), pp. 599–619.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 460.

³¹ Diana Hicks, Paul Wouters, Ludo Waltman, Sarah de Rijcke & Ismael Rafols (2015) The Leiden Manifesto for Research Metrics, *Nature*, 520, pp. 429–431, at p. 430.

³² Canagarajah, "Nondiscursive" Requirements, p. 437.

³³ Syed Farid Alatas (2003) Academic Dependency and the Global Division of Labour in the Social Sciences, *Current Sociology*, 51(6), pp. 599–613, at p. 602.

³⁴ Michel Foucault (1980) Power/knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977 (New York: Pantheon Books), p. 82.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Françoise Salager-Meyer (2008) Scientific Publishing in Developing Countries, Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 7(2), pp. 121–132.

³⁷ Alan Sangster (2015) You Cannot Judge a Book by its Cover, *Accounting Education*, 24(3), pp. 175–186.

³⁸ Gregorio González-Alcaide, Juan Carlos Valderrama-Zurián& Rafael Aleixandre-Benavent (2012) The Impact Factor in Non-English-Speaking Countries, *Scientometrics*, 92(2), pp. 297–311.

knowledge is altered. It makes scholars of the periphery simply the consumers of central scholars' knowledge.³⁹

The fifth problem is that citations reflect the impact of scholars on their colleagues and not on society. Bibliometric information cannot present the evaluation of the most important original task and achievement of knowledge production, its impact on society. Even in the case where scholarly work is cited because of a useful innovation, the likelihood that this innovation is instrumental for the advancement of community may be low since this measure is mediated by the paradigms, ideologies, priorities, and values of the powerful center, not to mention its market monetary value serving as the principal unit for measuring utility. This problem is of utmost bearing with respect to the backdrop of the neo-colonial condition that generally prevails in the Arab context, and particularly in Palestine where neo-coloniality conjoins coloniality.

A final problem is emphasis on publishing in highly ranked journals, which fosters a narrow conception of what scholarship and the production of knowledge entails. Scholarship mainly is understood as a process of discovery or knowledge construction that is the result of scientific inquiry, what Ernest Boyer termed the scholarship of discovery. However, as Boyer⁴⁰ noted, there are other forms of scholarship that are just as important: Scholarships of integration, application, and teaching. Integration involves creating new knowledge by bringing together knowledge from two or more disciplines or fields in order to create new insights and understanding. Application involves bringing knowledge to bear in addressing significant societal issues. Yet, neither integration nor application can be published easily in short journal articles but are developed better in monographs. However, monographs are not captured adequately by metrics, and, consequently, faculty are discouraged from publishing monographs, thereby creating unnecessary privilege for publishing articles.

Bibliometrics in a Hegemonic Context

This situation did not develop in a vacuum. It is an attribute of the colonial legacy that drove conditions whereby the notion of Western supremacy is internalized and embedded in institutions, research and teaching. This legacy articulated with neoliberalism and succeeded in aligning higher education with neoliberal ideology and neoliberal economics, leading to marketizing higher education⁴¹ and commercializing academic publishing.⁴² This changed the definition of education from a public good serving society to a private good benefiting those who graduate⁴³ and the institutions that hire them. This fundamental change in thinking about education and research emerged under the pressure of extreme privatization and radicalized market forces. Rankings in this context are not what they claim, i.e., means of assessing the value of educational and research production. Rather, they are exclusionary and help to align higher education with

³⁹ Suresh Canagarajah (1996) "Nondiscursive" Requirements in Academic Publishing.

⁴⁰ Ernest Boyer (1990) Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate (Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching).

⁴¹ Barbara Kehm & Tero Erkkila (2014) Editorial: The Ranking Game, *European Journal of Education* 49(1), pp. 3–11.

⁴² Hall & Page, Following the Impact Factor, *Tourism Management*, 51, pp. 309–312.

⁴³ Philip Altbach (2009) Peripheries and Centers: Research Universities in Developing Countries, Asia Pacific Education Review, 10(1), pp. 15–27.

[']neoliberal rationalities at national and global levels.' This is how neoliberalism, superimposed on colonization, has taken over universities, with the institution of the audit culture and systems of academic surveillance, competition among universities and researchers, and what is called academic entrepreneurship.⁴⁴ These changes are particularly relevant in the Arab World, including Israeli-colonized Palestine.

The degree to which the scientific milieu in Arab countries has been subjugated to Western academia's directives, journals and indexes is stunning. For example, an Arab researcher developed mathematical models for application to journals published in Arabic and for estimating the impact of cumulative research contributions of particular scientists.⁴⁵ without considering the wide range of disciplines and topics which could or could not be evaluated with the count approach, nor the issue of prioritizing what is being studied and why. A public health journal search in Arabic- speaking countries using English language databases revealed that there were 20 journals in 2016, all available in English. Of those, three were available in English and Arabic, one in English and French, and another in all three languages. The authors noted that journals published in languages other than English are cited infrequently, have low impact factors or none reported, and that they are not indexed in major bibliographic databases.⁴⁶ The authors did not seem troubled by the fact that most were in English, or why. A study of the contributions of Saudi authors to Library and Information Science (LIS) in 2013 used three metrics to rank journals, the JIF, SJR, and Google Scholar. The author reported that only the works published in foreign journals were counted and maintained that publications in local journals were not included because of their little or no impact on the global LIS literature.⁴⁷

This obsession with indexes prompted two Saudi Arabian universities to recruit highly-cited researchers from a top Western university to make it on lists of most frequently cited researchers. They offered affiliation with their universities in exchange for presence in these universities once yearly for a short period; to indicate in all their publications their affiliation to the Saudi University; and with a payment of about 70,000 USD per year!⁴⁸ Perhaps such business transactions are what led Nature Index to publish that Saudi Arabia leads the way (called leader of the pack) in scientific research in the Arab World.⁴⁹ In fact, Said al-Siddiki notes that there is no corresponding benefit for the students in these universities from these high cost professors.⁵⁰ Undeniably, the marketization of higher education and of its metrics created a vicious circle, which makes resisting and negotiating both syndromes extremely difficult.

