

*Knowledge Production in the Arab World: The impossible promise.* By Sari Hanafi and Rigas Arvanitis. London and New York: Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group), 2016. 345pp. ISBN 9781138948815 (hardback); 9781315669434 (ebook).

*Knowledge Production in the Arab World* provides a wealth of vital and useful insights on the dynamics of research in the Arab region. This meticulously well-researched volume is an inside look at what goes on behind the doors of Arab universities, research centers, and policy-makers' saloons to find "exits" or possible ways out of the current research impasse. The book authored by Sari Hanafi, a professor of sociology at AUB, and Rigas Arvanitis, a sociologist at IRD, detect what render a research in the Arab world an irrelevant/ineffective experience, a difficult mission or 'an/the impossible promise' at national, regional and global levels. In contrast to the positivists'-funded by some Arab governments- views that promote globalized models of knowledge economy is the mere solution to Arab knowledge production crisis, the authors believe this is "nothing but a rhetorical tool" to hide factuality. A careful reading reveals that the objective of this impressive project is not to locate failures or celebrate successes but to "pursue the retrospective in search of the prospective".

To achieve the book's promise, the authors, both of whom have longstanding experience in undertaking researches in this field, review their sources, reliability and validity of the research methodologies and methods available (in-depth interviews, online survey-questionnaire, census, desk review, case study) and advise appropriate criterion for their interrogations and choices. Considering its appendices, bibliography and index, this book would be helpful for undergraduate and postgraduate students, academics or research agencies interested to developed a sophisticated study on research in developing countries, educational sociology, policy studies, and development studies.

The authors' argument(s) and style(s) of writing are unpretentiously clear and their structure and organization of the book is polished; the book is divided into two parts; the first comprises 4-chapters (with compelling conclusions in each of their sub-sections) on the architecture and typology of Arab research systems, the publications' growth (considering issues of diversified specializations, citations and ranking, local-regional-international scientific partnership), and the complementary interrelation between Arab society, political-economic policies, universities and research. The second focuses on the characteristics of Arab social research, the marginalization of Arabic language and references among researchers in sociology, imperialism of academics and experts, academic politics of disengagement in the public debate (taking Lebanon as an example).

Finally, the authors' thorough and perceptive analysis in this well-documented coherent and functional piece of scholarship offers an engaging vision of future-to transcending the 'impossible'.

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