

## **University Missions/Goals in the Context of Globalization: Public and Private Institutions in the Middle East**

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**Abstract:** This study aimed at analyzing and comparing the mission statements, goals and objectives of selected public and private universities in the Middle East. A sample of four Middle Eastern countries was chosen for this study (Jordan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen). The first public and first private universities founded in each of these countries were chosen for this study.

This study used a qualitative approach to content analysis, the data were organized in categories, and the emerging categories in the mission goals of the universities are: development and community services, international activities, preserving national culture, and links to industry/ business.

The findings of this study are organized around the economic vs. cultural categories and national vs. regional vs. global categories. These categories are in line with issues that many universities around the world are considering in their priorities.

The main difference between the mission statements of the investigated universities and other one is that these universities pay more attention to the role of the university in preserving culture-Arab and Islamic (174).

**Key words:** University mission, globalization, public and private universities

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### **Introduction**

There are two perspectives on the role of higher education; one refers to higher education as a *social institution* while the other perspective refers to higher education as an *economic sector* or an *industrial branch* (Clark 1998; Henkel 1997). According to the first perspective, universities and colleges must attain educational and other goals related to their core activities, retain institutional legacies, and carry out important functions for the wider society, such as the cultivation of citizenship, preserving the cultural heritage, and the formation of character and skills of individual students. The second perspective states that universities and colleges sell goods and services, train an important part of the workforce, and otherwise further economic development. In relation to either or both of these two roles a university may exhibit receptiveness or detachment. Receptiveness refers to the expectations that universities being more receptive to the society and industry/business needs and problems. Detachment is defined as “the requisite degree of aloofness of science from everyday problems and the preoccupation with questions of generality” (Wright, 1990, p. 66).

Higher education is under pressure to provide evidence that it is receptive to meeting social/cultural needs (i.e., promoting national unity) and “market needs” (i.e. produce employable graduates to suit employers' demands and to serve as sources of research-based knowledge).

It is possible to see a number of common themes internationally in the reactions of higher education policy to globalization and its impact on changes at the institutional level such as:

- a) Significant per capita government budget reductions occurred in higher education;
- b) a significant push to diversify income sources; an increased commodification of knowledge as intellectual property;
- c) reorganization of higher education has been promoted by national governments, or in some cases state/provincial governments, to relate it more closely to national economic agendas;
- d) the pressures for new forms of accountability have increased at all levels;
- e) "quality" movements in higher education have been established by governments, which are intended to monitor or audit institutional processes and outcomes, and funding is increasingly tied to the results.;
- f) and discourses of managerialism have become pervasive, imported into education from the private sector via earlier general public sector reforms (Paige & Leslie, 2000)

Some universities have explicitly or implicitly given attention to globalization in their goals, objectives, and mission statements. In a globalized world universities may give greater priority to strengthening the national economy to make it more competitive, to enhance the global competence of the national government, and/or preserving the national culture. Since higher education is still highly centralized in most of the Middle Eastern countries, it is assumed that the public universities reflect more closely the general policies of the national governments in these countries. Mission statements, goals and objectives might be a good indicator of how government officials or the owners of universities (i.e., in for-profit private institutions) organize their priorities. Do governments focus on integration with countries in the region, with countries around the world that share the same religion or language, and/or countries around the world in general? Private universities in most of the countries of the Middle East are relatively new, with the majority of them being established in the 1990s. The sponsors of the private institutions might have different conceptions, priorities, concerns, and strategies for dealing with globalization. Moreover, it is assumed, compared to public universities that private universities will be more likely to highlight or even mention globalization, whether positively or negatively, in their mission statements, because these were developed when the globalization discourse became wide-spread.

### **Research Questions**

This study seeks to analyze and compare the mission statements, goals and objectives of selected public and private universities in the Middle East. More specifically, the following research questions are addressed:

- What are the main themes included in the mission statements, goals, and objectives of the universities under investigation?
- To what extent do universities goals/mission and activities give attention to economic versus social/cultural issues at the national, regional, and global levels?
- How, if at all, is the issue of globalization raised in relation to these universities' mission statements, goals, and objectives?

