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**Deanship of Graduate**  
**Studies**



**Translation and Political Economy of Global Knowledge**  
**Production:**  
**A Systems Approach to Translating Contemporary Arab**  
**Thought**

**Fuad Ibrahim Abdelrahman Rayyan**

**MA Thesis**

**Jerusalem – Palestine**

**1443\ 2022**

**Translation and Political Economy of Global Knowledge  
Production:  
A Systems Approach to Translating Contemporary Arab  
Thought**

Prepared by:

**Fuad Ibrahim Abdelrahman Rayyan**

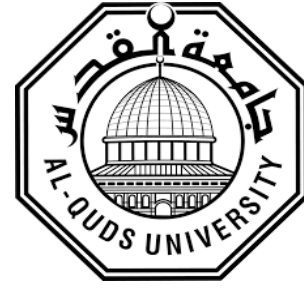
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Supervisor: Dr. Mohammad Thawabteh

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**Al-Quds University**  
**Deanship of Graduate Studies**  
**MA in Translation and Interpreting**



### **Thesis Approval**

**Translation and Political Economy of Global Knowledge Production:  
A Systems Approach to Translating Contemporary Arab Thought**


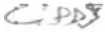

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## **Dedication**

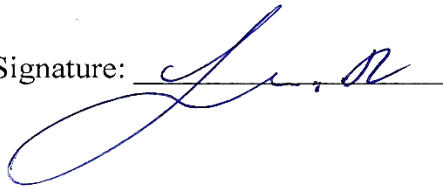
*To my late mother...may Allah have mercy on her.*

Fuad I. A. Rayyan

## **Declaration**

I certify that this thesis submitted for the degree of Master, is the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this study (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Fuad Ibrahim Abdelrahman Rayyan

Date: 5/12/2021

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## **Abstract**

Scholarly work on translating Arabic social sciences has been mostly neglected. This study explores the status of translating contemporary Arab thought and provides a macro socio-economic analysis based on the assumption that translation forms a global system. Translation production and reception processes occur between asymmetric language groups connected in an interdependent exchange system; thus, it is feasible to speak of a “world translation system.” The political economy of the world system determines global translation architecture and markets. The world translation system is based on the world system approach and the world language system. The world system is hierarchically constructed around three levels: core, semi-periphery, and periphery. The world's language and translation systems are similarly constructed, with English serving as a hyper-central communication and translation language. Furthermore, this hierarchical structure is mirrored in the 'international division of labor' of knowledge production, which influences the demand for specific languages and texts in various ways.

The Arab world is on the periphery of the global system, hence the global translation system. The study aims at exploring the translation landscape of contemporary Arab thought vis-a-vis the world translation system. The study will fill a gap in the literature regarding translating contemporary Arab thought. The study examines English translations of books by eighteen contemporary Arab thinkers (and an overview of translations into other languages). The study investigates the volume of translation, the themes translated, the publishers, and sponsorship, among other things, and attempts to interpret their characteristics in light of the global translation system. The study employs several methodological approaches, with the Amazon website serving as the primary search engine for data collection. The study confirms that the characteristic of translating contemporary Arab thought is essentially a reflection of the Arab nation's and Arabic language's position in the global system and mostly confirms the characteristics of the world translation system.

**Keywords:** center, periphery, world-system theory, world language system, world translation system, division of labor, contemporary Arab thought.

## الترجمة والاقتصاد السياسي للإنتاج العالمي للمعرفة:

### نهج النظم العالمية لترجمة الفكر العربي المعاصر

إعداد الطالب: فؤاد ريان

إشراف: د. محمد ثوابتة

#### ملخص

هناك اهتمام قليل في حقل دراسات الترجمة حول ترجمة العلوم الاجتماعية العربية. تهدف هذه الرسالة إلى استكشاف حالة ترجمة الفكر العربي المعاصر، وتقديم تحليل اجتماعي واقتصادي شامل قائم على افتراض أساسي هو أن الترجمة تشكل نظامًا عالميًا. تحدثت عمليات إنتاج واستقبال الترجمة بين مجموعات لغوية غير متماثلة، وعلاقات القوة الكامنة بين هذه المجموعات تعني وجود نظام تبادل مترابط. وبالتالي، من الممكن الحديث عن "نظام ترجمة عالمي". وهذا يعني أن الترجمة تتم في نظام متداخل على مستوى العالم، وبالتالي يتحكم في سوق الترجمة العالمي. يعتمد نظام الترجمة العالمي على نظرية النظام العالمي ونظام اللغة العالمي. يشكّل النظام العالمي بناءً هرميًا تراتبياً حول ثلاثة مستويات: بلدان المركز، وبلدان شبه المركز، وبلدان المحيط. ويتعلق هذا النظام بحقلي الاقتصاد السياسي وعلم الاجتماع. وينطبق هذا النظام الهرمي التراتبي أيضاً على نظامي اللغة والترجمة، حيث تعمل اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اتصال وترجمة عالمية فائقة المركزية. علاوة على ذلك، تنعكس هذه التراتبية في "التقسيم الدولي للعمل" لإنتاج المعرفة، والذي يؤثر على الطلب على لغات ونصوص معينة بطرق متنوعة.