⁴⁴ Hall & Page, Following the Impact Factor.

⁴⁵ Mahmoud Abdel-Aty (2012) Indices to Quantify the Ranking of Arabic Journals and Research Output, *CoRR* abs/1205.0003, available online at: http://arxiv.org/abs/1205.0003. Accessed February 18, 2021.

⁴⁶ Basil Aboul-Enein, H. Joshua Bernstein & Jacquelyn Bowser (2017) Peer Reviewed Public Health Journals from Arabic Speaking Countries: An Updated Snapshot, *Journal of Public Health Policy*, 38(1), pp. 146–157.

⁴⁷ Zahiruddin Khurshid (2014) Measuring the Quality of Contributions of Saudi Authors to LIS Journals Using Journal Impact Factor (JIF), SCImago Journal Rank (SJR), and Google Scholar Metrics (GSM), *The Serials Librarian* 67 (1), pp. 81–98.

⁴⁸ Barbara Kehm & Tero Erkkila (2014) Editorial: The Ranking Game, *European Journal of Education* 49 (1), pp. 3–11.

⁴⁹ Richard Hodson, Mahmoud Ashour, Aaron Ballagh & Alexander Scherrmann (2017) Leader of the Pack, *Nature*, 549 (7673), pp. 62–63.

⁵⁰ Said Al-Siddiki (2017) The Position of Arab Universities in International University Rankings, in Universities and Academic Research in the Arab World, pp. 119–145 (Beirut: Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies), at pp. 136–137 [In Arabic].

Consequently, they gradually are internalized and become the norm without questioning despite potentially disastrous consequences for higher education, such as the relative neglect of teaching, noted as: 'some university professors ... pay less attention to students' education and scientific problems and, as a result, students are left without supervisors and counselors to help them with their theses or articles. Naturally, this gap is filled by people in the academic black market,'⁵¹ where ghost writers complete students' academic work for a fee.

Institutional Consequences of Metric Reductionism

One consequence of this competitive field that emerges based on these indexes is that the particularity of various institutions that historically have constituted their strength becomes secondary, and they thus abandon their good traditions in exchange for (mal) practices that aim to provide better rankings in various indexes. The introduction of the new metric practices is inevitably coercive, since it brings in criteria that administrations, publishers, and donors impose. These criteria are not developed as a result of internal debate or democratic processes, but rather serve as an externally dictated intrusion, and they undermine the already limited existing space for freedom that academic institutions have in the Arab World and elsewhere. This is how institutions known for their outstanding liberal environment like Birzeit University moved from focusing on pride of being an oasis of freedom to a focus on rankings in various indexes. The impact of such a transformation is equivalent to becoming part of a 'Western higher education franchise,' much like a number of new institutions that have opened in the Arab World during the past two decades. Through these mechanisms, Arab universities are re-conceived as extensions of those in a foreign metropolis.

In terms of internal institutional structures, new definitions of meritocracy have emerged as a result of reliance on metrics. 'The right person' for leadership today is an academic with a good *h*-index rather than one with strong institutional bonds, or social and institutional wisdom. Whereas rank and tenure previously were considered assets for leadership positions at the university, now they have become a bottleneck. When university administrations adopt metric-based criteria for choosing faculty in leadership positions, they sacrifice autonomy as they opt to use criteria that are externally defined instead of those accrued within institutions. Institutional reputation is reduced from reflecting the integrative quality of the knowledge environment (including freedom, diversity, social cohesion, social relevance, and the like) to a process of counting and the simple sum of a few metrics (number of publications, citations, hits to the website, etc.). As noted, 'the international promotion criteria adopted by two-thirds of the [Arab] universities surveyed may require revision and assessment, in light of the need for local quality research that has local relevance and readability, as well as social and political impact for steering much needed change.⁵² Although metrics can be indicative of knowledge production to

⁵¹ Abbas Varij Kazemi & Azadeh Dehqhan Dehnavi (2017) The New Academic Proletariat in Iran, *Critique*, pp. 141–158, at p. 155.

⁵² Kamal Abouchedid & Diane Nauffal (2019) Promotion Policies and Recruitment in Select Key Universities in the Arab Region. (Beirut: The Arab Council for Social Sciences), available online at: http://www.theacss.org/uploads/cke_documents/AbouChedid-Nauffal_Promotion-Policies-and-Recruitment-in-Selective-Key-Universities.pdf. Accessed August 6, 2021.

some extent, reducing the quality of learning and knowledge production to counting metrics is a reduction of the process to some of its measurable features, and with questionable outputs.