### **Theoretical Issues and Related Research**

Globalization is an "amorphous" word that does not have a specific meaning. According to Amin (2000), the term globalization has become abused in the discourse so that one is no longer sure of its real meaning. Nevertheless, one can observe that globalization has no origin, in the sense of an exact starting point (Scholte 2000). What has changed over history is the intensity and trend of globalization. The pace of globalization progressively quickened with time. Some scholars such

as Petrella (1996) claims that globalization is a more recent phenomenon, while McMichael (1996) claim that the process of globalization is not new but represents an increasing adopted view of the world.

Globalization has been applied to cover debates centering on convergence/divergence, homogenization/ heterogenization, and local /global issues (Stromquist & Monkman, 2000). The most common synonyms are *internationalization*, *liberalization*, *universalization*, and *westernization*. Hirst and Thompson (1996) focus on globalization as internationalization, which is in terms of “large and growing flows of trade and capital investment between countries” (p.48). With respect to its meaning as liberalization, globalization refers to a process of removing government-imposed restrictions on movements of goods, services, capital, and people between countries in order to create an open borderless world economy.

In analyzing the process of globalization one can highlight at least three dimensions: Political, cultural, and economic. In terms of the political dimension of globalization, the literature focuses on the impact of globalization on the nation-state. There is a debate in the globalization discourse of whether or not globalization weakens the traditional nation-state and in what ways. According to Paige and Lesley (2000), globalization has had a dual impact: a) it led to the breaking up of large political entities into smaller components and b) it brought together smaller political units. In this respect, one can mention the breaking up of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (U.S.S.R) and the nation of Yugoslavia along ethnic, religious, and geographical lines in contrast with the creation of the European Union and the Asian Pacific Economic Community (APEC) by amalgamating different nation-states. Scholars, such as Slaughter (1997), claims that the state is not disappearing but being disaggregated, while others announced the death of the state and the rise of quasi- states (Falk, 1997). Or the state is viewed as having become dysfunctional unit for organizing human activities as a result of what Ohmae (1993) called the 4 I's: investment, industry, information, and individual. This led to the formation of *region states* (Ohmae, 1993) and *ethno-nations*, and *transworld nations* (Lawrence, 1996)

Under globalization, the national sovereignty is challenged by issues that require international strategies to address them, such as environment or terrorism. One of the factors that has led to the weakening of the nation-states is the emergence and growing importance of non-state actors particularly the international organizations (governmental and non-governmental), multinational corporations, non -governmental organizations, and the transnational civil society. Another explanation is offered by Strange (1998) who claims that states are getting weaker and non state actors are getting stronger because the ideology of the state allowed for these actors to compete.

The cultural dimension of globalization raises the questions of whether globalization makes people more the same or more different and whether globalization leads to the melting of the national cultures and identities. For some, globalization has harmonized and unified, often crushing traditional ways of life when they have deviated from the dominant pattern. Globalization introduces a single world culture centered on consumerism, mass media, Americana, and the English language. The second perspective links globalization with continuing or even increasing cultural diversity and with embracing inter-and intra- national differences (Appadurai, 1996). Accordingly, many groups have stressed the values of national, religious and other particularism as a reaction to and defense against a universalizing “McWorld” (Barber, 1996). An example is the emergence of some fundamentalist groups, particularly but not only Islamic groups, who believe that globalization is destroying their values. According to Huntington (1996), the claim that the world is moving into a global culture in which western

values are dominant is false and misleading. He claims that even if people consume the same goods, wear similar clothes, listen to the same music, and watch the same movies, it does not mean that they are becoming the same because the heart of culture (i.e. language, values, traditions, and custom) will remain different.

What happened, and is still happening, under globalization is the removal of boundaries and the ease of traveling—even virtual travel. With the Internet, an individual can travel around the world while not leaving one's house. This means that keeping one's identity is becoming easier and the assimilation into the new nation—particularly in the case of immigrants—is becoming harder (Marginson, 1999). Therefore, the world is still far from moving into a global culture and there is little evidence that national cultures are disappearing (Smith, 1990). National and sub-national cultures remain the bases of collective cultural identity.

