Recapturing the Research Enterprise as a Collective Responsibility: The View from the Middle East & North Africa

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Drawing on the essays in this volume of Dædalus, as well as REMENA (Research Ethics in the Middle East and North Africa) workshops and meetings over the last several years, we reflect on what constitutes responsible social inquiry. We present the context for a "call to action" for universities, foundations, and other funders, publishers, and researchers. Through procedural, professional, and political recommendations, we offer guidance to address some of the ethical dilemmas in designing, monitoring, funding, conducting, and disseminating social science research on the Middle East and North Africa – and beyond.

From its outset, the project of which this volume is a reflection – the Special Commission on Social Science Research in the Middle East and North Africa, tasked with developing guidelines for the conduct of responsible, ethical, and constructive social inquiry, or what we called REMENA (Research Ethics in the Middle East and North Africa) – deliberately eschewed guiding definitions of "ethical," "responsible," or even "constructive." We knew we wanted to go beyond institutional mandates, philosophical debates, and conventional justifications, and we did not want to limit where that might take us. In retrospect, we probably could not have done so if we wanted. The research landscape changed in important ways over the half decade we were engaged with one another in this initiative.

The exigencies of the COVID-19 pandemic shaped not only the circumstances of research around the world, but our own work as well, as in-person workshops transmuted into online seminars and we thought more systematically about the safety and security of research and collaboration in the digital world.[1] The demands imposed by politics, both in the region and globally, after Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, and Israel's ferocious retaliation in Gaza and its expansion of violent attacks in the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, and beyond, highlighted aspects of the research enterprise we had not anticipated. We struggled

with on-campus conflict, public controversy, and censure as well as the devastation in the region itself.[2]

Perhaps the most revealing outcome of our deliberations has been how often we have puzzled over the rationale or purpose of our conventional practices, how often we have asked, "why?" We found that the standard operating procedures of much social science research have become so routinized, so much "second nature," that their practitioners rarely reflect on whether they serve the purposes for which they were originally designed. Well-intentioned borrowing of policies from other fields, reliance on past (if outdated) practice, incremental additions to standardized formulae, and the prizing of technical innovation over intellectual insight have all created coatings of plausibility that obscured an enterprise increasingly adrift in a world of rapid change.

Thus, we turned again and again to question the purpose of social research and to examine its various elements from the perspective of what they were expected to accomplish. We were pleased to find kindred spirits – other researchers, teachers, administrators, scientists, and scholars who share our concerns, especially social scientists who work in the Global South – and, as will be apparent, we draw on their work and that of many other initiatives in formulating our recommendations. And there is evident unease about the health of the social research enterprise well beyond those who study the Middle East and North Africa, and we take comfort and encouragement from the work of these colleagues.[3]

There are many aspects of what makes for responsible, ethical, and constructive social inquiry. Although there is considerable and unavoidable overlap between these categories, the issues we examine fall into three groupings: what may be called procedural, professional, and political. Thus, those who look to this project for recommendations on how the processes or *procedures* of research might be improved – the conduct of field research, the dissemination of findings, the funding of programs – will find such proposals. We also reflect on what we owe each other as *professionals* – the training of early-career researchers, the promotion of scholarly and scientific communities. And on the level of *politics*, we consider what institutions – funders, universities, and even governments – contribute to creating or undermining responsible, ethical, and constructive research. Although our recommendations have grown out of deliberations among scholars devoted to working in and on the social science of the Middle East and North Africa, we believe much of what we have to suggest will be useful far beyond our specific concerns.