يقع العالم العربي، وكذلك اللغة العربية، على هامش النظام العالمي، وبالتالي على هامش نظام الترجمة العالمي. تهدف الدراسة إلى استكشاف بنية ترجمة الفكر العربي المعاصر في مقابل نظام الترجمة

العالمي. وتأتي أهمية هذه الدراسة في أنها تسد فجوة في الأدبيات من خلال استكشاف طبيعة وواقع ترجمة الفكر العربي المعاصر. تستكشف الدراسة في الترجمات الإنجليزية لمنشورات ثمانية عشر مفكراً عربياً معاصراً (مع نظرة عامة على الترجمات إلى لغات أخرى). تبحث الدراسة في حجم الترجمة، والموضوعات المترجمة، والناشرين، والممولين، من بين أمور أخرى، وتحاول تفسير خصائصها في سياق نظام الترجمة العالمي.

تستخدم الدراسة عددًا من الأساليب المنهجية، حيث يعمل موقع أمازون كمحرك البحث الأساسي. تخلص الدراسة إلى أن خصائص ترجمة الفكر العربي المعاصر هي إلى حد كبير انعكاس لمكانة الأمة العربية واللغة العربية في النظام العالمي. وخلصت الدراسة أيضا إلى أن ترجمة الفكر العربي المعاصر تتماثل إلى حد كبير مع خصائص نظام الترجمة العالمي، بينما لها في الوقت نفسه بعض الجوانب الفريدة الأخرى.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** المركز، المحيط، نظرية النظام العالمي، نظام اللغة العالمي، نظام الترجمة العالمي، تقسيم العمل العالمي، الفكر العربي المعاصر.

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# **Chapter I**

## **Introduction**

### **Overview**

As its title would suggest, this study explores the reality and politics of translating contemporary Arab thought into foreign languages. The study employs a multilevel theoretical framework based on a conceptual dichotomy, namely, the ‘center’ and the ‘periphery’. These two concepts were developed within the World System approach in the 1960s and 1970s. The World System Approach provides a macro socio-economic perspective that seeks to explain the world's capitalist system as a total social system divided into core and peripheral nations. The study employs the World System approach to understand the underlying structure that governs the production and circulation of knowledge via translation. The study seeks to explore the relation between the position of the Arab nation in the global system in terms of economic, political, and scientific production and to establish a linkage with the dynamics of translation from Arabic into foreign languages. In other words, it seeks to understand the global ‘division of labor in knowledge production and its implications on the flows and exchanges of translations between the Arab world and the rest of the world, with particular attention to translation into English.

System thinking and the dichotomy of center-periphery, or South-North, have been the subject of a growing volume of scholarly works in the field of Translation Studies, particularly in the sociological approaches to translation (Heilbron, 1999, 2000, 2010; Pieta, 2016; Sapiro, 2008, 2009). However, earlier approaches in Translation Studies have already explored such aspects including descriptive Translation Studies and postcolonial approaches. Nonetheless, when it comes to scholarly works on Arabic translation, seldom have they explored nonfiction translation from Arabic and its context of production. This

present study employs a systems approach from a socio-economic perspective to explore the politics of Arabic nonfiction translation for the case of contemporary Arab thought.

Emanuel Wallerstein's world system theory is a historical socioeconomic approach that provides an account to understand global division of labor and the power relations embodied in the various fields of communication between Northern and Southern nations. Building on the world system theory, the study employs system approaches developed in the study of language and translation, namely the world language system developed by Abram de Swaan and the world translation system developed by Johan Heilbron.

On the empirical level, the study will investigate the nature, significance, and politics of translated non-literary texts (books) produced in Arabic in the contemporary era. The study will focus on works produced after the second half of the twentieth century by contemporary Arab thinkers. It will explore and collect available and accessible data from a variety of sources. Data for 18 contemporary Arab thinkers will be collected and analyzed in terms of certain aspects such as the volume and topics translated, translators, sponsorship, and publishers. The findings will be analyzed in respect to the proposed theoretical framework.