Economic globalization refers to the international integration of economies and systems of communication (Paige and Lesley, 2000). It involves the increasingly global nature of markets, capital, and labor, and globalized process of production and distribution of goods and services. Privatization of public sector is taking place everywhere. This movement is part of the forces of globalization on countries, which stem from the neo-liberal belief that public sector can not compete in global world. The "reality" of economic globalization has been questioned by Hirst and Thompson (1996), who argue that the economic evidence does not, in fact, support a dramatic change in the degree of internationalization of the world economy, nor in the growth of transnational firms, nor in a shift of investment and employment to the developing countries, nor in the extent to which world economic forces are unable to be regulated. Instead, globalization is more an "ideal vision" for economic neo-liberals of how they would like the world to be, and the direction in which they are trying to push it.

Under globalization, world economy is supposed to converge and become more integrated, but many studies show that it is diverging instead of converging and that regional not global integration is what takes place (Lawrence, 1996). Divergence takes place in terms of policies, and in terms of income and control, particularly between the north and the south and between men and women. Doremus, Keller, Pauly, and Reich (1998) show that even the policies of the multinational corporations based in the three major industrial countries (Japan, USA, and Germany) show a divergence in their policy in terms of investment and trade, R&D, and governance. But this does not mean they are not converging in their impact on other countries.

### **Methods of the Study**

A sample of four Middle Eastern countries was chosen for this study. These are: Jordan, Saudia Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. These countries are representatives of the Arab Middle Eastern countries in terms of cultural, social, economic, and educational aspects. These countries have different numbers of public and private universities; there are ten public and 14 private universities in Jordan; seven public and one private university in Saudia Arabia; 3 public and six private universities in the United Arab Emirates; and two public and three private universities in Yemen. The initial plan was to choose the first public and first private university founded in each of these countries, but since this study is mainly based on the universities' web sites, it was decided to select universities that provide good description of their mission/goals. This process led to including eight institutions in the study. Table 1 shows names and date of establishment of the universities under study.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The universities' web sites addresses are:  
AUST: <http://www.ajman.ac.ae>

**Table 1: Universities Included in This Study**

Country	Private University	Public University
Jordan	Philadelphia University (PU) Established in 1989. The university has 7 faculties, including: Engineering, Science, Administrative and Financial Sciences, Law, Arts, Information Technology, and Pharmacy	University of Jordan (UJ). Established in 1962 as the first university in Jordan. The university has 17 faculties: Arts, Medicine, Educational Sciences, Agriculture, Business Administration, Science, Islamic Studies, Nursing, Engineering and Technology, Physical Education, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Humanities and Social Sciences, Graduate Studies, Rehabilitation Sciences, and Information Technology.
Saudia Arabia	Effat College Established in 2003. The College has 9 academic programs: Psychology, Computer Science, Information System, Kindergarten, English Language and Translation, Business Administration, Computer Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Architecture.	King Saud University (KSU) Established in 1957 as the first university in Saudia Arabia. The university has 14 colleges, including: Medicine, Dentistry, Science, Engineering, Pharmacy, Computer and Information Technology; Architecture and Planning, Arts, Agriculture, Education, Administration, Languages and Translation, and Graduate Studies.
United Arab Emirates	Ajman University of Science and Technology (AUST). Established in 1988 as the first private university in the UAE. The university has 8 faculties including: Business Administration, Computer Science & Engineering, Dentistry, Education & Basic Science, Engineering, Pharmacy & Health Science, Foreign Languages, and Information and Mass Communication, and Public Relations.	UAE University (UAEU). Established in 1976. The university has nine colleges, including: Food System, Education, Humanities and Social Science, Medicine and Health Sciences, Science, Shariah and Law, Business and Economics, Engineering, and Information Technology.
Yemen	The University of Science and Technology (UST). Established in 1994 as the first private university in Yemen. The university has five schools: Arts, Administrative Sciences, Engineering, Shari'a and Law, and Education	Sana University Established in 1970 as the first public university in Yemen. The University has 14 colleges distributed among different cities in Yemen: Medicine, Engineering, Dental, Agriculture, Education, Shari'a and Law, Arts, Sciences, Languages, Business and Economic, Information, Pharmacy, Education, Education Arts and Sciences