We start with procedural issues, reflecting a focus on the subjects or participants in research. Much of the discussion of the ethics of social research finds its lodestone in *The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research*, published in 1979 by the

National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, part of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.[4] Three principles are said to govern research "involving human subjects":

- *Respect for Persons*, or the requirements to acknowledge the autonomy of individual research subjects and to protect those with diminished autonomy.
- *Beneficence*, or the expansion of the Hippocratic obligation to "do no harm" to maximizing the possible benefits and minimizing the possible harms of the research.
- *Justice*, or ensuring that the selection of research subjects is governed by criteria related to the problem being studied rather than "their easy availability, their compromised position, or their manipulability."[5]

Each of these principles requires corresponding procedures: research subjects must give informed consent to be involved in the research, researchers must assess (and disclose in the process of securing consent) the risks and benefits of participation in the research, and subjects must be selected on the basis of criteria that include consideration of who should bear the burdens of research and "the appropriateness of placing further burdens on already burdened persons."[6]

As seen throughout this volume, there are numerous instances of social research in the Middle East and North Africa that would seem to violate one or more of these elemental criteria. Experiments among refugee populations, for example, who are essentially captive, lack basic autonomy, and are selected because of their easy availability, already represent profoundly compromised studies, long before it is apparent that the only beneficiaries will be investigators who publish their findings and advance their careers.

But even research in which care is taken to choose participants appropriately and inform them of the purposes of the study and of any benefits and harms that may ensue does not encompass the full range of social science methodologies nor, unfortunately, the full range of ethical obligations. The underlying biomedical model of research that animates *The Belmont Report* translates poorly to social science, as has been much remarked.[7] This is why most social scientists working in the Middle East and North Africa (and well beyond) propose language that attributes agency to the researched group – active "participants" rather than passive "subjects" – and that acknowledges disruptive potential beyond the specific character of the "treatment" and the limited moment of the research. All people actively participate in shaping their own circumstances, including any research in which we may be involved, whether as researcher or researched. So, too, the impact of a life experience is not extinguished at the conclusion of the experience itself. Social research is necessarily mutual, collaborative, collective, and ongoing, involving discernment and judgment on the part of all involved. The unselfconscious adoption of the often patronizing language of doctor-patient (or investigator–

treatment group) relations reflects and reinforces historic power disparities that misrepresent research terrains and distort research findings. To repeat comments made many times in our discussions, slums and refugee camps should not be treated as "open-air labs."

Yet research that barely meets the standards of *The Belmont Report* is routinely authorized by institutional review boards (IRB), where such boards exist, and such standards are hardly acknowledged where they do not. Where they do exist, as at many universities, their policies and procedures should reflect the extent to which social research is, in fact, social: that is, interactive, collective, shared, a reflection of collaborations between social scientists and the social communities they study. Where they do not exist, as in many regional universities, international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and private consulting firms, institutional reviews should be implemented universally and systematically. Revisiting and strengthening institutional review processes to include recognition of the agency of the research participants should be a continuing imperative.

That said, IRBs themselves need to be more than mere risk-management devices. To some extent, academic institutions – and more and more often, development organizations, funders, and even publishers – have mechanisms to protect themselves from claims that they have allowed, promoted, funded, or published work that was conducted unscrupulously or irresponsibly. These kinds of institutional reviews typically reduce genuine observance of ethical norms to institutional compliance with government regulation. Institutions manage risk, not ethics, and cannot be relied on to provide adequate ethical oversight. As a result, interests are undisclosed, errors go uncorrected, research terrains are contaminated by multiple, uncoordinated, and often poorly designed projects and initiatives, and findings languish in reports restricted to their funders.

While recognizing that the demands of transparency and confidentiality are often in tension, IRBs should mandate that, when possible, researchers develop both collaborative processes of question generation and research designs that embody an ethic of participation and partnership, helping to mitigate objectification and minimize unforeseen or unrecognized sources of harm generated by the research. Researchers might be asked not only to disseminate findings to professional audiences but to provide reports of the findings – and any consequent actions – to the communities in which the research took place, in language that is clear and accessible to them.[8]

