



# *Research*





# The Status of Social Scientific Research in Lebanon in a “Globalized” Context: Attempt to Understand its Components, Conditions and Limitations\*

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## Abstract

*This paper attempts to draw a dynamic picture of the components of social science research in Lebanon, in the context of “globalization” of both higher education and research. It is predicated on the premise that social science research and higher education in social sciences are encumbered in Lebanon with what may be termed the “international division of scientific labor”, i.e., none of the components of social science research: institutional structure; cooperation frameworks; conceptual tools and methodology; funding; research priorities; dissemination and use of research results; and language and medium of publication, is controlled by local researchers, except in limited individual cases.*

*The paper addresses two specific determinants of the relationship between social science research and globalization. The first is the position taken in relation to the globalization of social sciences, and, consequently, research within their framework. In some countries “of the South”, there is opposition, even resistance, to globalization, as in India for example. In contrast, in Lebanon, there is submission to the dictates of globalization and the international division of research labor, which militates against formulating elaborated policies of institutional research, and feeds on a prevailing culture that directs education and research towards responding to the needs of the market first and foremost. The second determinant is the way in which the structure of social science research in Lebanon receives “globalization”. Universities and public research institutions, which constitute the research environment, either have been deeply rooted in some form of “globalization” since the outset of higher education in Lebanon in the second half of the nineteenth century, or have entered into foreign partnerships or “cooperation” arrangements that force research to adapt to conditions they generally do not participate in setting.*

*The paper is based on field research carried out within the framework of the Evaluation of Scientific and Technological Capacity in the Countries of the Mediterranean (ESTIME) project. It concludes by highlighting the importance of distinguishing between market-oriented research and science-based research which is maintained by a scientific community, and nurtured by academic*

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*institutions and private and public research centers that are governed neither by the logic of the market as the determinant of scientific activity, nor to priorities beyond the control of the researchers themselves.*

## I. Introduction

Scientific researchers and other researchers both face numerous difficulties in Lebanon in their attempt to study a subject, due to the scarcity of the research conducted in their domain. Indeed, this domain only draws people's attention in a few cases<sup>2</sup>, such as in the context of unpublished research conducted for academic purposes only. This is the result of a differential situation because the number of researchers, particularly in social sciences, is actually continually rising, just like the number of graduates from the second and third university or college cycles of the same disciplines. In addition, the number of published and unpublished pieces of research that are conducted in numerous fields is also expanding, both vertically and horizontally. This phenomenon was exacerbated in the end of the past century, when the Lebanese secondary education system was amended and reorganized on the basis of four branches, which included sociology and economics sections. If we add to this new education system the increasing demand for specialists in the fields of social sciences, applied research related to development, women's rights, the rights of other social groups, poverty and other topics, we can notice the disparity between the expanding presence of social sciences, in both education and research in Lebanese life on the one hand and the low level of attention granted to the understanding the structures performance and results of these sciences as well as the social use of these results on the other hand. In addition, if we take into consideration the historical dimension of the presence of social sciences in Lebanon, both in education and in research, we notice that this disparity grows to become a clashing paradox. Indeed, these sciences have an institutional history of at least fifty years in this country. However, despite the different troubled episodes of history, for example the destructive wars between 1975 and 1990, the outcomes of social research didn't stop, even though it was altered from time to time.

In this study, we will try to recompose the social research scenario in Lebanon, taking into account its particular institutional history, in the academic field, the changes it had to face and its present structure. After that we will address the different patterns of response adopted by researchers in order to cope with these changes. In conclusion, we will try to explain this situation in the context of the current "globalization" process.

The issue of research in Lebanon doesn't constitute a special case. It can be looked at and understood from a broader angle, namely when we look at its relation with the current "globalization" process. This dimension of globalization is supposed to have a crucial importance concerning the future of science and research. However, it limits the local and national dimensions. Therefore, we can study the case of Lebanon in taking into account the updates and evolutions occurring in the process of globalization or internationalization of research in "southern" countries. This process raises a number of questions<sup>3</sup>. The first question would be

<sup>2</sup> Among the rare works addressing research and researchers in social sciences in Lebanon, we mention: Bahithat, (1996 - 1997), El Amine , editor (2005).

<sup>3</sup> From a historical point of view, it is difficult to say that «globalization» is a new process. The system of modern education, along with research and protocols, owes its existence to the system of complex relationships, institutions and standards which found its way to the South through direct colonization or through expansion of educational institutions or, finally, through the formation of scientific experts

to know how the institutions of modern science were established in these countries, how they function and what were the results of their establishment. The second question would concern the relations of the state to these institutions. In the southern countries, the trend was for the state to interfere in the scientific development process and to direct its outcomes. This was the case in some countries such as India and Egypt, ever since the nineteenth century. This was also the pattern primarily adopted in Japan, followed by South Korea and China, as well as a number of countries in Asia and South America. The third question concerns the formation of the scientific community in “southern” countries. This community was built in compliance with the example of the same communities in industrialized countries. However, unlike these communities, its scientific, educational and research work was not independent, due to the direct interference of the state. The community remains, according to most of the cases studied, dependant on the strategies and political power of the state in these countries. This was particularly clear when, after their independence from colonial domination, these “southern” countries started searching for a model of a “nation- state” that would be compliant with their history. During this phase, the scientific community became an instrument in the hands of the national authority and it was used to build scientific institutions in order to establish an independent economy (such as producing instead of importing). When this model started tumbling, the community itself tumbled. (Gaillard, Krishna & Vaast, 1997)

Another question can be raised, concerning the current phase that started in the 1970's when the criteria for the establishment and functioning of scientific institutions on the international level, namely the public ones, became subject to the demand of national and international institutions, as well as globalized companies, in the context of the predominance of neo-liberalism. The scientific community became largely dependent on the dynamics of this demand. After that, the community started to gain financing by responding to the demand of the public sector<sup>4</sup> or through its “cooperation” with national and international organizations.

In this exceptional evolution of the scientific situation in southern countries, many concepts were put at a difficult test. The first concept concerns the institutional dimension of science. The question that has to be asked is whether it suffices to adopt the model of institutional science present in industrialized countries to be efficient in all southern countries<sup>5</sup>.