The significance of this research is that it will fill a gap in the literature on the translation of contemporary Arab Thought. To the best of my knowledge, previous studies on translations from Arabic have shown little interest in the translation of social sciences and humanities or have paid no attention to the World Systems approach and its relevance to translation from Arabic.

The methodological inference of this study is of an explorative deductive nature, i.e., it seeks to reach a conclusion based on evidence and reasoning while moving from theory to observation. The study will offer a rigorous account and interpretation of the reality and politics of translating contemporary Arab thought by providing data and analysis on the translated works of eighteen Arab thinkers.

## **1.1 Historical background**

Translation is an ancient practice. It has played a central role throughout history in intercultural communication, dissemination, and preservation of scientific knowledge and literature, as well as in international politics. It is no exaggeration that translation has been key in shaping the world as we know it today.

The subject of this study is the translation of contemporary Arab thought into foreign languages with particular attention to translation into English. Therefore, it is important to recall back one of the historical eras in which the Arabic translation movement flourished in both directions; into Arabic and later from Arabic. This recall is not for the sake of making comparisons, but for researching the various factors that might affect the translation movement at a particular historical stage of a nation. The translation process does not occur in a vacuum; rather it is highly sensitive to changes in the social environment inside the nation, as well as the power relations between the nations of source and target texts. Indeed, translation is a historical dynamic practice.

Arab-Islamic civilization flourished for a period that lasted more than eight centuries (7<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) before it started to demise. The reasons behind the demise are complex and ramified; the aim of the study is to explore contextual factors in the contemporary era to establish a linkage between rising or demise and translation. The history of the Arabs provides a good example of fluctuations in the translation movement. It is historically interesting that Arabs witnessed eras of active translation movements in both directions and other static eras on the other hand. This history provides insights into the status of both the Arabic language and translation movement in the contemporary era.

Translation from and into Arabic is old too. There is historic evidence that translation into Arabic existed in the pre-Islamic era. For example, Prince (2002) suggests that translation into Arabic can be traced back as early as the first half of the second century AD at the time of Assyrians. However, it was the birth and rise of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century AD that gave the Arabic language, and then translation, the momentum that has prevailed for centuries. According to Mehawesh (2014) “The birth of Islam changed the political, cultural and linguistic map of their area” (p. 685).

A distinct era in which Arabic translation witnessed a significant development is the Abbasid era, particularly the early period (Jaber, 2015). According to Rababah (2015), “the Arabs have transferred knowledge from pre-Islamic civilization to the Islamic civilization and later to the European or Western Civilization. This transfer of knowledge has taken place through effective and active translation movement” (p. 124).

Translation flourished in the Islamic Empire along with the growth of Arabic as a written literary language. The need to standardize the text of the Qur’an and the declaration of Arabic as the sole administrative language of the Islamic empire made Arabic the *lingua franca* of that era (Baker and Saldanha 2009, p. 329). The growth of prosperous and stable urban centers, such as Baghdad, and the multiethnic nature of the Islamic empire, as well as the support of political leaders, are some of the reasons why translation flourished.

In fact, Arabs were the first to create an organized and sponsored translation movement in history as part of the House of Wisdom (*Baytul-Hikmah*), which was established in Bagdad and was one of the leading intellectual centers in Arab-Islamic history. It housed a “huge number of translated and authored books, manuscripts, maps and other books from the Greek, Persian and Indian civilizations” (Algeriani & Mohadi, 2017, p. 182). According to Baker and Saldanha (2009), “[t]he Arabs are credited with initiating the first organized, large-scale translation activity in history. This activity started during the reign of the Umayyads (661–750)” (p. 330). According to al-Khury (1988), this golden era of translation can be distinguished from translation activity the world had known before in terms of three factors: the range and diversity of languages translated into Arabic; the range and variety of topics translated; and the organization and institutionalization of that translation movement (p. 24).

### **1.1.1 The golden era of translation from Arabic: The Toledo School of Translators**

There is a growing number of studies on translating Arab sciences and philosophy produced in the golden age of the Arab Islamic civilization and its influence on the European renaissance (for example, Akasoy, 2011; Burnett, 2001; Hasse 2010). Sciences in Europe lagged Arab sciences in the 12th century. Charles Burnett, a world expert in the history of Islamic influences in Europe, gives the clearest image of the Arabic knowledge

production and the status of Arabic language when Arab-Islamic civilization was at its zenith:

The 8th to the 13th centuries was such a period in Islamic history, when scholars from the Arab and the wider Islamic world explored the learning of earlier civilizations and built out of them a world civilization based on science which was previously unmatched [...] Arabic was the international language of communication of the medieval age. (2010, para. 2)