KSU: <http://www.ksu.edu.sa>  
 PU: <http://www.philadelphia.edu.jo>  
 UAEA: <http://www.uaeu.ac.ae>  
 UJ: <http://www.uj.edu.jo>  
 UST: <http://www.ust.edu>  
 Sana University: <http://www.sanauniv.net>  
 Effat College: <http://effatcollege.edu.sa>

Mission statements, goals, and objectives of each university were collected from the universities' web sites. Only Sana University does not have an English version of its website, so translation from Arabic to English was done by the investigators who are native in Arabic. The documents were analyzed using a qualitative approach to content analysis. The data were organized in categories that relates to the questions to be answered. The emerging categories in the mission/goals of the universities are: development and community service, international activities, preserving national culture, and links to industry/business.

### Findings

The findings of this study are organized around the economic vs. cultural categories and national vs. regional vs. global categories.<sup>2</sup> These categories are shown for each university and then a general framework is followed for all the universities,

#### Ajman University of Science and Technology (AUST)

As Table 2 shows, AUST's mission statement, goals, and objectives focus on the economic role played by the university at the national level. Regarding culture, the university is focusing on the global (i.e., promoting collaboration and exchange) and the regional level.

**Table 2: The focus of Ajman University of Science and technology**

	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Cultural</b>
<b>Global</b>	-----	Establishing exchange/collaboration agreements. A sister university in Valencia, Spain (the Mediterranean University of Science & Technology). The university's mission stresses that the university should be open to the world in order to examine the various educational programs and then selecting the best, taking into consideration "the technical aspect and the moral value and their customization with Arab and Islamic society."
<b>Regional</b>	-----	
<b>National</b>	The university aims at breaking the barriers between academy and business. It pays attention to developing academic programs that suit the business market, establishing training centers, and transferring the scientific and technical experience to the surrounding environment.	-----

<sup>2</sup> National refers to the individual country in which the university is located, while regional refers to the Arab and Islamic countries, and to the Middle East. Global refers to areas or regions larger than the Arab and Islamic worlds

**Effat College/ Saudi Arabia**

Regarding the economic role of the College, Effat College focuses on its role at the Saudian, regional, and global level. In terms of its social/cultural role, the cultural level, the college has a well-established network of international relationships (see Table 3).

**Table 3: The Focus of Effat College**

	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Cultural</b>
<b>Global</b>	Effat College is committed to nurturing the multifaceted development of students to enable them for life and professions in a <b>changing world</b> and they are able to cross academic, <b>geographic</b> , and <b>cultural boundaries</b> .	Effat College has a network of international relationships with many educational institutions in Europe, and the USA. The university also signed cooperation agreements with certain professional institutions such as <i>Duke University, Durham, NC, USA, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, USA</i> , Canadian Education Network in Coordination with LaSalle College, Montreal, Canada
<b>Regional</b>	Effat College seeks “to prepare students to enable them to become leaders, innovators, and productive members of society. Students learn teamwork and leadership through group projects and collaborate with faculty on research and creative production.	The College has cooperation and educational exchange agreements with regional universities such as American University of Cairo/ Egypt.
<b>National</b>	Likewise, faculty collaborates with colleagues across departmental, college, and institutional boundaries to elevate the quality and impact of their work.	The College believes that the rapid development of knowledge, science and technology widened the cultural divide between generations. Thus The structure of the curriculum at Effat sets the College apart from many other colleges in that students are required to create their education by making a series of active choices. It’s a flexible system designed to guide the student through stages of intellectual growth that give coherence, breadth, and depth to the student’s chosen course of study.

**King Saud University (KSU)**

KSU’s mission statement, goals, and objectives focus on the economic and cultural categories at the national, regional and global levels (see Table 4). The University aims at contributing to the economic as well as social development of Saudia Arabia and enhances collaboration with other public as well as private institutions. With respect to the social/cultural dimension/role, the University aims at preparing “citizens who can serve and defend the country in accordance with the wisdom and idealism of Islam.” At the regional level the university is hosting some students as part of the cultural and educational exchange processes. At global level the university aims at playing a positive role in research which concentrates on the development of the world in the field of arts and science.