On the other hand, what is the exact meaning of scientific openness and cooperation? Can we talk about a “national” science that is prone to communicate with “national” sciences proper to other countries? Or can we consider that there are situations in the context of which science falls and which constitute an unequal process on the historical level (ex-colonized countries and ex-colonial countries) as well as on the cultural and operational level (the relatively easy reversal

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in the South and through the transfer of the concept and methodology of science directly to them. Therefore, it is more accurate, historically and conceptually, to talk about the internationalization (global standardization) of science and research rather than «globalization». As the «globalization» seems to be a “neutral” process, with no status. This slide can be ambiguous and even misleading.

<sup>4</sup> Although the context here is global by excellence, the Lebanese example can clarify the limits of responding to the demand of the private sector in the case of research. The Lebanese government approved, at the beginning of the third millennium, that the Institute of Industrial Research meets the demands of the private sector to be able to compensate for the shortfall in its funding from the budget of the Ministry of Industry.

<sup>5</sup> This model has proven, so far at least, to promote stability, growth and effectiveness in the specific experiences subsequent to the industrial revolution, and even later, during the collapse of the colonial system, like the cases of Korea, China and Brazil, for example. For the experience of South Korea, see (Amsden, 1989).



against social sciences during times of wars and conflicts due to the weakness of the social sciences traditions in a large number of southern countries and the revival of the anti secular culture)? Finally, what does “scientific research” mean, namely in the field of social sciences, in southern countries: Does it simply consist of adopting predetermined research areas and themes according to a fixed social model or to the market imperatives?

These questions can’t be ignored if we intend to study the future of research in the field of social sciences<sup>6</sup> in Lebanon, in a “globalized” context. These questions, as one can imagine, are at the core of the research process in this country. In order to answer these questions we should look at the experience of research and higher education far from the backtracking approach. This experience cannot be analyzed unless it is linked to the Lebanese project of state. Undeniably, Lebanon constitutes a completely different model compared to the previously mentioned states. Indeed, it has always had a precarious state project, which made it difficult to build the modern science institutions, especially the scientific research institutions. On the other hand, the history of science and scientific research in Lebanon teaches us that these weaknesses undermined the capacity of scientific and social culture to gain legitimacy in the face of the predominant culture. As a result, scientific culture had little chance of becoming a direct and efficient factor in the predominant culture. In this context, scientific research seemed, to a large extent, an external condition when it came to culture or to the state project. We arrive here to a very important dimension of the conflictual historical relation between the state on the one hand and science and scientific research (specifically in social sciences) on the other.

## II. Landscape of higher education and scientific research in Lebanon and its evolution

Lebanon has always been a hub for higher education institutions, as well as for the institutions responsible for the preparation of graduates in many specializations. This task was undertaken by centenarian universities<sup>7</sup> and by others that were established more than half a century ago<sup>8</sup>. However, the last batch of universities, which constitute the largest number and are the least compliant with the idea of university, only goes back to a little more than a decade ago<sup>9</sup>. The current total number of higher education institutions in Lebanon (by the end of 2009) is thirty two accredited universities or have at least gathered all the conditions of acceptance required by the Higher Education Council. These universities do not fall under the same category due to the disparities in the specializations they offer, the registration fees and the opportunities their degrees offer on the local, regional and international job markets. We also find these disparities in the levels of specialization, in the availability of scholarships and in the regional and international exchange programs. And most notably they differ in their relation to scientific research. Indeed the institutions that sponsor this type of research or at least offer the conditions

<sup>6</sup> In this paper, we mean by social sciences, the science that study specific levels and dimensions of the social structure in its material and institutional - the relational aspects on one hand, and the mental aspect in its various products such as symbolism on the other hand. Thus, the sciences that we will present and analyze are: sociology, anthropology, economy and law. However, a particular importance will be given to research in the fields of sociology and anthropology, for they reflect, to a large extent, the modifications that have occurred in the structure of the research system in Lebanon in the last two decades in particular.

<sup>7</sup> We will call them “first generation universities”

<sup>8</sup> We will call them “second generation universities”

<sup>9</sup> We will call this last batch “third generation universities”





to conduct it are very few. They belong to the first or second generation of universities, where there are clear criteria they have to respect. These academic institutions<sup>10</sup> were established in a climate of cultural, scientific and linguistic competition. Each one tried to be a pioneer in their own domains<sup>11</sup>.

It is true that the universities of the first two generations were dedicated to education and training, however their relation to research, mainly through the personal initiative of some professors, was maintained. They indeed provided the framework for attracting the scientific know-how and for sending the students benefiting from a scholarship on mission abroad (the Lebanese university started applying this policy in the 1960's). They also provided the necessary resources such as academic libraries and laboratories and they organized and participated in many international conferences, etc. This is particularly true in the case of natural and medical sciences (Gaillard et al., 2008). As for the social sciences, they didn't start to develop in the institutional level until the 1960's when the developmental policy adopted during the mandate of President Fouad Chehab (1958 - 1964) was oriented towards censuses, research and field studies. It is noteworthy that the mandate of President Chehab saw the first serious attempt at building a modern state. The Social Sciences Institute of the Lebanese University was founded in 1959 as an institute for both education and research. In 1962, Lebanon saw for the first time, the formation of a ministry that had the task of conducting studies and elaborating the necessary plans in order to improve the performance of both the state and the economy. This event was accompanied by the foundation of the National Council of Scientific Research that had to play a consulting role and that had the mission of opening up academic life in general, namely in the Lebanese University. And even though the mission of this institute only includes natural and exact sciences, its mere foundation carries the foundation of the process that consists of integrating research into higher education which includes the field of social sciences.

This orientation led to monthly or quarterly<sup>12</sup> periodicals that reflected the tone of the cultural, ideological, scientific and social debate concerning social conflict and economic planning as

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<sup>10</sup> In fact, Lebanon experienced, very early compared to neighboring countries, the spread of modern education. That is reflected in the foundation of two educational institutions in the second half of the nineteenth century. Their first vocation was to prepare Christian theologian and a central body of paramedics before becoming two universities, in the strict sense of the word. From the outset, the development and evolution of these institutions that will be known as of the twenties of the last century as the American University of Beirut (Protestant religious groups) and the Jesuit University (Jesuit community), involved competition, although the status of the Jesuit University was more anchored in the beginning due to existence of a supporting environment despite some reserves (the Maronite Church of Lebanon that has a long history began to play a political role since the system of Alqaimqametin in Lebanon, which falls under the Ottoman Empire) in comparison with the protestant Anglo-Saxon presence that aims to evangelize a hostile milieu, according to some allegations.