Using such indexes to evaluate research production and universities is about accepting an external (rather than an internal) definition that infringes on the autonomy of research and researchers and limits the ability of researchers in the periphery to produce and benefit from knowledge production relating to their needs and concerns. This process stands in contradiction to the widely agreed upon principles of measuring performance 'against the research missions of the institution, group or researcher,' and protecting 'excellence in locally relevant research.'53 It objectifies and promotes the East-West divide and prohibits the inclusion of what we study, which becomes defined by the West, and written for Western audiences, with priorities for Western knowledge production using Western conceptualizations and frameworks. Thus, research coming from the periphery gets published only if it is acceptable to the center. Not only does this pattern restrict the investigation and publication of topics that are considered worthy of scientific inquiry and dissemination, but it also confines fields of knowledge such as de-colonial scholarship to what is legitimized in the colonial center. As a result, scholars of the periphery lose some of the main purposes of conducting research, which is to serve their society and to produce alternative emancipatory knowledge. Scholars from the periphery are left with two alternatives: Either accept being silenced in the global theatre of academia whenever their scholarship crosses the boundaries set by the mainstream; or being side-lined in the struggle of getting promoted and ensuring tenure in the heat of their institutions' competition in getting listed in university 'quality' indexes.

As noted elsewhere, university managers in Israeli-colonized Palestine, and elsewhere in the Arab region and beyond, have surrendered to the power of academic rankings and adopted the policies and practices of 'power metrics' locally, thus reproducing the power of the center over the periphery in the neoliberal era of global governmentality. Consequently, scholars of the periphery end up either controlling themselves and abiding by the policies and practices of power metrics, or becoming scholarly irrelevant and left with teaching duties, which are controlled by another set of metrics that reflect the marketization of learning and the 'McDonaldization' of higher education.⁵⁴ Facilitating this process is the fact that it did not face any significant resistance. While the same process in the imperial center took place as part of the contraction of the welfare state,⁵⁵ the periphery had no welfare, and there was little to defend beyond salaries and contracts coming at the cost of the faculty giving up its control over the university.⁵⁶

⁵³ Diana Hicks, Paul Wouters, Ludo Waltman, Sarah de Rijcke, & Ismael Rafols (2015) The Leiden Manifesto for Research Metrics, in *Nature*, 23, p. 430.

⁵⁴ David Hartley (1995) The 'McDonaldization' of Higher Education: Food for thought?, Oxford Review of Education, 21(4), pp. 409–423; Marianne Paiva (2015) The McDonaldization of Higher Education, available online at: http://www.ethnography.com/2015/01/the-mcdonaldization-of-higher-education/, accessed Dec. 30, 2020.

⁵⁵ Hartley, The 'McDonaldization' of Higher Education.

⁵⁶ Peter Bratsis (2020) Covid and the Crisis in Capitalist Universities, *The Gadfly Online*, 30 November, available online at: https://thegadflybmcc.wordpress.com/2020/11/30/covid-and-the-crisis-in-capitalist-universities/, accessed Dec. 30, 2020.

Problems Related to the Palestinian Context

In the Palestinian case, the situation is complicated further because Palestinian scholars often are disqualified, censured, and excluded from presenting their research and analysis of the Palestinian predicament. If they state a truth verified by practice and lived experience, but which contradicts the mainstream narrative, they are labeled as biased or unscientific. Even the venues that present themselves as critical, anticolonial, and non-paradigmatic set certain criteria as to what constitutes decolonial critique. As noted, 'there are no "third world radicals" or indigenous theorisers in mainstream journals.⁵⁷ Hence, Palestinian scholars need to present their experiential knowledge in frameworks that are legitimate within the center's mainstream. One flagrant example is equating the critique of Israel with anti-Semitism, and creating a situation where a Palestinian scholar reporting on Israel's violations of human rights is labeled as anti-Semitic. Paul Findley's account on how difficult it was to find a publisher for what turned out to be a bestseller is illuminating:

My quest for a publisher began in March 1983 and was predictably long and frustrating. Declining to represent me, New York literary agent Alexander Wylie forecast with prophetic vision that no major U.S. publisher would accept my book. He wrote, "It's a sad state of affairs." Bruce Lee of William Morrow and Company called my manuscript "outstanding," but his company concluded that publishing it "would cause trouble in the house and outside" and decided against "taking the heat." Robert Loomis of Random House called it an "important book" but reported that the firm's leadership decided the theme was "too sensitive." Twenty other publishers also said no.⁵⁸

The Palestinian public intellectual Edward Said noted that: 'A disciplinary communications apparatus exists in the West both for overlooking most of the basic things that might present Israel in a bad light, and for punishing those who try to tell the truth.'⁵⁹ While some space recently has opened up in English language publishing outlets for documenting the Palestinian predicament and narrative under Israeli military occupation and colonial practices, this did not reduce the mainstream presentation of the Palestinian problem as a conflict between two nations on equal footing instead of one stemming from an external obstruction of self-determination. This presentation allows for what Mahmood Mamdani calls a 'serious intellectual error'⁶⁰ that 'makes it seem as though the conflict in Israel/Palestine is between Jews and those who hate them, rather than between settlers and the community they dispossessed.'⁶¹ For example, in 2002, and during the Israeli army attacks on West Bank towns, with bombing, destruction of infrastructure, shooting, killing and maiming, and humiliation of the civilian population, one of the authors of this article wrote a commentary on the traumatic

⁵⁷ Peter Marcus Kristensen (2015) How Can Emerging Powers Speak? On Theorists, Native Informants and Quasi-officials in International Relations Discourse, *Third World Quarterly*, 36(4), 637–653, p. 648.