**Table 4: The Focus of King Saud University**

	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Cultural</b>
<b>Global</b>	-----	Play a positive role in research which concentrates on the development of the world in the field of arts and science.
<b>Regional</b>	-----	The university is hosting 5 graduate and 958 undergraduate students from countries outside Saudia Arabia. While almost 50% of the 10,901 university staff are non-Saudi.
<b>National</b>	The university aims at contributing, side by side with other institutions, in the economic and social development of the country.  The university believes in strong coordination with both the government and the private sector to provide expertise, research, and consultations. The university also aims at encouraging the private sector to fund the university's activities and programs.	Strengthen the belief in the God and provide students with Islamic education that make him/her responsible in front of the God. Paying special attention to Islamic studies and its development, and to

**Philadelphia University (PU)**

**Table 5: The Focus of Philadelphia University**

	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Cultural</b>
<b>Global</b>	Philadelphia University "commits itself" to becoming a full partner in the economic and social development of Jordanian society, in particular, as well as other societies in the region and the global level.	Philadelphia University has a network of international relationships with many educational institutions in Europe, and the USA. The university also signed cooperation agreements with certain professional institutions such as The Swiss Reitz Hotels Institution and the Electronic Libraries Network.
<b>Regional</b>		The university has many cooperation and educational exchange agreements with Arab universities
<b>National</b>	Philadelphia University seeks "to prepare students to meet market economy with excellence on the basis of competitiveness, creativity, and skills." The university lays special emphasis on preparing students with language skills, computer skills, the Internet, and other necessary skills in order to "function in the knowledge society."	The university believes that the rapid development of knowledge, science and technology widened the cultural divide between generations. Thus, modern approaches to education and lifelong learning will play the role in counteracting the effects of this trend.



Regarding the economic role of the university, Philadelphia university focuses on its role at the Jordanian, regional, and global level. In terms of its social/cultural role, the cultural level, the university has a well-established network of international relationships (see Table 5).

**United Arab Emirates University (UAEU)**

As Table 6 below indicates, the United Arab Emirates University focuses on the contributing to the national economy and preparing graduates to meet the needs of the different sectors in the United Arab Emirates. Also, the university aims at preserving and meeting the cultural needs of the Arab, Islamic, and the United Arab Emirates as well as other Arab and Islamic societies.

**Table 6: The Focus of United Arab Emirates University**

	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Cultural</b>
<b>Global</b>	-----	-----
<b>Regional</b>	-----	The university works at preserving, enriching, and deepening students' understanding, appreciation, and pride in Arab and Islamic cultures.
<b>National</b>	The university aims at keeping the curriculum in line of "internationally accepted criteria" to ensure that the graduates will meet the industry, government and private sector needs.	It aims at meeting the educational and cultural needs of the UAE society.

**University of Jordan (UJ)**

**Table 7: The Focus of the University of Jordan**

	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Cultural</b>
<b>Global</b>	-----	At the international level, the University has reached agreements with academic institutions and research centers in the world at large "with a view to exchanging know-how and expertise, and to keeping itself abreast with breakthroughs in the various fields of science and education." The University engages in exchange of professors for teaching, research, and teaching missions. Through agreements with universities around the world, students in the University of Jordan are able to participate in training programs, especially in the fields of medicine, engineering, and foreign languages.
<b>Regional</b>	The university aims at providing community service at the local and regional level and responds to the social, educational, cultural, economic, and industrial and market needs. It also focuses on the development of the Arab World	-----
<b>National</b>	The university will support "research activities, which are in line with the national development plans." the university will focus on projects that link the educational programs to the market needs more closely and firmly, thus enabling the students to acquire and develop the necessary market skills.	-----

The University of Jordan is focusing on both cultural and economic categories at the different levels (i.e., national, regional, and global) as shown in Table 7.

**University of Science and Technology (UST)/Yemen**

The information obtained from UST web site stresses on the economic role played by the university to contribute in the development of Yemen as well as other Arab and Islamic societies (see Table 8).