Similarly, while recognizing that the interests of governments often conflict with the open and universalist norms of social research, we note the absence of national research systems to regulate both academic and nonacademic research, or policy and advocacy research, in most of the countries of the Middle East and North Africa – and elsewhere in the Global South. Such systems could define local research priorities, assess the quality of research outputs, and determine the pa-

rameters of sufficient evidence within the local context. When international organizations and funders impose the priorities and dominate quality assessment, the resulting disparities in resources and distortions in research agendas undercut the health and vitality of local academic establishments. Local and regional expertise should be more effectively deployed in the design and implementation of social science research in the region. In part because much social research is commissioned by or directed at audiences in government agencies – both regional and international – we hasten to add that governments should not conduct such reviews directly, nor should they be included in evaluating topics, methods, or personnel involved in social research. As we will see, research oversight is a vexed and challenging issue, and one that should not be left, as is so often the case today, to government security agencies.[9]

The audiences for social research go well beyond the communities studied or the governments that permit, prevent, or otherwise regulate research. Social scientists participate in communities of scholarship – university departments and faculties, disciplinary associations, editorial boards, writing workshops, and research collaborations – that are, in fact, among their most important constituencies. Questions of benefit and harm, risk and reward are not limited, therefore, simply to what might happen in the course of the research itself, but are also involved in how the findings are presented and disseminated.

Particularly when the relevant audience for the research is unfamiliar with the place where the research was conducted, care must be taken that the communities in question be characterized honestly, fairly, and respectfully, and the circumstances in which the research is conducted, including any elements of duress, must be reported clearly. Violence should not be normalized as unavoidable and ordinary. The processes by which theories, hypotheses, agendas, and findings are reviewed and disseminated also entail ethical obligations on the part of journal editors and book publishers that too often are ignored or minimized.

To that end, editors and publishers should ensure that knowledge of the place in which the research is conducted is represented as they select manuscript reviewers. Methodological sophistication is certainly an important criterion for article submissions and book proposals, but assessments of the significance and resonance of the research question, familiarity with relevant literature in local languages, and appreciation of the political, social, and economic circumstances in which the research was conducted should also be reflected in decisions to publish research, particularly when these may not be common knowledge among the intended readership.[10] If journal editors, mentors, and reviewers ask about relevant regional research in local languages, scholars would be encouraged to incorporate relevant new knowledge, no matter the language of publication. After all, we know that such nudges or encouragement can increase rates of cross-language citation; as Sari Hanafi has shown, references in Arabic increase quite

dramatically when academic supervisors and advisors encourage their students to use them.[11]

The lack of coordination and communication between researchers within and outside the Middle East and North Africa is apparent in the dearth of coauthorship and citations in U.S. and European publications of research by scholars based in the region. Journals should directly ask submitting authors about their employment of nonauthor research assistants, translators, and fixers and require disclosure of their roles so as to discourage the too-frequent failure to properly cite or credit collaborators.[12]

Incentivizing collaboration across regions in funding schemes, however well-intentioned, may set up rent-seeking dynamics that ultimately undermine genuinely egalitarian collaboration. But supporting the publication, dissemination, and utilization of cross-regional collaborations in peer-reviewed journals would raise the visibility and influence of those with intimate knowledge of the research terrain in the region.[13] This would also contribute to coordinating and communicating the results of the substantial social science research produced outside the academy in the region, as we will see.

These kinds of procedural improvements in the research process also require reforming and improving how the professional obligations of social science researchers are fulfilled: how junior career scholars are trained and mentored; how colleagues are evaluated and supported; how students, readers, and wider audiences are introduced to new ideas and findings. In considering this level of professional obligation, we returned to sociologist Robert Merton's well-known characterization of the norms of science.