 ⁵⁸ Paul Findley (1989) They Dare to Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby, Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, p. viii.

⁵⁹ Edward Said (1984) Permission to Narrate, Journal of Palestine Studies, 13(3), 27-48, p. 30.

⁶⁰ Mahmood Mamdani (2020) Neither Settler nor Native: The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University), p. 254.

⁶¹ Ibid.

effects of such political violence on Palestinian children and sent it to a journal for which the author writes reviews. The editor rejected it based on the notion that the journal 'would like to remain neutral'! During the same period, several journals were publishing articles on the traumatic effects of conditions on Israelis, and none were deemed non-neutral or biased. This discrepancy is part of the prevailing approach that disqualifies Palestinian discourse. In 2014, the same author along with others had to endure attacks by the Zionist lobby on a prestigious English journal, which threated the demise of the journal or the firing of the editor who dared to allow the publication of information about how the Gaza Strip was experiencing the choking and continuing Israeli siege.

The Matrix of Domination

Scholars of the periphery are subjected to multiple and interconnected governmentalities: Those of disciplinary limitations, institutional regulations, the scientometric culture, and that of the 'publish at the center' policies, with an added layer of colonial/ neo-colonial hegemony/governmentality. The question is: Why do Palestinian, and Arab promotion regulations abide by English language journal controls, ideologically laden biases, and fears of telling the truth? Why do they reproduce locally and, in part voluntarily, this matrix of governmentalities? It is as if a fear reflecting a type of governmentality at the metropolitan center triggers a knee jerk rejection among high impact English language journals of Palestinian and Arab articles which go against the ideological grain, and attempt to tell the truth. But why does it not find resistance in the periphery? Who are we serving by insisting on mimicking promotion regulations based on indexes imbued with racism and orientalism? Why have we succumbed to the quick and dirty, to market forces, and competition which is changing the nature of research and education, and giving up on the broader cause of serving society and humanity? For whom are we writing, and why are we writing?

The problem is that of the matrix of domination conditioning the education, practice, and career of scholars of the periphery. Resistance acts are penalized; its initiators are excluded and labeled as radical, or as conspiracy theory promoters, thus opinionated and unscientific. Their careers are threatened. If they do not 'perish,' they will not be promoted, and eventually they will be led by those who get promoted. This system of deterrence ensures a localized reproduction of the domination matrix, and enables its perpetuation and expansion. Other factors are also relevant including funder dictats that prompt the use of their frameworks and set research agendas conceived in the metropolitan center with scant or no relevance of research to local contexts. The insistence of research funders on policy-oriented research, not the production of knowledge, promotes the alienation of peripheral framing and scholarship unless it plays a secondary role in informing that of the center. Another crucial factor reinforcing this domination is the interconnectedness of research and knowledge production with the political environment. Highly securitized, non-democratic regimes that prevail in the periphery have preferences for 'sanitized' knowledge production that coincides with those of the metropolitan center and its donors. The less local scholars work on local issues in an independent manner, the less threatened are totalitarian regimes; and the more local scholars engage with the application of ideas emerging in the metropole, the better they can be maintained outside the realm of praxis, and serve the legitimation of existing regimes. Gilbert Achcar tackles one important example of this complexity. He states that '[p]aradoxically, until 2011 the Arabic-speaking region itself stood as an exception to the global research trend in exploring socio-economic inequality, with very few studies dedicated wholly or in part to this issue and its consequences.⁶² Then, using the Egyptian case, he illustrates how this research gap was convenient for the regime and for international financial institutions (led by the IMF), and supported by other international institutions (such as UNDP and 'foreign experts').

Possible Decolonization Strategies

The matrix of domination is complex and powerful. Its resistance is broad and requires multifaceted efforts. First, what is required is a 'clarified political and methodological commitment to the dismantling of systems of domination which, since they are collectively maintained must, to adopt and transform some of Gramsci's phrases, be collectively fought, by mutual siege, war of maneuver and war of position.⁶³ That is, decolonizing academia in the periphery requires consolidated and multifaceted resistance to the domination matrix. Promotion policy and regulations need to change, but this comes with risks. Changes in parts of the system, even if only pertaining to promotion and tenure regulations, can instigate a crisis with repercussions on the system as a whole. It can lead either to lagging promotions due to the emergence of new requirements that are not sufficiently developed, as for example the presence of specialized high quality Arabic language journals; or lead to massive promotions, encouraging 'academic populism.' Some Arab universities accept works published in local Arabic journals for promotion/tenure. However, if Arabic journals do not establish quality control systems, problems such as the negative impact on the quality of what is published arise. Interaction with the global scientific communities also can be curtailed and can lead to the de-universalization of knowledge, and to a revival of the racist myth of the 'clash of civilizations' as a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is also not uncommon in some Arab and other developing countries to publish in English predatory journals to be promoted rapidly.⁶⁴ In order to minimize these risks and undesirable effects, the decolonization process needs to be well planned, incremental, and consensual.