At the beginning of the fifties of the last century, the establishment of the Faculty of Pedagogy constituted the first step of the public universities, i.e. the Lebanese University, which would later become the largest academic institution in Lebanon.

<sup>11</sup> This is what Samir Khalaf noticed, for example, in the cases of American Universities (in Beirut) and the Jesuit University. (Khalaf, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> The most important are: The Road Monthly Review which was founded in the early fifties of the last century and which essentially addresses Lebanese affairs. It ceased publication at the end of 2003. Also, the Journal of Arab Studies established in the mid-sixties and tended to extent its interests to the Arab affairs without losing sight of Lebanese ones. It has completely ceased publishing in 1998. In addition the American University of Beirut (AUB) and more specifically the St. Joseph University (USJ) had published some periodicals in this particular period of time.





well as the socio-political transformations, etc. In addition, many publishing houses worked at tightening the links between researchers and their readers (Mermier, 2007).

This orientation was even clearer in the 1970's when Beirut became host to private research centers, with Arab financing, which attracted researchers in both human and social sciences. In the midst of the 1970's, the Arab Development Institute was founded. The institute extended its activities until the early nineties. The Center for Arab Unity Studies, which still works with permanent and powerful energy, was founded in 1978 and constituted a distinction in the context of destructive wars and the beginning of the relapse in higher education and research in Lebanon. Even though these two institutions adopted a regional ideology (Arab nationalism), their common accomplishment was to attract some highly experienced researchers and dozens of new graduates. The institutions therefore provided what we can call a "living" laboratory where the researchers could experience their capacities and develop them at the same time<sup>13</sup>. In addition to what was previously mentioned, the role of these two centers also included publishing. Indeed, this allowed them to establish intellectual communication, to exchange ideas and to broadcast them. In this context, the two centers published a number of periodicals in the field of social sciences<sup>14</sup> and various reports as well as collective or individual publications. They also provided a framework for research teams, conferences as well as exchange and coordination with researchers from other Arab countries.

However, the activities undertaken in the field of research in social sciences weren't limited to publications in Arabic only. In the same period, the Center for Studies and Research on the Contemporary Middle East (CERMOC)<sup>15</sup> was founded in 1977. Despite a series of crises, namely the ones provoked by the regional-local wars in Lebanon, this center contributed in promoting research in social sciences in a local and international context. It published a large number of monographs, particularly in French, concerning Lebanese issues, not forgetting those from other regional countries such as Jordan, Palestine, Syria and Iraq. This comeback of institutional research brought back the importance of social science after the governments following the Chehab mandate refused to acknowledge the importance of this science in both the building of state institutions and the development in its broader sense.

### III. Higher education and research in the post-Taif phase

This was the landscape of higher education and research in social sciences in Lebanon before and during the series of local and regional wars, i.e. until the late 1980's. At the end of this phase it seemed as if stability was relatively established, especially after the Taif accord that established the "second republic". Despite the fact that Lebanon only witnessed stability on a superficial level, without really enjoying it, its academic institutions witnessed a rapid growth in an unprecedented way.

<sup>13</sup> We are aware of the presence of two other research institutions in Beirut at the same period. The first one is the 'Institute for Palestine Studies', which was founded at the mid sixties and the second one is the 'Palestinian Research Center' which had been completely looted by the Israeli army during its invasion of Beirut in 1982. The influence of both institutions on the world of social research in Lebanon was very limited since they were completely devoted to Palestinian cause and the Arab-Israeli conflict and therefore had attracted a few numbers of Lebanese researchers.

<sup>14</sup> We particularly mention the Arab Thought magazine issued by the Arab Development Institute, which focused on issues of community and methodology, as well as the Arab Future Journal, published by the Center for Arab Unity Studies, one of the few Journals dedicated to social sciences in the Arab world.

<sup>15</sup> Centre d'Études et de Recherche sur le Moyen-Arabe (CERMOC).







Until the late 1980's, Lebanon only had eleven universities, ten of which were active, and three of which were founded during the eighties. This number kept rising, especially in the middle of the 1990's. It has now reached the fixed number of thirty two. However, this quantitative expansion didn't have any developmental dimension concerning research; the goal remained, as we will see, to rapidly train students only looking for a job opportunity.

In parallel, the world of social science witnessed a recession after the Development Institute stopped its research activities in the early 1990's. In the meantime, the French Research Center (CERMOC) reduced its research activities<sup>16</sup> to almost nothing. The only survivor was the Center for Arab Unity Studies. However the center chose to stick to its "nationalist dimension" and lost, to a large extent, its Lebanese cachet, except when it came to administration and logistics.

In the early 1990's, the Lebanese University, that traditionally accommodates more than half the professors and academics in Lebanon, went through a very troubled and destructive phase after which it was only left with weak structures, flawed education programs and a quasi-total absence of scientific research<sup>17</sup>. The university had to restore all that was fragmented, reestablish cooperation between its different branches and departments and mitigate the deterioration of the educational process as well as provide the necessary resources, before giving its attention to research.

Also in the early 1990's, the prestigious private universities were trying to awaken from a long lethargy that only some progress in medical research could breach (Gaillard et al., 2008). However, is it possible to start running when your knees are injured? This was in particular the case of the American university. (Indeed, foreign professors, i.e. professors who had neither the Lebanese citizenship nor an Arab one, who were working at the American University of Beirut, were forced to leave Lebanon after the president of AUB, Mr. Daniel Dodge, was kidnapped and his successor, Mr. Malcolm Kerr assassinated. This vicious circle of threats and aggression persisted during this period)<sup>18</sup>.

As to researchers, especially those working at the Lebanese university, they were clearly affected by the deterioration of their revenue, which was a result of the devaluation of the Lebanese pound. Consequently, they had to look for other sources to increase their purchasing power, knowing that their salaries were no longer enough. And the question that should be raised in this context is: How were these researchers able to go back to research in these circumstances? All of this happened when state institutions were struggling to catch their breath and when the consensus over a unifying vision of the country seemed impossible to reach, despite the Taif accord of 1989<sup>19</sup>. The institutional structure of the state was then revised and the roles redistributed in order to be in compliance with the model of hegemony imposed by the prominent local and regional forces, which had the monopoly of public affairs (resistance against the occupying Israeli forces, the "brotherhood treaty" with the Syrian regime, the control of the social and political life so it fits in the mold of poor standards, namely concerning the freedom of speech and the undertaken activities) while the civil society and the academic world were struggling to

<sup>16</sup> Here we mention the assassination of Michel Seurat, director of the Center in 1987, which was preceded and followed by a numerous field difficulties that hindered the center's activity.