Just as much of the discussion of the procedural obligations of ethical social research proceeded from adoption and critique of *The Belmont Report*, Merton's 1942 description of the imperatives that make up the "ethos of modern science" served as an organizing device for discussion of professional ethics.[14] Merton's four norms – which he called communism, universalism, disinterestedness, and organized skepticism – seemed to encapsulate the aspirations, if not always the reality, of scientific practice. This characterization has been debated both in the sociology of science and among those who observed changes in the practice of research.[15] Physicist John M. Ziman, for example, described how the "industrialization" of science, or what we might call the corporatization of the research enterprise, has produced a science that is "governed by principles that are almost antithetical to the Mertonian norms," in which "research is directly commissioned by the management of a firm, it is performed by local 'in-house' experts, under the authority of the management, and its results are considered to be company property that may have to be kept secret."[16] In the social sciences, the proliferation of social research conducted by international NGOs and private con-

sultancies around the world, including in the Middle East and North Africa, has meant that Mertonian norms and bureaucratic practices are typically intermingled in contemporary practice and, as Ziman predicted, "people find themselves in very ambivalent situations, torn between the norms that they have personally internalized and the duties that they are being called upon to perform."[17]

The training and mentoring of early-career social scientists should reflect the prevalence of social science outside universities and academic research centers in much of the world, as well as the belated recognition in many social science doctoral programs that "nonacademic employment" is the most likely result of most graduate job searches.[18] Many parts of the research landscape in the Middle East and North Africa are crowded with competing research teams jostling for access to field sites and to informants, as academic research methods have been adopted and adapted by international organizations, private consultants, development agencies, and humanitarian and rights advocates, among others, that are not governed by the Mertonian norms of the academy.[19] Academics cannot afford to ignore this work; after all, many of those conducting such research are the products of the very same disciplinary training as university-based researchers: these are the "nonacademic jobs" that doctoral students and postdocs are increasingly encouraged to seek. Professional development should reflect the variety of institutional contexts in which research is conducted.

Driven by career imperatives to conduct and publish research for whose novelty academic scholars will be recognized, researchers rarely consider collaborating with nonacademic organizations conducting parallel studies, developing common training programs, datasets, and even publication protocols. Yet a better understanding of how such work is organized, funded, and recognized would contribute to relieving research participants of the burden of uncoordinated research teams mindlessly replicating redundant – and wearisome – projects.[20] Such recognition of the wider field would also contribute to acknowledging all those collaborators, research assistants, data analysts, translators, and interview arrangers without whom much academic research could not happen.[21] Far too often the resources of the privileged – the time and money afforded researchers based in wealthy universities in the Global North – accumulate while those who make their work possible languish on the margins of our supposedly collective enterprise.

While it is unlikely that doctoral training programs can single-handedly rectify the problems posed by research ungoverned by academic standards, students can be better prepared for the ethical demands of research outside the academy. Ethical and responsible frameworks for robust data generation, honest analysis, fair recognition of labor, and responsible publication must be promoted and rewarded by academic institutions, starting with mentorship.[22] Mentorship, both by formal advisors and by more-senior figures and collective actors within a discipline (for example, editorial boards or organized conference sections), transmits

the norms, practices, and attitudes that shape research via teaching, informal discussions, feedback, and promotion. Mentorship incorporates training, provides ethical guidance, conveys incentives, transmits priorities, and should be systematically incorporated into all early-career training.

To that end, we recommend that all research proposals, whether or not they entail IRB approval, should be the subject of a discussion with experienced research scholars – doctoral advisors, senior consultants, veteran university faculty – about not only the methods but the ethical obligations that are also entailed in the research. Early-career scholars should be as well equipped to discern their ethical responsibilities as they are to deploy suitable methods. Students should be expected to ask: What are the possible outcomes of the research? Who will benefit? How might the outcomes of the research result in negative consequences, even if unintended? Who will be detrimentally affected? These discussions will broach the disparity of power in many relationships: local and foreign researchers, researcher and community/research participants, funders and researchers, academic and nonacademic research, and rich prestigious doctoral programs and smaller less well-endowed programs.