Publications

One possible avenue is boosting publishing in Arabic journals not reproducing local versions of the domination of those of the center. Eurocentrism is not limited to Europe or the West. Its legacy is part and parcel of the 'global' traditions of academic knowledge production which transposes Western into global. This transposition needs to be contested in order for publishing in local languages to become instrumental in decolonizing the frameworks of knowledge dissemination. The struggle for

⁶² Gilbert Achcar (2020) On the 'Arab Inequality Puzzle': The Case of Egypt, *Development and Change*, 51(3), pp. 746–770, at p. 747.

⁶³ Edward Said (1985) Orientalism Reconsidered, *Cultural Critique*, 1(1), pp. 89–107, at p. 107.

⁶⁴ Selcuk Besir Demir (2018) Predatory journals: Who publishes in them and why? *Journal of Informetrics*, 12(4), pp. 1296–1311; Ayokunle Olumuyiwa Omobowale, Olayinka Akanle, Adebusuyi Isaac Adeniran & Kamorudeen Adegboyega (2014) Peripheral scholarship and the context of foreign paid publishing in Nigeria, *Current Sociology* 62(5), pp. 666–684.

decolonizing any aspect of knowledge production should not be a local effort, nor should its aims be local as this affects many non-English speaking countries, but it can start locally. Decolonization is not about switching the center and the periphery, but instead about equalizing them. The claim of globalism and universality should be realized, rather than refuted. Knowledge should be produced and published globally and in all languages.

While initiatives to establish and develop Arabic language journals do exist,⁶⁵ and have provided a venue for scholarly exchange in Arabic, these initiatives remain limited, insufficient, and sometimes reproduce mainstream Western prejudices in their editorial policies and review criteria. Those who are capable of taking up these initiatives are usually the products of the existing system. It likely will take some time before such efforts bear the fruits of resistance scholarship.

Another avenue is the production of Arabic language journals maintaining rigorous standards and publishing translated work. Finding local and regional reviewers is difficult, but not impossible if a vibrant 'Arabophone' academic network is active on the ground and in solidarity with a decolonial program. The success of such a network hinges on cooperation among Arab universities; the development of a research infrastructure; the production of quality journals; and the institution of assessment procedures that do not rely on just counting, but on quality, relevance in terms of both alternative knowledge production and contribution to world debates, and addressing issues of importance to societal development.

While attempts to develop indicators to add measured factors reflecting the relevance of research to teaching, regional cooperation, and knowledge exchange,⁶⁶ as for example the European (U-Multirank) index, attempts to develop indicators for the Arab World largely have been confined to the existing standards with no significant attempts to counter balance the prevailing above-mentioned prejudices. For instance, the Association of Arab Universities launched an Arab Index Factor,⁶⁷ which is based on typical indicators with the addition of 'language precision.' There are other, more localized attempts by various institutions to find ways to deal with Arabic language journals, but they fall short of the needed radical decolonial perspective.

A third avenue is strengthening the academic publication landscape in the Arab World with the creation of Arabic versions of certain progressive and 'prominent' journals and the inclusion of Arabic-speaking members on editorial boards. It is natural to assume that such Arabic language journals will provide ample space for discussions of issues and matters that pertain to the Arab world, and have a special focus on decolonial research. Such journals can provide relevant educational material for Arab universities and can become references on regional matters. Institutions such as universities should be prompted toward accepting publications in these journals for the

⁶⁵ Examples are a series of journals in the social sciences and humanities published by the Doha-based Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. For an overview of these journals, see: https://www. dohainstitute.org/en/booksandjournals/pages/journals.aspx, accessed 6 August 2021. Other examples also exist such as *Idafat*: The Arab Journal of Sociology", published in Beirut by the Arab Society for Sociology in collaboration with the Centre for Arab Unity Studies, available online at: https://caus.org. lb/en/idafat-journal/, accessed 30 January 2022.

⁶⁶ Said Al-Siddiki (2017) The Position of Arab Universities in International University Rankings. In: Universities and Academic Research in the Arab World, pp. 119–145 (Beirut: Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies), p. 143. (In Arabic)

⁶⁷ Association of Arab Universities (2016) Arab Impact Factor. Available online at: https://www.arabimpactfactor.com/pages/tasnif.php. Accessed 6 August 2021. (In Arabic)

purposes of promotion/tenure for a certain period regardless of the 'h-status' of the new journals.

While the benefits of publication in Arabic are self-evident in the humanities, the social sciences and public health, they are also valid in the sciences and engineering disciplines. There is no reason why researchers could not do both: Contribute to global debates, while also researching issues relevant to societal development. It is important that chemists, for example, join global debates, but they also need to research issues related to supporting local industry and promoting or improving production that is based on local resources and meets local needs. The agricultural sector is another area where such transformations are vital. Finally, publishing houses in the Arab World need to publish high quality monographs and books, not only journals, and to develop rigorous reviewing and editing procedures.