<sup>17</sup> C.f Adnan Al Amin (editor), 2002

<sup>18</sup> In an interview with the Daily Star, on 4 May 2009, Peter Dorman, the newly appointed Chairman of the American University in Beirut, notes that the university is still in the process of reemergence from the years of "civil" conflicts in Lebanon.

<sup>19</sup> An agreement approved by the Lebanese deputies meeting in the city of Taif in Saudi Arabia in 1989 under the auspices of U.S. and Saudi Arabia and with a Syrian acceptance. The drafters of the agreement and its supporters thought it will bring peace to Lebanon and allow its reconstruction.



do their jobs, trying their best not to anger the hegemonic forces<sup>20</sup>. This equation was magnified by the intensified presence of UN, international and nongovernmental organizations<sup>21</sup>, on both financial and logistical levels as well as in the priorities of the research field. We can understand this phenomenon through the urgent and increasing needs that resulted from the destructive wars that affected the human, financial and institutional situation. We can also look at the emergency call from the Lebanese governments, starting in 1992, to these organizations, asking for help in the mitigation and control of the complex situation of finance and livelihood. These same governments insisted on keeping the traditional role of the National Council for Scientific Research not allowing it to play an incentive and pioneer role in the field of social research.

As we can see, neither the private universities nor the public ones were prepared to cope with these changes. First of all, they had to reorganize their structures and mitigate the educational and logistic deterioration that they endured, with different magnitudes. Here are some of the measures the university took: Attempts by the Lebanese university's central administration to put some order in its newly created branches in different regions; the decision of the American University of Beirut to close its Eastern Beirut campus, unlike the Jesuit University which reinforced its campuses in the same region as well as in other regions. In addition, these two universities took measures to restore libraries and all complementary educational tools and to popularize computer usage in research and in administrative work, etc. Universities also had to give increased importance to their faculty (the governmental decree issued in 1993 stipulating the lay-off of all professors not yet returning to their university jobs in the Lebanese University, as well as the tendency at the American University of Beirut to start recruiting foreign professors, etc.)

In parallel, the centers of attention; in the domain of social sciences research; were changing drastically. The questions and issues related to the social structure in general and to social changes, development, state building, migration, displacement and other major phenomena, were replaced by sectarian and administrative matters. These were dealt with in a narrow social framework for they were considered as social issues requiring a local and precise response, such as local development, poverty belts, women's empowerment, deportation and the consequences of wars in Lebanon in general. Furthermore, ever since the early 1990's the agenda of research has changed once again and became inextricably linked to the concerns of international organizations and forums. For example, these topics included such areas as "globalization" (namely its cultural dimension), women's empowerment, the instauration of democracy and sustainable development, as well as the promotion of the role of "civil society" and "knowledge society", etc<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> Once again, the dichotomy between policies and priorities of the state on one hand and the growth and needs of scientific research on the other hand, is confirmed. This pattern will remain until the beginning of the third millennium, when the mission of the National Council for Scientific Research was expanded to include social sciences and humanities with the reintroduction of university research grants in the Lebanese University.

<sup>21</sup> UN organizations are those deriving from the structure of the United Nations, while the international ones are those defined by the prevailing international system such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, etc.

<sup>22</sup> We have already dealt with how sociological thought addressed the issues in the Arab context, in general, and in the context of deep pragmatic societal transformations. See: Kabanji, 2005. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that these themes have only had limited echo in the doctoral dissertations prepared at the Institute of Social Sciences at the Lebanese University, which is the main grantor of PhD in sociology in Lebanon. In the period between 2001 and the end of April 2009, around 60 PhDs were

Research in social sciences in Lebanon had to be integrated, during the 1990's, in this dynamic process despite the fact that individual researchers and research institutions had limited influence on its extent, incentives, priorities or resources. Therefore, the majority of social researchers, especially in the academic circles, had become mere instruments asked to play the role that they were assigned. This situation, as well as the historical openness of universities in Lebanon, was crucial in the transition to the internationalization (globalization) of social research in Lebanon at all levels: The demand for research, its priorities, its financing, controlling the application of its outcomes, its publication and dissemination, etc.

#### IV. The landscape of institutional research in Lebanon

##### 1. Components of the Lebanese Scientific Research System

The reorganization of the landscape of research at both structural and institutional levels, as well as at the level of human and financial resources and priorities, can best be illustrated in Graph 1. This graph defines the main components the Lebanese research system in its current form. This system has four main pillars: the National Council for Scientific Research, the active universities in Lebanon, especially the ones belonging to the first and second generations, research centers that are not institutionally linked with the academic structure, and finally the UN and international agencies along with the globalized NGOs all specializing in the funding of applied research projects. These four pillars often work in different, and contradictory ways. They do, however, regroup the majority of researchers, namely those who work individually and who don't belong to a collective research framework. In this structure of the research system, the National Council for Scientific Research does not play an important role in the field of social sciences. This is despite the fact that the Council is the organization responsible for policy making and for the activation of scientific research in Lebanon, in cooperation with universities as well as economic and professional institutions. The reason behind this is very clear. Indeed, the Council did not involve social sciences in its activities until 2003. However, social sciences didn't become an actual research concern until the end of 2008. In parallel, the universities sponsoring research (from the two first generations) remained hostages of their traditional research strategies in dealing with the totally different and urgent tasks that resulted from the consecutive wars between 1975 and 1990. The same goes for dealing with the emergence of universities with low academic standards and with no commitment to the imperatives of research.

**GRAPH 1 : Components of the Lebanese Scientific Research System**



awarded at the Institute. The most prominent topics were the following: development, elderly, health, women, the problems of industry and agriculture, emigration, migration, reversed migration, politics and religion. We can see in this variety of themes, the differences in the concerns of scientific research and standardized research.