Students and other early-career scholars should be rewarded for, not discouraged from, developing collaborations – and acknowledging their collaborators appropriately. Too often, collaboration begins only with implementation, but there are opportunities for meaningful and ethical collaboration at all stages of the research process, including question generation and research design. Equitable collaboration between research partners is an essential feature of ethical North-South and South-South research. In this, we recommend that initiatives like the "TRUST Code," which its founders describe as "a global code of conduct for equitable research partnerships," be widely disseminated and incorporated into training programs in universities, disciplinary associations, and other research organizations. Designed in part to prevent "ethics dumping, the practice of exporting unethical research practices to lower-income settings," by accenting fairness, respect, care, and honesty, the TRUST Code has been endorsed and adopted by a number of European and African universities and funders.[23]

We recognize that many senior social scientists, particularly in North American and European institutions, are understandably reluctant to dispense practical advice about unfamiliar research terrains, and we applaud their modesty.[24] That said, we recommend they become familiar with resources like the Advancing Research on Conflict bibliography and the discussion guide we have developed to assist senior advisors in discussing issues of ethics, even in research contexts with which they are not personally familiar.[25] We also recognize that these recommendations could conceivably slow research processes and publication timelines. Yet cutting corners in the interest of "finishing early" and "getting published" has contributed to precisely the kinds of unethical practices that weaken

the research enterprise for everyone. Becoming a responsible researcher requires reflection about research agendas, and consultation and cooperation with other more knowledgeable scholars at universities and research firms, in the field and beyond.

Reforms of both procedural practices and professional norms would contribute to more reliable, trustworthy, and useful research. But many of the ethical issues that bedevil work in the Middle East and North Africa are not reducible to technical processes and professional development, however desirable reforms in those arenas may be. Politics – disparities of power and privilege – shape research agendas and resource allocations in ways that undermine the very purpose of social research by distorting understanding and warping perceptions of human behavior and social life in the region.[26]

There is an epistemological element in this: if place-based research is to have any purpose, those of us who specialize in social research anchored in a place – the Middle East and North Africa, for example – have a responsibility to produce and advocate for the "situated knowledge – knowledge marked by place, time, and circumstance – [that] relies on the excavation of meaning."[27] Merely replicating surveys or experiments designed elsewhere or constructing cases to fit typologies originating elsewhere contributes relatively little to better understanding of either place or, for that matter, greater refinement of the instrument. Social scientists need to be vastly more self-conscious and openly reflective about the limitations of their conceptual apparatus, including the possibility of geographic and temporal provincialism.

This will require modesty in our truth claims, especially when dealing with ideas, concepts, and issues we know to be contested. Perhaps because so much is disputed in the Middle East and North Africa, the social research community that works there may be particularly alert to the importance of uncertainty and the utility of skepticism. But we begin with the premise that knowledge is always generated from a specific perspective, shaped by social position and personal experience. Instead of striving for a singular truth, we seek to understand different perspectives and relay them precisely and respectfully.

This is particularly important because the distortions introduced by ambitions to universalist science are not random. They reflect a history of global aspirations on the part of imperial powers to shape and reshape social worlds in their own image. The dominance of American concepts (in ideas of race, for example), methods (in controlled trials), and dissemination outlets (in the English medium of "top-tier journals") has been repeatedly illustrated in this volume. The conceit that American concepts, methods, and media are merely "better," and not a reflection of the power the United States exercises in the world, is a debilitating mistake.

But there are also inhibitions to ethical social research in the Middle East and North Africa that are not simply born of researchers' naivete and overconfidence. Governments in the United States and Europe work to undermine or interfere in the collection and dissemination of information. Autocratic governments in the Middle East and North Africa distort and undermine research by restricting permissions, visas, funding, and access. Social scientists based in most of the universities in the region work in deplorable conditions. Academic institutions across the region have been weakened by poverty, state repression, neoliberal reform, and war and cannot provide support for the critical intellectual work of independent social research.[28] Foreign efforts to support independent or organic research communities are sometimes met with suspicion or hostility by local governments. Often, this is for good reason: much of the world's best early anthropology, for example, was undertaken in the context of colonial domination, and much highly regarded political science has been devoted to explaining and justifying U.S. hegemony in the world. Moreover, the danger to researchers is heightened where violence is widespread – whether state-sponsored torture, militia-based combat, criminal gang violence, or foreign military intervention and outright war – or where disease and trauma are endemic, as in many humanitarian crises and impoverished communities.[29]