**Table 8: The Focus of the University of Science and Technology**

	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Cultural</b>
<b>Global</b>	-----	-----
<b>Regional</b>	The University aims at advancing in research and scholarship in areas closely linked to the “development needs of the Islamic world at large and the Yemeni community in particular.”	-----
<b>National</b>	The university stresses linking education outcomes directly with the needs of development and provides public and private sectors with scientific consultations.	-----

**Sana University/ Yemen**

The information obtained from Sana University web site stresses on the economic role played by the university to contribute in the development of Yemen as well as other Arab and Islamic societies (see Table 9).

**Table 9: The Focus of Sana University**

	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Cultural</b>
<b>Global</b>	-----	-----
<b>Regional</b>	The University aims at advancing in research and scholarship in areas closely linked to the “development needs of the Islamic world at large and the Yemeni community in particular.”	-----
<b>National</b>	The university stresses linking education outcomes directly with the needs of development and provides public and private sectors with scientific consultations.	-----

Finally Table 10 below uses the same categories as above to locate the universities within the cells. It shows that all the universities are focusing on their role in contributing to the national economy. At the regional level, four universities (Philadelphia University, University of Jordan, University of Science and Technology, and Sana University) are focusing their attention to the

development of the economy, while only two universities (Philadelphia University and Effat College) aim to contribute to the global economy. Looking at the right side of the table, one observes that four universities (University of Jordan, Philadelphia University, Ajman University of Science and Technology, and Effat College) are paying attention to the culture globally, while 4 universities (United Arab Emirates University, Philadelphia University, King Saud University, and Ajman University of Science and Technology) are focusing on enhancing cultural exchange at the regional level. Only three universities (United Arab Emirates University, Philadelphia University, and King Saud University) highlight on their role in preserving the national culture.

**Table 10: Summary of the Focus of the Universities under Investigation**

	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Cultural</b>
<b>Global</b>	-Philadelphia University (PU) - Effat College	-University of Jordan -Philadelphia University (PU) -Ajman University of Science and Technology (AUST) - Effat College
<b>Regional</b>	-Philadelphia University (PU) -University of Jordan -University of Science and Technology (UST)/Yemen - Sana University	-United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) -Philadelphia University (PU) -King Saud University (KSU) -Ajman University of Science and Technology (AUST)
<b>National</b>	-University of Science and Technology (UST)/Yemen -University of Jordan -United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) -Philadelphia University (PU) -King Saud University (KSU) -Ajman University of Science and Technology (AUST) - Sana University - Effat College	-United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) -Philadelphia University (PU) -King Saud University (KSU)

### **Discussion**

Several categories of analysis can be observed when discussing the mission/goals of the universities in this study. These categories are in line with issues that many universities around the world are considering in their priorities. These issues include: promoting international understanding and collaboration, the role of the university in the national development, , and keeping a good linkage with industry and meeting the market needs.

The main difference between the mission statements of the investigated universities and other ones is that these universities pay more attention to the role of the university in preserving culture—Arab and Islamic. Below is a discussion of these categories using the literature mentioned under the conceptual issues?

### **Internationalization of higher education**

Internationalization refers more to the process of increasing cooperation between states or to activities across state borders, and rather reflecting a world order in which national states (still) play a central role” (Wender, 2001, p.1). There are several rationales for internationalization. In general, they are clustered into four groups: economic, political, cultural, and educational rationales (National Agency for Higher Education, 1997; International Association of

Universities [IAU], 1998).<sup>3</sup> Focusing on one or more of these rationales depends on the level of policy whether it is at the national or institutional level.

Internationalization of university activities takes several forms, such as internationalizing the curriculum, expanding the focus of faculty research and service activities, establishing area studies programs, and offering more foreign languages.

Universities in this study devote some attention to the international dimension of the university and its role in promoting international understanding. Stressing and achieving the international dimension varies from one university to another. For example, universities in this study refer to their international activities in many ways, such as having agreement with Arab or international educational institutions; hosting foreign students—Arabs and non-Arabs; and establishing foreign language programs other than English.

The following excerpts show all these ways of promoting international activities. Effat College offered a bachelor degree in English language and translation. Also, King Saud University has established the College of Languages and Translation that offers teaching of 14 languages because

Teaching foreign languages is an important way to facilitate economic, scientific, and cultural development of the country and facilitate the civilizational dialogue with the different world cultures.