These universities kept counting on the individual researchers who finance their research activity either through research tenders, essentially individual, or through incentive programs that motivate them to conduct their research<sup>23</sup>. This is the case particularly of the Lebanese University, but also the case of the two most prestigious private universities in Lebanon: the American University of Beirut and the Saint Joseph University<sup>24</sup>. The main accomplishment of these two universities in the research field is the deepening of their “openness” to the institutions of the countries and cultures that they belong to. They established partnership and cooperation arrangements with foreign universities with the same linguistic and academic sensitivity, which gave them new perspectives in the field of international research cooperation. In that sense, both of them have increased their dependency on “globalized” research partners, namely European and American ones<sup>25</sup>, after having achieved the “globalization” of their educational process. However, the best example of the “globalization” of social research in the academic context was provided by the Lebanese University through a common governmental initiative launched by Lebanon and France. It is true that this example may not be the only one, or the most important in the context of research “globalization”. Nevertheless, this accord, concluded between France and Lebanon on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 1996, has led to the creation of the CEDAR (CEDRE) program<sup>26</sup>. This program allowed dozens of Lebanese researchers, mainly in the Lebanese University<sup>27</sup>, to conduct research in cooperation with partners working in French universities and French research institutions.

All in all the universities that sponsor research in different ways, although not with the same efficiency, - have integrated their traditional research policies in the context of a “renewed scientific globalization”. However, this orientation is not reflected in the universities that emerged in Lebanon in the middle of the past decade.

Ever since the beginning of this decade, a process has started developing, carrying the heritage of academics and research as well as the components of an academic present that is evolving far from the old criteria, if not in a total opposite direction. The higher education system in Lebanon has carried, since its beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, the milestones of an early “globalization” that would consecrate the concept of academic “modernization”, namely

<sup>23</sup> At the beginning of the third millennium, the Lebanese University established a system of incentives for the individual researcher (budget field, petty cash and funding for some equipment related to informatics, etc.). It has also established a central committee for research. Its task was to keep pace with the stages of research and to impose a minimum of scientific regulations.

<sup>24</sup> The vice president of research stimulates research in these two universities. The American University offers research grants to the junior instructors. Overall, these universities, in addition to the Lebanese University, produce the majority of academic research in Lebanon. See: Gaillard 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Evidence is provided with the AUB support to ‘faculty by providing short- and long-term development grants primarily for short-term travel to conferences and workshops to present research and long-term visits to research facilities. (Gaillard & al. 2008, p. 19)

<sup>26</sup> The objectives of the agreement, as defined in the signed text of the two governments, are «to promote cooperation and exchange of scientific experts and academics through participation in order to launch research and develop it in Lebanon» as well as to “create a procedural mechanism that provides scientific quality of research and that benefits from the effective support of the governments.» The research topics are, according to the text of the agreement: science society and the contemporary world, the environment and Earth sciences, health, medicine, and finally Engineering Sciences.

<sup>27</sup> It can be assumed that the importance of this program is to attract dozens of Lebanese researchers affiliated to the Lebanese University, especially if we take into consideration that the total accredited research projects submitted by professors at the Lebanese University - which have a total number of professors of three thousand – between 2002 and 2005 amounted, according to the university’s data, to 211 projects, including a rate of 51.2% in French compared to 13.3% in English and the rest in Arabic.

in the first and second generation universities. However, the new generation of universities that have emerged since the last decade of the twentieth century reversed this trend and exclusively oriented themselves towards the commercial aspect of this globalization. With this generation, the concept of university changed, to become “an already made” educational program, offering a restricted list of specializations, only to meet the punctual needs of local and foreign markets. Thus, the concept of university itself became ambiguous. Indeed, universities with different and uneven academic and logistical capacities (including capacities of scientific research), were put on the same level. If one looks closely into the list of accredited universities<sup>28</sup>, the difference between new universities and their predecessors becomes very clear. Indeed, the number of faculties in the new universities rarely exceeds three. These faculties only provide a technical training that any specialized institute can offer (with the exception of specializations related to religion). In addition, its educational staff has, in the best case scenario, a master degree, and it isn’t entirely dedicated to higher education. Nevertheless, we cannot underestimate these universities as they represent fifteen out of thirty two legally accredited universities. Furthermore, their capacity to increase their symbolic capital is promoted by a number of agreements they concluded with international educational institutions, such as prestigious ones (like Al Azhar University in the case of the Global University) and high-quality universities (such as the University of Quebec, Canada, in the case of the Lebanese Canadian University). These agreements provided an “added value” and an increase in the symbolic capital, which promotes the image of the concerned university.

However, the current research structure includes, as we previously mentioned, other pillars besides the National Council for Scientific Research and universities. In this context we mention the research centers that have kept undertaking their activities according to what we will call “guided research programs” and didn’t divert from their original programs to marginal preoccupations except in a few cases<sup>29</sup>. Therefore, it is easy to notice the working pattern of the Center for Arab Unity Studies that maintained its centers of attention<sup>30</sup>, taking into account the developments occurring on the Arab scene, namely in the political and strategic levels. Even though the Research and Studies Center for the Middle East (CERMOC) tried to be flexible when it comes to research programs, it kept a certain form of stability in its orientations and preoccupations. Indeed, the center has always worked according to the intersection of interests of both the institutional entity to which it is related<sup>31</sup> and the incoming researchers. We can therefore safely assume that in general, just like universities promoting research activities, the main research centers did not interact with the various challenges facing research and higher education in Lebanon.

In parallel, the UN and international institutions and organizations, including nongovernmental ones, played a crucial role that surpassed the role played by the academic institutional components when it comes to the changes occurring in the “globalization” of research in Lebanon, during the past two decades. Their role also consisted of defining the framework, priorities and financing of research. Briefly put, these organizations interfered in the field of research according to their

<sup>28</sup> See the list of accredited universities and the ones that have received the approval of the license on the website of the Directorate General of Higher Education in Lebanon: [http://www.higher-edu.gov.lb/personal\\_univ.html](http://www.higher-edu.gov.lb/personal_univ.html)

<sup>29</sup> This is particularly noticeable in the case of the Center for Studies and Research on the Middle East, that is prone to cooperate with the active Anglophone parties in the field of research in Lebanon, namely through funding. We must note in this context the establishment of the Center for Lebanese Studies in 1989, which set to itself a guiding framework that maintained its attention concentrated on issues related to general policies.

<sup>30</sup> This can easily be checked by taking a close look at the center’s outcomes of the last three decades.