A key institutionalized movement of translating Arabic texts into Latin was the Toledo School of Translators. The school was established in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century by the Archbishop of Toledo. With the conquest of Toledo in 1085 by Alfonso VI, the city became more multicultural and multilingual. A mix of Mozarabs, Muslims, Jews, and the newly arrived Christians, who came from different places in Europe, lived together. Several languages were spoken including Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin. Burnett (2001) asserts this by identifying two main reasons why Toledo was the principal center for translation of Arabic scientific and philosophical texts into Latin; first, the “linguistic mix of the population”, where most of the population spoke Arabic and Romance languages dialect. The second reason is that Toledo was a center of scientific learning even before the capitulation to Alfonso VI. This translation movement was encouraged by the clergy brought in by the French archbishops, as they were the only influential audience in Toledo who did not understand Arabic (Burnett, 2001). Additionally, there were enthusiastic translators and scholars that with their personal efforts these translations were achieved. A key translator was *Gerard of Cremona*, who, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, translated around 80 books written in Arabic sciences.

A huge list of works, including a vast body of philosophical and scientific texts were translated from Arabic into Latin in Toledo (Arráez-Aybar *et al.*, 2015; Akasoy, 2011). According to Burnett (1985), “[i]n the seventy years between 1116 and 1187 at least 116 works were translated from Arabic into Latin, or written as conveyers of Arabic wisdom, by known authors” (p. 161).

What was significant about the Toledo translation movement is that it was driven by demand. In other words, there was a need in Europe's emerging scientific movement to translate such works. One aspect of this research will investigate the supply and demand sides of translating contemporary Arabic thought. This will be done specifically by looking

at publishers and translation sponsorship. Translation supply and demand reveal certain aspects of power relations between source and target language nations.

### **1.1.2 Arabic translation in the modern era (late Ottoman- early 20th Century)**

After the Abbasids, the caliphate passed to the Ottomans, and that was in the year 1299. Although the Islamic Empire expanded during the Ottoman dynasty, scientific and intellectual production declined considerably. Since that time, and for a variety of reasons, the Arab Islamic civilization has experienced a long-term stagnation. As a result, cultural encounters with Europe had dwindled, especially with the decreasing presence of Arabs in Spain. In turn, philosophy and scientific production started to flourish in Europe, setting the foundations of its renaissance.

In the Ottoman era, the translation movement experienced a significant decline in both directions. According to Aksoy “in the early years [of the Ottoman Empire], interpreting was the main mode of translating and became institutionalized during the rule of *Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror*” (2005, para.3). However, the same cannot be said regarding translation; there are a variety of reasons why translation declined during the Ottoman era; according to Ülken:

The religious nature of the Ottoman State, the dominance of Islamic learning and civilization, and the introvert society structure was not an amenable climate for translation to flourish in all fields. The Ottoman society was of a closed nature and cut off from older civilizations. (Ülken 1997, p. 308, as cited in Aksoy, 2005, para.4)

Moreover, the Ottomans advocated and encouraged the use of Turkish instead of Arabic, and later, Turkish became the official language of the Ottoman Empire. However, Arabic and Persian remained spoken in different places in the empire. Nonetheless, making Turkish the official language encouraged translation from Arabic, and several works were translated from Arabic into Turkish. As Muslims, the Turks wanted to “access the resources of Islamic culture, and therefore more translation was done from Arabic into Turkish than vice versa” (Oghli 2006, as cited in Baker and Saldanha 2009, p.334).

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a new era started, and contact between Arabs and Europe was re-established through the French and British colonial expansion in the region. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 was the first direct contact. Although the invasion lasted only for 3 years, it has an indirect influence on reviving the translation movement in

the Arab world in later periods. If we ignore the translation activity during Napoleon's campaign, the most important influence was that Arabs “realized the depth of the gap between them and the West in terms of military strength and intellectual progress. This prompted local rulers to seek knowledge of Europe to bridge the gap” (Abu-Rahmeh, 2015, para. 6).

Shortly after Napoleon's campaign, Muhammad Ali Pasha took power in Egypt (reigned 1805-48). In fact, reviving the translation movement in the modern era is usually associated with him; Muhammad Ali initiated and sponsored a foreign education program, and subsequently encouraged translation initiatives. He supported Egyptian students to pursue their education in France, and on their return, he instructed them to translate technical texts needed to modernize his army and administration (Baker and Saldanha, 2009). He also established *Dar Al-Asun* in 1835, an institution dealing with translation issues.