Translation

In addition to Boyer's⁶⁸ four forms of scholarship discussed above, we suggest a fifth one: Scholarship of translation. In the Arab World, fluency in English is a privilege that mostly is confined to elites (in addition to the division of Arab elites into Anglophone in the Mashreq and Francophone in the Maghreb). The circulation of critical and scientific knowledge and literature in Arabic is limited and is outweighed by other forms of knowledge such as religious, political, and folkloric literature. The current situation driving the publication of vital critical and innovative knowledge in English, supports the maintenance of the status quo. The past few decades have witnessed the deterioration of several important translation hubs due to wars, and a new 'genre' of commercial translation has emerged leaving behind the option of professional disciplinary translation. Notwithstanding these transformations, including the demise of translation hubs in Iraq and Lebanon, for example, endeavors initiating new Arabic translation projects exist⁶⁹ and have been of significant utility for scholarship. It is also important to promote the use of correct Arabic language in various scientific research activities, and support scientific publication produced in Arabic and translated into it and from it.⁷⁰ There is a need to emphasize that translation is scholarship, and Arab academics should be encouraged to translate scholarly work professionally into Arabic, thus building the critical mass of literature in Arabic and providing the possibility of learning and scholarly development for non-English speaking social segments.

Promotion and Tenure Criteria and Processes

Our experience indicates that promotion committees frequently are constrained by limited capacities for reading and assessing research production quality. Such committees

⁶⁸ Ernest Boyer (1990) Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate (Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching).

⁶⁹ Most prominent among these endeavors are the National Center for Translation in Cairo, the work of the Arab Organization for Translation, and the "Turjman" series, launched at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Doha.

⁷⁰ Wael Benjaloun (2017) Scientific Research and Arab Universities, in Universities and Academic Research in the Arab World, pp. 49–67, at p. 60 (Beirut: Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies) (in Arabic).

tend to rely on using indexes to count mechanically without reading the material presented to them, a practice that should end, with the capacities of committees boosted. In smaller universities, there is often an absence of specialists in certain fields. Expanding the committees' capacities by involving external members (or at least readers) is not an uncommon practice. This is a task the Union of Arab Universities can facilitate. Additionally, more than one central promotion and tenure committee on campus could be established especially when the university is large enough to make this feasible with, for example, separate committees for the natural sciences, social sciences, professional schools, arts and humanities. However, service on such committees requires reduction in teaching loads so that members could reserve time for more thorough assessments beyond counting.

Publishers Think Universal is Western

An additional strategy is the rectification of the transposition resulting from reducing the 'universal' to the 'western,' which constitutes a breach of universality. The demand to stand up for declared commitments is an ethical one. Scientific publishers who claim to abide by scientific criteria need to stick to the notion of the universality of knowledge. Certain journals explicitly state their interest in Western traditions, or in certain countries or regions, but those that claim specializing in disciplines, fields of knowledge, or methodologies, should not limit the interest of their journals and other publications to what is attractive to the Western readership. This is especially true for all journals and publication series with global readership. As a study conducted on journals (1990–1997) specializing with international relations shows:

The four arguably leading IR journals, which set the cutting-edge agenda for the discipline, International Organization, International Security, International Studies Quarterly, and World Politics, have an average of less than 3% of their contributors coming from the periphery, and less than 12% coming from outside the United States.⁷¹

If the main argument for encouraging publishing in 'prestigious' journals is to ensure interaction with the global scientific communities, then 'prestigious' journals need to ensure global coverage of issues of concern to smaller nations, and the non-English speaking world. Criteria for reviewers and journal ethical codes also need to include statements that ensure universality.

Conclusion: Contextualization as First Step to Decolonization

Promotion and tenure serve multiple purposes, the most important of which is the advancement of knowledge production. The latter should serve the enhancement of human life within rational ethical criteria. Given the plurality of views and perspectives on what is best, ethical scientific behavior requires democratizing and emancipating knowledge, and adopting global principles along lines comparable to those that

⁷¹ Ersel Aydinli & Julie Mathews (2000) Are the Core and Periphery Irreconcilable? The Curious World of Publishing in Contemporary International Relations, *International Studies Perspectives*, 1(3), pp. 289–303, at p. 298.

guide the protection of human rights. Among these guidelines is the autonomy of science geared toward protecting it from partisan, ideological, financial, and other partial interests. Another guideline is equity that can bring people toward equality. A third important guideline is freedom. The implementation of these principles in relation to the matter being discussed here requires various principled measures of a decolonizing nature oriented toward the existing hegemonically structured relations at both ends of the center – periphery divide.

The center must ensure that the academic publishing machine universalizes itself and accepts universality as belonging to all and cannot stay confined to the center. Review criteria must ensure that reviews are completed in a global context, with a global concern without underrating local needs. In the periphery, promotion decisions based on publications need to become significantly quality based, as opposed to quantity and citations based. University administrations need to understand that internationalization does not mean following the Western traditions and practices, and that submitting to policies of the neoliberal higher education reform only will objectify and cement the peripheral status of universities in the periphery. Tying the prospects of knowledge production to markets and the vagaries of international funding means that knowledge production will continue to be controlled, will stay poor, and that periphery faculty will become the center's cheap academic labor. Their main role will be serving as 'native informants,' who are 'posited in a hierarchical relationship to the mainstream discipline and its theorists.⁷² They will not be allowed into the global knowledge production facilities unless they work on matters serving the facility masters, who 'grate at their marginalized, exploited status. Instead of scholars and theorists in their own right,'73 they are seen as 'native informants.' In conclusion, it is vital that Arab universities develop their own contextualized evaluation of academic work prioritizing the value and quality of research for the purpose of local and regional development in addition to contributing to the global body of knowledge.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank Eric Hooglund, Editor of Middle East Critique for his thorough copy editing of the article, express their gratitude to the reviewers for their comments, and in particular, to having alerted the authors to recently developed Arabic language translation outlets, journals and metrics.