<sup>31</sup> This center is affiliation to the French Foreign affairs ministry; it therefore has a particular diplomatic status.

own logic, keeping in mind their one-dimensional vision on important topics such as poverty, development, civil society, women's empowerment, fighting corruption and the like. The organizations then work to popularize this vision among different groups and on different levels. As a result, their role expanded and their influence on the Lebanese research field increased. The best example may be their intensified presence, in both financial and methodological levels, in the on-the-field research programs aimed at providing the Lebanese administration with a primary data base concerning the conditions of health, economy and demography in Lebanon, starting in the mid-nineties<sup>32</sup>. Needless to say that the team of social researchers participating in these censuses and studies attracted academics from prominent Lebanese universities.

On the other hand, the participation of these international organizations and agencies in the work of research centers reached a decisive point. Indeed, it became possible to assume that some of these centers only remained active thanks to their support and financing<sup>33</sup>. In addition, entrepreneurial research activities owe its survival to the same sources.

Entrepreneurial research activities in the Lebanese context are conducted by local agencies that consist in a number of institutions and offices responsible for the field research assigned to them. The mechanism usually consists in participating in 'calls for tender' organized by UN agencies or international organizations<sup>34</sup> or through subcontracting in the context of on-the-field missions, assigned to them by prominent institutions undertaking social, economic and legal projects<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Here we can mention the contribution of these agencies and organizations in the following surveys and field research: the UNICEF in the survey for the health of children and mothers, the League of Arab States in a research on the health of Lebanese families, the United Nations Development Program and the World Bank on poverty, in addition to the contribution of these two organizations and the ESCWA in the local development, and the contribution of the European Community's agencies in the development researches and the modernization of administration etc..

<sup>33</sup> It is possible, for example, to rely on a list of funders for one of the main research centers, the Lebanese Center for Lebanese Studies, founded in 1989, listed on the center's website:

- Canadian Fund for Dialogue and Development, CIDA, the Canadian Embassy
- Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE)
- Economic Development Institute (EDI) , World bank
- Fares Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Freidrich Ebert Foundation
- Frem Foundation
- Harvard Institute for International Development (HIID)
- International Center for Economic Growth (ICEG)
- Konrad Adenauer Foundation
- Near East Foundation
- Netherlands Organization for International Development Cooperation (NOVIB)
- Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM)
- Rockefeller Foundation
- UNICEF
- UNCHS-HABITAT

<sup>34</sup> This is adopted by global institutions such as some organizations of the European Community or the World Bank or research centers affiliated to a country such as the Canadian Agency for International Development.

<sup>35</sup> For clarification, we can refer to the work conducted by prominent research and consulting institutions in the field of construction and contracting, such as the Khatib & Alami institution and the Teame institution and which assign a local research agency with a specific field work with a socio-economic dimension or content.

These local agencies<sup>36</sup> generally play a double role and are becoming increasingly important. On the one hand, they accomplish a large part of social and economic field research without decisively influencing the orientation of the research objectives or limitations. Therefore, the agencies do not directly participate in enriching the scientific research experience because their experience in the domain does not belong to the institutional and academic research process; in the absence of clear and adequate mechanisms. On the other hand, these agencies recruit trained researchers among social sciences students, namely in the second and third academic cycle. The experience of these students is limited to an intensified use of technique and predetermined means that they can hardly integrate to their academic curriculum.

However, the importance of these local agencies is on the rise due to the huge demand on their executive work on one hand, and to their capacity to adapt to the imperatives of this demand on the other hand.

### **The UN and international agencies: a structural and institutional component**

The UN and international agencies have been exceptionally present in the realm of applied and field research during the past two decades. Their presence contributed in the restructuring the landscape of social research in Lebanon. When it comes to researchers, the agencies played an even greater role according to the result of our field study<sup>37</sup>. The agencies also played an almost decisive role in financing research. Their financial contributions to the work of researchers varies between one third, in the case of researchers in law (and this constitutes the lowest percentage) and 54% in the case of researchers in economy. Researchers in sociology declared that these agencies financed 43% of their work and 41% of the anthropologists' work.

It can therefore be assumed that the very important role played by these agencies made them a main institutional and structural component of social research: "the main support of research in social sciences, in the case of Lebanon, comes from regional and international agencies. The parties playing an even greater role are the World Bank, European Union's agencies and UN organizations, working in different social and economic fields such as cultural and economic development, health and childhood. Therefore, the most important activities conducted in the social field have been financed by these international agencies, ever since the early 1990's." This situation allowed us to talk about what we will call "custom research" and "remotely-directed research" (Kabbanji, 2010).

However, the reason these agencies controlled the applied and field research in the social field doesn't only reside in financing. Indeed, the agencies were capable of networking data in the social field, which gave them greater control.

These agencies have accomplished the following:

<sup>36</sup> The "research and consulting institution" and the "research and training group for development action" constitute the two main examples of these agencies.

<sup>37</sup> This research, conducted in 2006 and 2007, includes a group of 44 researchers working in the four scientific fields constituting social sciences: sociology, anthropology, law and economics. These researchers come from various universities, research centers and research entrepreneurial agencies. This work is part of a research including the Arab Mediterranean countries and aims at studying the «assessment of scientific and technical capabilities» in the Arab world, namely in the field of research in social sciences. The European Community funded this research, and coordination has been under the supervision of the French Research Institute for Development (IRD). The results of this research concerning Lebanon have already been published by the Institute of Social Sciences at the Lebanese University. (Kabbanji, 2010).

- Interconnection with the academic world, namely by recruiting, through fixed-term contracts, scholars and researchers working in the fields of sociology, anthropology, economics and law, as well as other fields, particularly in the Lebanese University and the American University of Beirut.
- Availability of considerable and easily transferable financial resources at their disposal, compared to the slowness witnessed in the academic and administrative mechanisms.
- Control of the outcomes of field research, and restriction of their distribution.
- Making first-hand decision of the priorities and dimensions of research, even when the partner party is a public institution.
- Determination of the scope and domain of research. They also determine the methods that researchers have to use.

## 2. Researchers and “research globalization”

We have already talked about the structural and institutional dimensions of research evolution in Lebanon and its pathway towards specific forms of cooperation and openness in the constantly renewed “globalized” context of academics and research activities. This brings us to a very important question: How did researchers cope with this evolution and what limited their ways of dealing with it?

In order to answer this question, we will talk about two specific dimensions of research activity. The first dimension concerns the method adopted by researchers to spread the outcomes of their research as well as the openness of these methods to the “globalization” of research that we previously mentioned. The second dimension concerns the presence of researchers in the international institutions responsible for the international exchanges in the field of scientific cooperation, such as in social sciences.