### **1.1.3 Contemporary Era (1950s - present)**

During all the centuries after the Toledo school, translations were mostly in one direction, namely, from the Western languages into Arabic. However, around the middle of the twentieth century, the scene started to change; the West began translating modern Arabic works, particularly Arabic literature especially into French and English (Tomiche 1978, in Abu-Rahmeh, 2015), however, the volume of translated works remained low. It was until 1988, the year when Najib Mahfouz, the Egyptian novelist was awarded Noble Prize in literature, that the West started to give closer attention to Arabic literature. However, our concern in this study is with nonfiction, particularly contemporary Arab thought. Translating contemporary Arabic thought has not received similar attention in academia the same way fiction has had, and this is what the present study will explore.

It is important at the outset of this study to present the main characteristics of the Arabic translation movement in the contemporary era. This will help us draw a general picture of the translation movement and the position of nonfiction translation within it. The following points depict the major characteristics of the translation movement in the Arab World:

First, there is an increasing number of institutions, projects, collective and individual initiatives devoted to translation in the Arab world. One example is the Arab Organization for Translation, which was established in 1999 in Beirut. The organization translates key

books in social science and humanities from their original languages. The organization is a not-for-profit and provides financial support to produce translations.

Second, there is a noticeable increase in the number of academic and translator training programs at the graduate and postgraduate levels. Consequently, there has been an increasing volume of research, journals, conferences, and awards (although the impact of these developments on translation policy has not been fully studied yet).

Third, most translation efforts are devoted to translating into Arabic, except for some projects and individual initiatives to translate Arabic literature. This issue is usually framed within the asymmetry of exchanges and flows of translations between the North and the South in the colonial and postcolonial eras which have been the subject of several research studies, particularly in the postcolonial approaches to translation. However, this issue has been further developed in the sociological approaches to translation, particularly in the world translation system, which forms the base of reference for this study.

Fourth, the availability and accuracy of data about translation in the Arab World is a challenging issue. There is a lack of reliable data on the translated works whether from Arabic or into it. In fact, some of the reports and studies are conflicted in terms of the data presented (see Jacquemond, 2009). Indeed, this issue imposes a challenge for researchers in analyzing and thus drawing a clear picture of the status of translation in the Arab world.

Fifth, when we talk about translation from Arabic into foreign languages in the contemporary era, most of the available studies address only translating Arabic literature or media, with very little attention to other genres such as social sciences.

## **1.2 Significance of the study**

Scholarly works on translating Arabic social sciences and humanities into foreign languages in the modern and contemporary eras are very few if any. This is evident when one tries to search for related literature. Among other things, the shortage of scholarly works on the topic might be due to the impression that there is nothing worth researching in this area because there are no significant translations made from Arabic in the fields of social sciences and humanities. Moreover, it is widely circulated that the Arab world is a

consumer of knowledge rather than a producer, thus no knowledge is exported to the world via translation. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to provide rigorous research and exploration in the topic to provide an answer beyond impressions, and to fill the gap in the literature in this area. Moreover, and as a byproduct of the study, the collected data will be introduced for the first time in a study which might provide a useful source for other scholars.

The thesis will explore an important era in Arab world history through the study of translation flows of contemporary Arab thought into foreign languages. This is an area of study (Arab thought) that has been neglected by translation scholars. Yet, the purpose is not only to describe the features, such as the volume and topics of the translations but to contextualize and to provide interpretations (the “why” question) of the basic findings to reveal the underlying factors behind such status. Thus, the study will employ a multi-strata theoretical framework to reveal the underlying factors of the status of translation, which then will extend to study several indirect topics.

### **1.3 Problem and questions of the study**

There is a long list of translated classical Arab scholars like al-Farabi, al-Ghazali, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd. The philosophical and scientific works of those scholars were translated into many European languages. For example, there are 17 different translations of Ibn Rushd alone (Hasse, 2010).

Unlike classical Arab scientists and philosophers and their contributions to the advancement of world knowledge (via translation), little is known about the translation of modern and contemporary Arab thinkers and scholars and their contribution to the world system of knowledge production. Currently, the Arab nation counts more than 430 million people living in 22 countries. Also, the Arabic language is one of the six official languages of the United Nations. However, the Arab world’s contribution to the world system of production and circulation of knowledge is questionable.

There is an enormous volume of scholarly works dealing with the different aspects of translating from Arabic into foreign languages. Nonetheless, these writings are almost

confined to the study of literary translation. And when it comes to nonfiction translation from Arabic, there is a paucity of scholarly works exploring its nature and politics with adequate rigorous theorizing. Of course, we are not talking here about the study of linguistic or descriptive aspects, as there are many studies in this regard, but rather on the contextual, or extra-textual, aspects and the conditions and policies of translation production and exchanges with other languages.