Nonetheless, there have been successful initiatives aimed at strengthening both the social research communities within the region and collaborations across scholarly communities. The Arab Council for Social Sciences, the Arab Political Science Network, and other similar institutions and projects are examining the landscape of social science in the region, encouraging novel intraregional collaborations, and fostering research within and beyond disciplinary communities.[30] New universities and institutes, such as the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies and the affiliated Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Qatar, are training early-career scholars and supporting research in an attempt to build social science that reflects local preoccupations and interests and fosters collaboration and competition that can strengthen social science research across the region – and indeed, globally.[31] With a long-standing presence in the region spanning decades, the network of French research centers in Beirut, Erbil, Amman, East Jerusalem, Cairo, Kuwait, and Rabat has developed collaborations with local institutions and proven to be an important venue for scholars from the region. The Arab Reform Initiative, with offices in Beirut and Tunis, is working across institutional lines to foster collaborations with universities, think tanks, and NGOs.[32] More focused initiatives such as Insaniyyat, the Society of Palestinian Anthropologists, bridge regionally based and international scholarly communities.[33] Professional associations in the Global North, from the American Political Science Association to the Middle East Studies Association of North America, have also launched efforts to increase opportunities for scholars from the region to access mentoring, meth-

ods training, and opportunities for publishing research and deepening scholarly networks.

While we applaud these efforts, and indeed would like to see more of them, we also urge practitioners and academics alike to broaden the definition of where social science happens. Particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, where the university systems are so weakened, many social scientists work in private firms, for advocacy and development agencies, and as consultants and journalists. Working more closely with colleagues located in nonacademic sites would contribute to widening the scope and reach of social research in the region.

All of these kinds of initiatives require funding and, as we have seen, funders in Europe and North America often have quite specific agendas that reflect the policy preoccupations of their home governments. European funders encourage research on refugees and migration, for example, and U.S. funders support work on "countering violent extremism," which represents neither the needs nor the interests of social researchers in the Middle East and North Africa. The failure to invest in nurturing social science communities in the region, even (and perhaps especially) when their work does not contribute directly and immediately to addressing policy preoccupations of European and American governments, is short-sighted and ultimately self-defeating. After all, the "crisis-driven" policy concerns in Europe and the United States are in part reflections of the fact that political dynamics in the region have been poorly understood for decades.

Some of this ignorance is, of course, deliberate. The extent to which American and European governments are complicit in maintaining autocratic regimes in power in the region is not typically something that either the patron or the client governments want examined. Yet some of the independent private foundations in the United States, long supporters of social science, have increasingly reallocated funding away from international programs – arguing with some justification that there are plenty of problems to tackle at home – and withdrawn from supporting programming that might be deemed controversial. Darren Walker, the outgoing president of the Ford Foundation, spoke to this latter dynamic in late 2024: "Around too many board tables, trustees and directors tell their executives: *Just keep your head down*. The prevailing attitude says: *Speaking out will cost you more than it buys. Better to say as little as possible, to protect yourself and your reputation, to exhibit neutrality for the purpose of self-preservation*." Far better that these trustees and directors celebrate Ford's own commitment to "disrupting systems to advance social justice" because "the inherent dignity of all people and that inequality is the defining challenge of our time."[34]