Philadelphia University refers to hosting foreign students as well as establishing exchange agreements with other universities:

The student body is drawn from all regions of Jordan as well as from Arab and other countries (28 nationalities). The university has a wide network of international relationships with institutions in Europe, USA, and the Arab countries.

The University of Jordan states that the accommodation of students of varied cultures and backgrounds is a great advantage to the university community. It enriches campus life and paves the way for the exchange of ideas and dialogue amongst Jordanian students and their Arab and foreign colleagues. The University of Jordan stresses that it hosts students from different countries:

There are many students from Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Palestine, Saudia Arabia, North Africa, etc. And there are students from all the parts of the globe: American, British, Malaysian, and Japanese.

The University of Science and Technology (UST) believes that keeping close contact with some of the most reputable Arab and foreign universities is important for achieving academic coordination (i.e., curriculum planning, and admission policies) and educational exchange. UST has made twinning and cooperation agreements with some Arab famous universities.

According to these agreements, supervision courses of study, training, preparing exams

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<sup>3</sup> Economic rationale refers to the link between internationalization of the higher education and the economic and technological development of the country (i.e. the role of higher education in producing a skilled and knowledgeable work force). Political rationale refers to the importance of international education as a tool used by some countries as a way to strengthen and promote their national identity. Internationalization based on cultural rationale refers to the importance of understanding cultural and ethnic diversity within and between countries. Finally, the educational rationale refers to the role of higher education to achieve international academic standards for teaching and research which will improve the quality of higher education systems.

and educational exchange between the university and those academic institutions will take place.

While not always explicitly the rationales that motivated these universities to internationalize their activities seem to be educational and cultural ones. Also, another conclusion might be is that these universities still view their international activities as a way for cooperation and not competition.

### **Economic and Social Development**

“If knowledge is the electricity of the new informational-international economy, then the institutions of higher education are the power sources on which the new development process must rely” (Castells, 1994, p. 16). This statement points out the important role of higher education in the development process. In a global world, higher education institutions are rising to meet the demands of their clients to support more effectively the goals of economic and social/cultural development. Universities have always been important centers of knowledge. In view of their traditional role in the production, transfer, dissemination and handling of knowledge, universities and colleges are key socio-economic organizations in any society (Gornitzka & Maassen, 2000). However, universities are now, more than ever before, being press to take responsibilities and duties towards active contribution to the socio-economic development of local, regional and global societies (Almaani, 1999). In much of the world, there is an expectation that higher education will provide technical and professionally trained persons who will contribute to social/cultural and economic development.

The role of universities in bringing the national economy into a competitive position in the new world economy is tied to the broader policies in which their governments seek to achieve economic and social development. For example, the success of Korea and Singapore depended on an overall set of "developmental state" strategies that pushed export-driven economic growth and technological upgrading into science-based industrial production and not only by creating the high quality science and engineering or technical research in universities (Carnoy, 1995).

Universities in this study clearly indicate their responsibility toward the development of society and economy. This aspect of their role is seen as very important, thus, they must be very responsive to the social, cultural, economic, and industrial needs of the society. Attention is given not only to the development of the national economy but also to the preservation and development of Arab and Islamic culture.

Also, it seems that the governments in these countries are very much concerned with the efficiency and the effectiveness of the higher education systems. Analyzing the mission/goals of the universities in this study, one notice that many times that these universities aims at producing graduates who meets the demands of employers for a skilled workforce. Also, these universities express the need to diversify their funding sources even the ones in the rich Gulf countries.

### **Preserving Culture**

Most of the universities in this study mentioned their role in preserving the national culture. The universities under investigation are located in Muslim majority population countries. These universities state that they seek to preserve Islamic culture but also Arab culture by preparing generations who value the Islamic and Arabic way of living and preparing them to learn and adapt to other cultures and take what fits with the local traditions. This is not a surprise if we know that many Muslims see themselves as very threatened under globalization compared to Western non-Muslims. They feel that the Western culture is intruding on their traditions and aims

at dissolving it; so, one way to resist this intrusion is by preparing future generations who are well grounded in and committed to such culture.