Translation Studies, as an academic discipline, is historically dominated by literary inquiry; and nonfiction translation is overlooked when compared to scholarly works on literary topics, although the volume of nonliterary translation outnumbers the literary ones (Newmark, 2004). This is basically due to a certain historical context of the development of the discipline itself, as Translation Studies emerged from the linguistic and English literature departments and was influenced by comparative literature and critical literary theory. Although there have been several ‘shifts’ in Translation Studies, and growing attention in global academia to the multidisciplinary nature of Translation Studies by drawing from a variety of academic disciplines such as sociology and political economy, but in the Arab world academia, the literary and linguistic aspects are still dominant.

The present thesis will study the different extra-textual aspects of contemporary Arabic nonfiction translation into Western languages, mainly into English, and where possible, other languages including peripheral languages. Particularly, the study will explore the dynamics of production and circulation of translated contemporary Arab thought and the Socio-economic foundations that underpin these dynamics. Moreover, since there is a lack of organized data on this topic, an essential part of this study will be to provide data that will be analyzed with respect to the proposed theoretical framework that will be discussed in the next chapter.

The definition of nonfiction will be limited to the intellectual and scholarly works produced by Arab thinkers and scholars in the contemporary era. This will include all fields of inquiry in the social science and humanities (including philosophy, history, politics, theology, sociology, economics, etc.). The study will refer to these fields as ‘knowledge production in Arabic’.

The initial assumption of the study is that the Arab nation assumes a periphery position in the world system in almost all areas. Consequently, knowledge production, the Arabic language, and translating also occupy a peripheral position in the respected systems. Moreover, when it comes to international communications between the central nations and peripheral nations, this is in turn reflected in language and translation dynamics and policies, which we will explore regarding translating from Arabic.

The thesis will explore the reality and politics of translating contemporary Arab Thought and its position in the world system of language and translation. Language and translation are pertinent to the global system of production and circulation of knowledge. The foundations for understanding these systems are deeply rooted in the socio-economic and political powers between nations which form a global system with asymmetric relations, and consequently of inequalities in the flows and exchanges of translations. Specifically, the study will seek to answer the following questions: what is the volume and significance of nonfiction translation (as defined above) from Arabic? Who translates, sponsors, and circulates translations (patronage)? What kind of texts (topics) are being translated and why? And what pattern does it reveal in terms of production (i.e., whether it is supply-riven or demand-driven)? And how does all that correlate with the global division of labor of knowledge production based on the center-periphery dichotomy?

#### **1.4 Scope and limitations**

The study seeks to provide primary data on the existing translations of eighteen contemporary Arab thinkers and collect additional information such as sponsorship and publishers relevant for the intended analysis. By the contemporary era, it means the works produced after the second half of the twentieth century. The study seeks only works translated in book form.

It is important here to note that the study will only provide macro analyses, and not intend to offer specific cases of analyses for each author. The study might open the door for additional studies investigating specific cases or comparative analyses with other nations in the global South.

The limitations of the study are mainly related to the data collection and the availability of adequate information related to the proposed questions of inquiry. Since the data will be collected author by author, this is a challenging task to obtain sufficient and accurate information about their published and translated books. Moreover, as many Arab authors write in two or even three languages (Arabic, English, and French), it is then difficult to know if a certain book is translated or was originally written in English or French. Especially since obtaining copies of the needed books is not accessible for all the needed books. There is also not much attention to translators in the book reviews that one can find in journals and websites.

Complimentarily, the study will provide reflections on some pertinent issues to this study; this will include the study of globalization and the dominance of the English language on international communications where, particularly, it has become the lingua franca of the global scientific and knowledge production arenas, and the effect of that on translation. Moreover, the study will explore the issue of supply and demand (i.e., if there is a natural demand from the Western markets on translating Arab thought, or if translations were sponsored and promoted to the west).

## Chapter II

### Literature Review

#### Overview

Translation, like any other human activity, takes place in a specific social and historical context that informs and structures it, just as it informs and structures other social or creative processes (Jacquemond, p. 1992). In the case of translation, the operation becomes doubly complicated since, by definition, two language groups and thus two cultures, two societies, and two histories are involved (ibid, p. 43). The involvement of cultural, social, and historical factors is often processed with asymmetric power relations, or as Bassnett and Trivedi put it, that “translation rarely, if ever, involves a relationship of equality between texts, authors or systems” (1999, p. 2). Seeing it from this angle, translation flows between nations are often laden with politics, power relations, history, and preconceived beliefs rather than the simplified notion of translation as a neutral cultural mediator. Thus, understanding socio-economic and political factors is key when discussing translation flows and exchanges between language groups.