But it speaks to our last set of recommendations for universities, foundations, and other institutions that are devoted to the protection and nurturing of social science research. First, this too is an arena in which greater collaboration and communication would be worthwhile. The lack of coordination among funders

not only makes it difficult to assess the impact of the funding, but also inhibits better diversification of funding sources, topics, and researchers. A wider range of funders and better coordination among them could discourage debilitating duplication of effort and support work on issues that reflect local priorities that are otherwise understudied. To that end, donors should also extend their networks and support beyond their usual grantees. Understandably, U.S. and European foundations tend to support regionally based researchers who have been educated in U.S. and European institutions, can easily converse in Western languages, and fit comfortably within U.S. and European networks and paradigms. These scholars deserve support, but to reap the benefits of diversity, external donors need to pay additional attention to other scholars, particularly those based in the Middle East and North Africa – including those working in nonacademic settings such as policy research centers – whose approaches and interests may more fundamentally challenge Western assumptions.

Finally, universities, foundations, professional associations, and other institutions devoted to the search for knowledge and to the institutional infrastructure that is entailed in that enterprise need to rededicate themselves to first principles. The advocates and defenders of research must acknowledge that the purpose of the university is to discover the unforeseen – sometimes marvelous, sometimes bewildering, sometimes even alarming – as they make their case in the twenty-first century.[35] The purpose of academic freedom is to create and sustain space for candid, critical debate about sometimes deeply contentious ideas in the face of popular or powerful hostility, incredulity, or simple misunderstanding. The protection of academic freedom is also an occasion in which coordination and collaboration would be a powerful mechanism by which to mobilize resources and serve common interests.

There are many models of such collaboration from which to choose; North American and European universities do not have to invent new mechanisms. The Magna Charta Universitatum, for example, was born of a declaration endorsing the fundamental principles upon which the mission of universities should be based, developed in Europe in 1988 on the occasion of the nine hundredth anniversary of the University of Bologna. Reaffirmed by nearly a thousand universities from ninety-four countries (including only twenty-two of the four thousand universities and colleges in the United States) in 2020, it reminded its audience of the three principles that are to guide the work of universities:

- The first principle was independence. Research and teaching must be intellectually and morally independent of all political influence and economic interests.
- The second was that teaching and research should be inseparable, with students engaged in the search for knowledge and greater understanding.

- The third principle identified the university as a site for free inquiry and debate, distinguished by its openness to dialogue and rejection of intolerance.

It is hard to imagine that the global university community – including its funders and collaborators among foundations, government agencies, and international development organizations – would not be well-served by a unified and public embrace of these principles. As the declaration insists, "Universities question dogmas and established doctrines and encourage critical thinking in all students and scholars. Academic freedom is their lifeblood; open inquiry and dialogue their nourishment."[36]

Whether in reforming institutional review processes, reassessing research agendas and methods, rethinking early-career social science training, reconsidering funding priorities, or recommitting to the importance of academic freedom, perspectives from the Middle East and North Africa reveal not simply the ethical fault lines of social research but also the enormous opportunities to remake the enterprise anew.

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ENDNOTES

1 Jannis Julien Grimm, "The Mixed Blessing of Digital Fieldwork: Digital Security and Ethical Dilemmas of Remote Research during and after the Pandemic," *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 20 (2) (2022): 33–38.

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3 Among the many sources we found particularly useful were Divya Sharma, ed., *Ethics, Ethnocentrism and Social Science Research* (Routledge, 2021); Scott Desposato, ed., *Ethics and Experiments* (Routledge, 2016); Ron Iphofen and Dónal O'Mathúna, *Ethical Issues in Covert, Security and Surveillance Research* (Emerald Publishing, 2022); Marlies Glasius, Meta de Lange, Jos Bartman, et al., *Research Ethics and Risk in the Authoritarian Field* (Palgrave, 2017); Keerty Nakray, Margaret Alston, and Kerri Whittenbury, *Social Science Research Ethics for a Globalizing World: Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (Routledge, 2016); and J. Paul Goode and Ariel I. Ahram, "Observing Autocracies from the Ground Floor," *Social Science Quarterly* 97 (4) (2016), https://www.jstor.org/stable/e26612353.

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