Disclosure Statement

The International Development Research Centre supported the research for this article under Grant 109739-001.

References

Abdel-Aty, M. (2012) Indices to quantify the ranking of Arabic Journals and Research Output, *CoRR*, Volume abs/1205.0003. Available at: http://arxiv.org/abs/1205.0003, accessed February 18, 2021.

⁷² Peter Marcus Kristensen (2015) How Can Emerging Powers Speak? On Theorists, Native Informants and Quasi-officials in International Relations Discourse, in *Third World Quarterly*, 36(4), p. 637–653, at p. 643.

⁷³ Anna Agathangelou & L. H. M. Ling (2004) The House of IR: From Family Power Politics to the Poisies of Worldism, in *International Studies Review*, 6(4), pp. 21–50, at p. 31.

- Abouchedid, K., & Nauffal, D. (2019) Promotion Policies and Recruitment in Select Key Universities in the Arab Region (Beirut: The Arab Council for Social Sciences). Available at: http://www.theacss.org/ uploads/cke_documents/AbouChedid-Nauffal_Promotion-Policies-and-Recruitment-in-Selective-Key-Universities.pdf, accessed August 6, 2021
- Aboul-Enein, B. H., Bernstein, J., & Bowser, J. E. (2017) Peer Reviewed Public Health Journals from Arabic Speaking Countries: An Updated Snapshot, *Journal of Public Health Policy*, 38(1), pp. 146–157.
- Achcar, G. (2020) On the 'Arab Inequality Puzzle': The Case of Egypt, *Development and Change*, 51(3), pp. 746–770.
- Agathangelou, A. M., & Ling, L. H. M. (2004) The House of IR: From Family Power Politics to the Poisies of Worldism, *International Studies Review*, 6(4), pp. 21–50.
- Akena, F. A. (2012) Critical Analysis of the Production of Western Knowledge and Its Implications for Indigenous Knowledge and Decolonization, *Journal of Black Studies*, 43(6), pp. 599–619.
- Aksnes, D. W., Langfeld, L., & Wouters, P. (2019) Citations, Citation Indicators, and Research Quality: An Overview of Basic Concepts and Theories, SAGE Open, 9(1), pp. 215824401982917–215824401982957.
- Alatas, S. F. (2003) Academic Dependency and the Global Division of Labour in the Social Sciences, *Current Sociology*, 51(6), pp. 599–613.
- Altbach, P. G. (2009) Peripheries and Centers: Research Universities in Developing Countries, Asia Pacific Education Review, 10(1), pp. 15–27.
- Al-Siddiki, S. (2017) The Position of Arab Universities in International University Rankings. In: Universities and Academic Research in the Arab World, pp. 119–145 (Beirut: Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies). (In Arabic).
- Amsler, S. (2007) The Politics of Knowledge in Central Asia: Science between Marx and the Market (London: Routledge).
- Amsler, S. S., & Bolsmann, C. (2012) University Ranking as Social Exclusion, British Journal of Sociology of Education, 33(2), pp. 283–301.
- Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (2017) *Journals Published by the ACRPS*. Available at: https:// www.dohainstitute.org/en/BooksAndJournals/Pages/Journals.aspx, accessed 6 August 2021.
- Association of Arab Universities (2016) *Arab Impact Factor*. Available at: https://www.arabimpactfactor. com/pages/tasnif.php, accessed 6 August 2021. (In Arabic)
- Aydinli, E., & Mathews, J. (2000) Are the Core and Periphery Irreconcilable? The Curious World of Publishing in Contemporary International Relations, *International Studies Perspectives*, 1(3), pp. 289–303.
- Benjaloun, W. (2017) Scientific Research and Arab Universities. In: Universities and Academic Research in the Arab World, pp. 49–67 (Beirut: Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies) (In Arabic).
- Boyer, E. (1990) Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate (Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching).
- Bratsis, P. (2020) Covid and the Crisis in Capitalist Universities. Available at: https://thegadflybmcc. wordpress.com/2020/11/30/covid-and-the-crisis-in-capitalist-universities/, accessed 30 December 2020.
- Brown, T. (2011) Journal Quality Metrics: Options to Consider Other than Impact Factors, *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy : Official Publication of the American Occupational Therapy Association*, 65(3), pp. 346–350.
- Canagarajah, A. S. (1996) "Nondiscursive" Requirements in Academic Publishing, Material Resources of Periphery Scholars, and the Politics of Knowledge Production, Written Communication, 13(4), pp. 435–472.
- Cox, J. (2009) As I See It! Impact Factors and Usage Factors: Testing Alternative Metrics, Against the Grain, 21(6), pp. 74–76.
- Demir, S. B. (2018) Predatory Journals: Who Publishes in Them and Why?, Journal of Informetrics, 12(4), pp. 1296–1311.
- Falagas, M. E., Kouranos, V. D., Arencibia-Jorge, R., & Karageorgopoulos, D. E. (2008) Comparison of SCImago Journal Rank Indicator with Journal Impact Factor, *FASEB Journal : Official Publication of* the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, 22(8), pp. 2623–2628.
- Findley, P. (1989) They Dare to Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books).
- Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon Books).