Translation activity involves a complex network of agents and actors subject to specific contexts and a set of objective structural conditions. These interwind elements demand an interdisciplinary approach to translation (Budimir 2020). Bassnett described Translation Studies as “not merely a branch of comparative literary study, nor yet a specific area of linguistics, but a vastly complex field with many far-reaching ramifications” (2013, p. 13). Today, Translation Studies represent an “inter-discipline that encompasses the arts, humanities, social sciences, and computer science” (Lowe 2016, p, 20).

For the last three decades or so, there has been an increasing interest in studying the extra-textual aspects of translation, or what is now referred to as the “context-oriented” study of translation activity (Saldanha & O'Brien, p. 2014). The perspective is that translation should be contextualized as a social system because it occurs in an environment that

involves a network of elements, including the objective economic conditions, cultural and political institutions, ideologies, power relations, etc. (Tianmin, 2006).

This scholarly attention to the structure and context, as well as the agency, is often referred to as the ‘sociological turn’ in translation studies. According to Vorderobermeier, the involvement of the sociological approaches is in large part “a product of the increasing attention paid in recent years to asymmetrical power relations” (2012, p. 1). The central thesis of sociological approaches is to “render translation describable and explainable as social practices, as social facts”. (Vorderobermeier, 2012, p. 1), or as Hermans describes it, a “socially regulated activity” (1997, p. 10). The sociological approach has broadened the scope of inquiry in the study of translation activity. It has provided invaluable insights to understanding the translation phenomenon both as a process and as a product. The topics discussed varied from using micro-perspectives such as the study of activism, to macro-perspectives, such as studying the roles played by institutions or translated book markets. In fact, preceding the sociological turn was the so-called “cultural turn”, influenced by the postcolonial approaches. It has given considerable attention to asymmetric power relations between the West and the former colonies exerted in translation. However, in the postcolonial approaches, the focus was mainly on cultural aspects and literary translation with particular attention to cultural hegemony.

Yet, framing asymmetries in translation from an economic (or political-economic) perspective has not been thoroughly studied in previous approaches to translation. Most previous studies give particular attention to issues such as culture, ideology, manipulation, and narrative (e. g., Venuti, 1993; Baker, 2010). Nonetheless, in the past few years, there have been an increasing number of studies contextualizing translation in the larger global socio-economic context. Particularly, there is a growing number of studies that employ a socio-economic perspective, namely the world-system approach (Budimir, 2020; Heilbron, 2000, 2010; Heilbron & Sparo, 2016; Karpińska, 2016; Pięta, 2016; Zajac, 2016;). This approach will be employed in this study with particular attention to nonfiction translation.

The starting point in the theoretical framework of this study is the core-periphery dichotomy developed within the World-system approach. World-system is a group of writings from the 1970s in the socio-economic analysis of the world capitalist system and

international division of labor. The approach is mainly attributed to the American sociologist Emmanuel Wallerstein. The approach is employed here to study the status of translating contemporary Arab thought into foreign languages by looking at the structural socio-economic conditions of the Arab nation as a one language group and by looking at the international division of labor of the knowledge production and the power relations within, particularly in the social sciences and humanities.

The attempt to capture all the factors affecting the translation of contemporary Arab thought is a complex task that cannot be enumerated in a single study. Also, understanding the reality of the contemporary Arab world and its position in the (dynamic) global system is another far-reaching aim. However, this study tries to capture the major characteristics depicting the Arab nation as a one language group and as one socio-economic model. The study provides three levels of analysis: firstly, the Arab nation in the world system and its position in the international division of labor (particularly division of labor in knowledge production); secondly, the global languages system and the position of Arabic in it; and thirdly the world translation system and the position of translating Arabic thought in the global books' translation market.

## **2.1 The World-system approach**

The World-system approach is a macro-scale socio-economic perspective that seeks to explain the dynamics of the “capitalist world economy” as a “total social system” (Martinez-Vela, 2001, p. 1). It emphasizes the world as one system rather than on the nation-states and the position of nation-states in the system. It is both a political and an intellectual enterprise that provides a framework for understanding economic development in the global South (Cosma, 2010). The approach has become an academic enterprise constructing an explanation of the historic rise of the West and framing the continued poverty of most non-Western societies (Chirot & D. Hall 1982, p. 85). The very basic thesis of the approach is that the world is seen as one system with “core countries representing the ‘developed’ western industrial countries and the periphery and semi-periphery countries representing nearly all of the non-Western countries. Within this system, there is

a division of labor where the function of the periphery is to supply the core with raw material and consume the core's products (Madi-Sisman & Sisman, 2018).