## 3. Researchers and publishing

The research strategies of researchers working in the social sciences field and associated to universities that sponsor research are mainly based on the policies adopted by these universities. Indeed, in universities where the academic and professional future of faculty members is directly linked to what they produce and publish, there are very specific criteria, namely the publishing in accredited and standardized journals. From this perspective, these universities are just like any other institution in the academic world, on the international level. However, in the case of Lebanon, these criteria play a double role: on one hand, the criteria are only valid in a small number of universities, but on the other hand, these criteria determine the future of researchers. Furthermore, the universities adopting these criteria do not implement it in the same way. Indeed, the universities adopting the American system, using English as the medium of instruction and belonging to the first generation, ask their researchers to publish their articles in English and in specific journals. Thereby, these universities get their researchers in touch with the academic world that constitutes the mirror of the work they publish. This strategy promotes ties with the research field in an international level. However it limits the interaction between researchers and the local and regional academic world that publishes its outcomes in Arabic or in any other language. Breaking these rules would be a personal decision of the researcher and comes at a cost<sup>38</sup>. Here, we can safely assume that “globalized” communication is channeled through

<sup>38</sup> The researcher who trespasses on her/his institution’s publishing conditions incurs the risk of the annulment of his contribution during the academic evaluation.



language, as a carrier, more than in any other way. We can also assume that the communication tool of “globalized” research, i.e. the English language in this case, can rapidly become a cultural tie, carrying all the connotations of this language.

Other universities, belonging to the French-speaking world, give their researchers, in order to be evaluated, the freedom of publishing in a variety of languages, with a preference for the French language. Indeed, the research openness of these universities is mainly oriented towards the Francophone academic world that is quite limited in comparison with the Anglophone academic world. Therefore, in this case, we can understand the source of language diversity in terms of publications, means and countries.

When it comes to academic criteria, the Lebanese University constitutes an exception. It is true that it shares several common points with Francophone universities when it comes to language diversity adopted by its professors too. Nonetheless, it differs when it comes to the restrictions imposed by the separation between education and research. Indeed, despite allocating a large budget to research, the Lebanese University does not link the professor’s job security to research activity. Thereby, the “Publish or Perish” rule is not implemented as a sine qua non condition. In consequence, the teacher has to prove his research capacities on his own, and therefore merit a promotion in the academic hierarchy not necessarily subject to a scientific evaluation.

On the other hand, there is no language or publishing restriction imposed on publications in the Lebanese University. Therefore, a professor can present, in order to evaluate her/his work, material that was published in non academic periodicals.

However, the separation between education and research in the Lebanese University hinders the chances of international scientific exchange. While some of its teachers, namely those who do not aspire to an academic promotion, prefer to boycott intellectual production and publishing, others prefer to produce individually, probably to avoid obeying to the evaluation mechanisms adopted in institutional research. This can provide an explanation for the low demand of research grants in the field of social sciences in the Lebanese University. While the demand for research grants in the field of natural and exact sciences rose to 60% of the agreed upon research projects from 2002 to 2005, the percentage of agreed upon the same kind of projects in the field of social sciences (sociology, anthropology, economy, law and political science) for the same period only accounts for 12%<sup>39</sup>.

These disparities in the relations of academic researcher with the conditions of publishing show a great deal of differences in her/his relations with the “globalization” of the research process in the social sciences field<sup>40</sup>.

#### **4. Researchers and international institutional research interaction**

The relationship between researchers in general, especially academic ones, with international institutional research interaction does not deviate from the evolution of their publishing activity. Once again, we notice disparities between researchers. Indeed, they interact with international research institutions through their respective affiliations in an academic, linguistic and cultural world. This means that the interaction opportunities of a researcher affiliated to an academic institution working in Lebanon depend on the ties her/his university has with a specific cultural and linguistic climate. This was proven by the researchers’ evolutions that we have previously mentioned in this study. The cooperation agreements between local universities and international institutions (such as the International Organization of Francophone Countries)

<sup>39</sup> This data is taken from the records of the central research committee of the Lebanese University

<sup>40</sup> We have detailed this other aspect of “globalization” in different study (Kabbanji, 2010)

define the different aspects of interaction and their limitations<sup>41</sup>. This is particularly the case in work teams, international conferences, symposiums and workshops or even in groups of experts, missions and research grants.

However, this framed process does not include all the openness and exchange measures of researchers. We also have to mention the international institutions to which academics pay allegiance on the international level. These institutions are mainly international associations. Some of these cross linguistic and cultural barriers and some are affiliated to a specific linguistic, cultural and geographic sensitivity. And it seems obvious that Lebanese academics working in social sciences and belonging to the Anglophone world tend to be affiliated to international associations that are open to all languages, but that mainly work thanks to the hegemony of the English language. The Francophone researchers, on the other hand, are prone to be affiliated with international associations with a French affinity.

The exceptional case remains that of researchers in social sciences working at the Lebanese University. Many of them have little or no links to the prominent international institutions that promote interaction between experts in social sciences. This can be explained by the lack of incentives motivating them to communicate internationally. This is attributed to the linguistic barrier. Indeed, Arabic is not considered as a communication language on the international level. It can also be explained by the limited subjects of research, knowing that these topics may not have an echo on the international scene. In addition, social experts tend to only publish their works in Arabic. Furthermore, the translations available are either poor or absent. This hinders the possibility of communication with the international scientific community and its prominent institutions.

The absence of incentives can also have an institutional explanation. Indeed, the Lebanese University has no exclusive international and cultural reference in the field of social sciences, unlike the American University of Beirut and Saint Joseph University. It does, however, have a preference for the francophone world, but this orientation is a great deal clearer in the case of exact and applied sciences than in social sciences.

We can therefore assume that the efficiency of “scientific globalization” in its current phase is increased when the receiving structure is adequate, namely in the fields of scientific culture and language. This receiving structure is present in academic institutions and among researchers when they are oriented towards international scientific culture, with its criteria and regulations, regardless of the used language (English and French in the case of Lebanon).

## **V. Research and researchers in the midst of international distribution of scientific work - an attempt to explain**

According to what was previously mentioned, we can assume that the “globalization”<sup>42</sup> of the research process in Lebanon is a complex and unequal one. At the core of this process, reside the Lebanese modern educational system and the changes that have occurred in the research field; as well as the deviance of a major part of it to establish relations defined by the demand on the private sector, with the increasing importance of “remotely-directed research”. This process is part of the larger framework of the current “globalization” context that we also call “international division of scientific work and education”. This division is the mirror of the division of international work in

<sup>41</sup> Our interviews in the context of our previously mentioned research work showed that the professors and researchers at the American University in Beirut, for example, look at the scientific exchange and research as a process of affiliation to the a culture and a system of values.