- González-Alcaide, G., Valderrama-Zurián, J. C., & Aleixandre-Benavent, R. (2012) The Impact Factor in Non-English-Speaking Countries, In: *Scientometrics*, 92(2), pp. 297–311.
- Gruber, T. (2014) Academic Sell-out: How an Obsession with Metrics and Rankings is Damaging Academia, *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 24(2), pp. 165–177.
- Haddow, G., & Genoni, P. (2010) Citation Analysis and Peer Ranking of Australian Social Science Journals, *Scientometrics*, 85(2), pp. 471–487.
- Hall, C. M., & Page, S. J. (2015) Following the Impact Factor: Utilitarianism or Academic Compliance?, *Tourism Management*, 51(3), pp. 309–312.
- Hanafi, S. (2011) University Systems in the Arab East: Publish Globally and Perish Locally vs Publish Locally and Perish Globally, *Current Sociology*, 59(3), pp. 291–309.
- Hartley, D. (1995) The 'McDonaldization' of Higher Education: food for Thought?, Oxford Review of Education, 21(4), pp. 409–423.
- Hicks, D., Wouters, P., Waltman, L., Rijcke, S., & Rafols, I. (2015) Bibliometrics: The Leiden Manifesto for Research Metrics, *Nature*, 520(7548), pp. 429–431.
- Hodson, R., Ashour, M., Ballagh, A., & Scherrmann, A. (2017) Leader of the Pack, *Nature*, 549(7673), pp. S62–S63.
- Jacsó, P. (2012) The Problems with the Subject Categories Schema in the EigenFactor Database from the Perspective of Ranking Journals by Their Prestige and Impact, *Online Information Review*, 36(5), pp. 758–766.
- Jiang, X., Borg, E., & Borg, M. (2017) Challenges and Coping Strategies for International Publication: Perceptions of Young Scholars in China, *Studies in Higher Education*, 42(3), pp. 428–444.
- Kazemi, A. V., & Dehnavi, A. D. (2017) The New Academic Proletariat in Iran, *Critique*, 45(1–2), pp. 141–158.
- Kehm, B., & Erkkila, T. (2014) Editorial: The Ranking Game, *European Journal of Education*, 49(1), pp. 3–11.
- Khurshid, Z. (2014) Measuring the Quality of Contributions of Saudi Authors to LIS Journals Using Journal Impact Factor (JIF), SCImago Journal Rank (SJR), and Google Scholar Metrics (GSM), *The Serials Librarian*, 67(1), pp. 81–98.
- Kristensen, P. M. (2015) How Can Emerging Powers Speak? On Theorists, Native Informants and Quasi-Officials in International Relations Discourse, *Third World Quarterly*, 36(4), pp. 637–653.
- Kuhn, T. (1970) The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2nd edn. (Chicago, London: The Universoty of Chicago Press).
- Mamdani, M. (2020) Neither Settler nor Native: The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press).
- Min, H. (2014) Participating in International Academic Publishing: A Taiwan Perspective. TESOL Quarterly, 48(1), pp. 188–200.
- Moed, H. F. (2014) SNIP Journal Impact Indicator Accounts for Differences in Citation Characteristics and Database Coverage between Properly Defined Subject Fields, *Against the Grain*, 22(4), pp. 34–38.
- Nkomo, S. M. (2009) The Seductive Power of Academic Journal Rankings: Challenges of Searching for the Otherwise, Academy of Management Learning & Education, 8(1), pp. 106–121.
- Omobowale, A. O., Akanle, O., Adeniran, A. I., & Adegboyega, K. (2014) Peripheral Scholarship and the Context of Foreign Paid Publishing in Nigeria, *Current Sociology*, 62(5), pp. 666–684.
- Özbilgin, M. F. (2009) From Journal Rankings to Making Sense of the World, Academy of Management Learning & Education, 8(1), pp. 113–121.
- Paiva, M. (2015) The McDonaldization of Higher Education. Available at: http://www.ethnography.com/ 2015/01/the-mcdonaldization-of-higher-education/, accessed 30 December 2020.
- Palacios-Huerta, I., & Volij, O. (2014) Axiomatic Measures of Intellectual Influence, *International Journal of Industrial Organization*, 34, pp. 85–90.
- Said, E. (1984) Permission to Narrate, Journal of Palestine Studies, 13(3), pp. 27-48.
- Said, E. (1985) Orientalism Reconsidered, Cultural Critique, 1(1), pp. 89-107.
- Said, E. (1994) Culture and Imperialism (New York: Vintage Books).
- Salager-Meyer, F. (2008) Scientific Publishing in Developing Countries: Challenges for the Future, Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 7(2), pp. 121–132.
- Sangster, A. (2015) You Cannot Judge a Book by Its Cover: The Problems with Journal Rankings, Accounting Education, 24(3), pp. 175–186.
- Seglen, P. O. (1998) Citation Rates and Journal Impact Factors Are Not Suitable for Evaluation of Research, Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica, 69(3), pp. 224–229.

- Sternberg, R. J., Grigorenko, E., & Bundy, D. A. (2001) The Predictive Value of IQ, Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 47(1), pp. 1–41.
- Van Raan, A. F., Leeuwen, T. N. V., & Visser, M. S. (2011) Severe Language Effect in University Rankings: Particularly Germany and France Are Wronged in Citation-Based Rankings, *Scientometrics*, 88(2), pp. 495–498.
- Waast, R., & Rossi, P.-L. (2010) Scientific Production in Arab Countries: A Bibliometric Perspective, Science. *Technology and Society*, 15(2), pp. 339–370.