It is important to notice here that, to a large extent, these universities see themselves as part of the Arab and Islamic nations. Although they are willing to open to global culture, they still believe they are not part of that culture and they have their own unique one. So, the role of these universities fits with the conclusions drawn by Smith (1990), in that the world is still far from moving into a global culture and that national and regional cultures still strongly exist. These universities want to develop national culture, and shape the identity of its students and keep them within the Islamic and Arab culture's unique traditions.

### **Relationships with Industry/Business**

While the sociopolitical demands and expectations with respect to higher education have grown—especially with respect to its economic role, in most countries the level of public funding of higher education is declining. Therefore, the institutions of higher education are trying to keep close ties with the business/industry sector in order to survive—at least monetarily. At the same time, firms that wish to compete in the global economy will have to possess the knowledge that enables them to maintain or increase their competitive advantage. So, one way for corporations to cope with this competition is collaboration, including alliances with knowledge suppliers, i.e., universities (Neave, & Geodegebuure (2001).

University-business/industry linkages are frequently conceived as a way to stimulate the development and commercialization of a new technology and provide faculty and students with “real world” problems on which to work, gain funds, etc. Implicit in these relationships is the belief that the combination of resources and expertise from partnering organizations can be much more potent force than can either organization doing it alone (Santoro, 1998).

In the universities under study, promoting and enhancing linkage with industry/business is seen as one of their important missions/goals. The university is perceived to play an important role in breaking the barriers with the private sector and to perform a key function to meet the needs of the market. This linkage is especially clear in the case of the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), University of Jordan (UJ), and Ajman University of Science and Technology (AUST). United Arab Emirates University has started a project for partnership with industry during the academic year 2000-2001. The project aims at developing relations and partnership with distinguished IT manufacturers and vendors. In the case of UJ, it has “extended an invitation to the private and public sectors in Jordan requesting them to approach the University with regard to projects, problems, or issues that need investigation and seek a scientific solution.” The university has also an office called the Counseling Office. The main function of this office is to gather, select, process, prioritize and disseminate the findings of scientific work and activities conducted by researchers, teaching staff and graduate students at the University of Jordan.

One of the most clearly identified goals of AUST is “breaking the barriers between Academy and the business market.” This is to be achieved in the following ways:

- Establishing academic programs that suit the business market in society.
- Studying phenomena and cases related to business market through academic research done by the teaching staff and students.
- Establishing of training centers and an employment agency that helps gratis enters the business market.

## CONCLUSION

Four major themes emerged from analyzing the mission statements and goals of the universities examined in this study. These themes are in line with the mission and goals of universities around the world. The most striking observation is that only one university, Philadelphia University, mentioned the word globalization in its goals. None of the other seven universities directly refer to globalization but they used words that exist only in the age of globalization, such as e-learning, Cyber University, Internet, and changing world and geographic and cultural boundaries. This omission might be partially due to the fact that most of the mission statements of these universities were originally written before the discourse of globalization took place.

To a large extent, the mission statements, goals, and objectives of the public and the private universities examined in this study are similar. They almost stressed the same themes. Taking into consideration that the private universities were established for profit and that the governments of these countries still largely control them, then, perhaps should not be surprised that we see similarities in their missions with those of the public universities. At the same time, public universities are under pressure and suffer from cuts in funding and they are encouraged to diversify their funding resources; thus, it is no wonder their mission statements mirror those of the private universities.

The major limitation of this study is its dependence on documents available on-line. Interviews with government officials, university administrators, professors and students may have provided additional information to that obtained from the documents. Moreover, the original hard-copy documents were not available. The researcher contacted the countries cultural missions in the U.S., but they did not have any documents that could be used for the purposes of this study. The universities themselves were contacted to send their mission statements, objectives, and goals, but unfortunately none of them responded to the researcher. Therefore, the only source of information was the web sites. Nevertheless, the websites are official statements of these universities, purposefully made public to a wide-even global-audience. Thus this data source offers a useful way to investigate the topic under consideration.

Further analysis of the original documents, mission statements and goals, of the universities and following the changes took place in these documents will be very useful in understanding how globalization and global changes affect the mission of the universities in the Middle East.

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