<sup>42</sup> See footnote 3, concerning the definition of what we mean by “globalization”

general. In other words, the entity controlling resources and wealth, in the levels of production, distribution and consumption, also controls science because science constitutes a process of training, research, physical and logistical equipments, experiments - actual ones or by simulation, resources and priorities. The same entity also controls innovation even if not exclusively. It also imposes educational systems and research regulations and defines the standards of scientific productivity, efficiency and accomplishments. This evolution did not arise suddenly and did not happen in the blink of an eye. On the contrary it did arise from deep metamorphoses rooted in the modernization process and the hegemony of capitalism which dominated both science and research and controlled people's destinies and fortunes. It also emerged from the popularization of secular culture and a system of values that separates the worldly from the religious, as well as from a political system that promotes accountability, despite all the flaws and loopholes.

Despite all that, this situation is not predestined. This international division of international scientific work has been changing over the last decades. This is what we proved in the beginning of this study when we referred to the cases where countries or societies rebelled against the restrictions of such division. Furthermore, a large number of social experts tried, over the last three decades, to show the biases of this division and its unfairness.

This means that there is an international scientific research field, in the sense suggested by Pierre Bourdieu<sup>43</sup>, which is constantly restructured, even with difficulties. On one hand, there is a field that works according to rules and norms which do not differ from the traditional and institutional division of labor, despite some major breach. On the other hand, there is the awareness of some social scientists, who criticize this kind of division and work hard to overcome its restrictions. This is the truly bright side of "scientific globalization", when thousands of social scientists work in a context of international openness and communication that enriches scientific production. The other face of this "globalization" is represented by those who work to hamper equity between social researchers when it comes to international scientific production. Indeed, social scientists in "southern" countries do not possess sufficient financial resources in order to conduct research. They also have neither the adequate training nor the appropriate research equipment, such as laboratories and research centers that they would determine their priorities.

They also lack specialized publishing means, in quality and in quantity, which forbids them from communicating their outcomes, through translations, to their colleagues in different countries and institutions. In addition, their contact with them is often hampered by institutional and financial obstacles, such as the restricted openness of public universities to international scientific interaction. This openness isn't backed by a series of incentives that would encourage contact and openness in both the education and research levels.

This face of globalization tips the scientific balance to the advantage of the rules imposed by the international scientific division. From this perspective, the independence margin of the scientific field, i.e. the independence of its internal components such as researchers, institutional frameworks and resources, remains really limited and hinders the efficiency of the scientific field. It is from this loophole that organizations and agencies working according to the market's supply and demand rules interfere in the scientific research field.

This is what research experiences in Lebanon have shown in the field of social sciences. It is the same for a large number of countries that do not have an advantageous position in this international division of scientific work.

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<sup>43</sup> Bourdieu suggested in various works, different definitions of the concept of "field". We got his definition of the scientific field from a text he wrote about the social use of science. See (Bourdieu, 1997)

## VI. Conclusion

Looking back to the questions we asked in the beginning of this study, the Lebanese research experience in the field of social sciences seems to have a number of specific aspects. Indeed, in this case the state does not seem to play an effective role in promoting science (not education) and scientific research. Not enough strategies are adopted in this context and not enough effort is oriented towards it. The state entered the field of higher education in 1951, after the private higher education institutions, linked to international religious institutions, had already been established. Furthermore, the state's interest in the research field only goes back to the 1960's. Indeed, it spent a lot of time trying to expand the public university horizontally, without accompanying this expansion with research development policies (with the exception of the founding of the National Council for Scientific Research), especially in the field of social sciences. The state was far from the model of "national state for national science" adopted in a number of countries such as Egypt, India, Turkey, Tunisia, etc. When the country had recovered its strength after the troubled phase of 1975-1990-, the issue of scientific research, namely in social sciences, had been subject to dynamics that the state encouraged to some extent. Thereby, the state thought it was sufficient in the early 1990's to increase the budget allocated to promoting research in the Lebanese University that had adopted the "professor-researcher" formula. It also increased the resources of the National Council for Scientific Research in many fields of basic and applied research. However, the most important initiatives in the field of research were still launched by the academic institutions of the first and second generation. While in the field of social sciences, the main contributions were made by the regional and international research centers.

After the UN and other international agencies have attracted the field of applied scientific research, starting in the early 1990's, and after the emergence of the role of "research entrepreneurship", it became obvious that there were two processes of the research experience in the field of social sciences. The first process is the institutional and academic one which includes minimal standards of autonomy for the field and for researchers at once. The other process imposes the market conditions on the research "product" in the field and on researchers. Furthermore, with the poor implication of the state in the development of scientific research, there is a tendency of social research to lose some components of its autonomy (the control of agencies over resources, objectives and use of the outcomes of research).

It is clear that these two factors, i.e. the poor state involvement and the division of research into two different, maybe contradictory, processes, show the necessity of rethinking the whole nature of research in social sciences in Lebanon. Whenever the presence of universities and research centers in both scientific and institutional fields increases, the enabling factors of research increase too. This is one of the main conditions of the formation of a local scientific community. It also becomes possible to adopt a framework research policy where "scientific globalization" would constitute an important factor. However, accomplishing all this will require a number of conditions. Indeed, the availability of research strategies (framework research programs), training programs for researchers, the appropriate logistical structure such as laboratories and publishing means and the necessary financing, all of them requires a state contribution through allocations from the budget. This will reflect the country's awareness of the importance of drawing its attention to a field it has been neglecting ever since the dismissal of the Chehabist vision in the middle of the 1960's. Furthermore, the state sponsoring of research is a confirmation that scientific research cannot be subject to the supply and demand rule. We cannot imagine this structure without the assumption that the National Council for Scientific

Research will play a coordinating and central role, having integrated social sciences in its research orientations. This will allow the Lebanese research system, namely the institutions, to interact and to work on the improvement of the links between academic circles and the research field. Moreover, this alternative formula has in its core the openness of research in social sciences to regional and international cooperation, namely at the institutional level. This is, in our opinion, the way to reach “framework research programs in social sciences” that would promote the autonomy of both the researchers and the field.

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