The approach's first major contribution is associated with Immanuel Wallerstein, who in 1974 published a seminal paper titled *The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System* (Martinez-Vela, 2001, p. 1), and later his three volumes book *The Modern World-System*, as well as his other book *World-systems Analyses*, form the foundation of this approach. Wallerstein's approach was developed as a stimulation of earlier scholarly works of Latin American scholars of the "Dependency theory". The basic argument of the Dependency theory is that "development and underdevelopment are interdependent structures of one global system" (Koo, 1984, p. 35). In this global system, the economy and the social structure in the periphery are conditioned with the development and expansion of core economies (Koo, 1984, p. 35). In fact, Dependency theory was a reaction to challenge the Modernization theory, which is a euro-centric model which argues that underdeveloped nations should follow the same evolutionary model of the Western societies and considers the problem of the 'Third World' as a mere local problem of the Third World itself. For Wallerstein, the notion of a 'Third World' is misleading; he argues that "there is only one world connected by a complex network of the economic exchange relationship. Our world system is characterized by mechanisms which bring about a redistribution of resources from the periphery to the core" (Cosma, 2010, p. 220). Wallerstein emphasizes on the world as one system where the local is inseparable from the global.

According to the World-system approach, the world economy has developed 'core' nations with "well-developed towns, flourishing manufacturing, technologically progressive agriculture, skilled and well-paid labor, and high investment" (Chirot & D. Hall, 1982, p. 85). However, the core needed 'peripheries' from which to extract the surplus that fueled the expansion. According to Chirot and D. Hall, "Peripheries produced certain key primary goods while their towns withered, labor became coerced in order to keep down the costs of production, technology stagnated, labor remained unskilled or even became less skilled, and capital, rather than accumulating, was withdrawn toward the core" (1982, p. 85).

Besides the two categories of core and periphery, Wallerstein also suggests a third category: the “semi-periphery”. Societies in this group “stand between the core and periphery in terms of economic power. Some may eventually fall into the periphery, as did Spain in the 17th and 18th centuries, and others may eventually rise into the core, as has modern Japan” (Chirot & D. Hall, 1982, p. 85). Wallerstein believes that without semi-peripheries, the capitalist world system cannot function. According to him, semi-peripheral countries “in part, they act as a peripheral zone for core countries and in part they act as a core country for some peripheral areas” (Wallerstein 1976, p. 463). Because the world system is dynamic, albeit in a slow manner, the position of countries to which they belong in the three categories might shift. For example, Dunaway & Clelland (2017) provided a comprehensive account of the countries that shifted from peripheral to semi-peripheral from the 1960s to 2015 (Dunaway & Clelland, 2017).

Dunaway & Clelland's study classifies some Arab countries as semi-periphery, for example, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, UAE, and Saudi Arabia. However, the classification is based mainly on aggregate economic indicators. Thus, it is not surprising that countries on the semi-periphery list are oil-producing countries. Of course, it is reasonable to consider some of these countries semi-periphery from an economic perspective. The gulf states, for example, have become regional and international business centers where people from all over the world move there seeking job opportunities, and many of the international companies allocated branches there. If we also count on economic indicators such as GDP and per capita income, then some of these countries will even be counted as “central” economic countries. However, even from an economic perspective, these countries are centers for consumption rather than production, and the economy booming is due to oil revenues (rent economy) rather than producing value-added. An interesting thing in the Dunaway and Clelland study is that while Egypt was semi-periphery in 1960, it was not on the list in 2015, i.e., it moved to the periphery. It is important here to note that when it comes to the position of these Arab oil-producing countries in terms of the global hierarchy of science and knowledge production (R&D), they merely occupy a peripheral position. This is a key point to consider, that macro-economic indicators are inadequate when we discuss the international division of labor in science and knowledge production.

The Arab world occupies an important position (for other foreign countries) in global geopolitics. The Arab world represents a significant source of raw materials, particularly oil and gas. It has a vast land with a unique position on the world map that connects Asia, Africa, and Europe. However, the Arab world occupies a peripheral political and economic position in the world system. The reasons behind this stagnate development are manifold and complex. The root causes go back to several decades. The region has been an arena for several external and internal conflicts. Its origins go back to the late Ottoman Empire, then the British, French, and Italian colonialism. In the post-World War II era, post-independence states have emerged, however dependency on external (western) powers was maintained, and internal socio-economic and political problems have exacerbated.

Despite the differences between Arab countries in terms of economic indicators, particularly of oil production, and other factors such as foreign language preferences (between English and French due to past colonial history), all Arab countries suffer from almost the same structural problems. Particularly, when it comes to science and knowledge, value-added productions, and investment in research and development (R&D), none of that has any significant output. The Arab world still exhibits many of the classic dependency features despite the many changes and shifts in the international division of labor. The primary product produced is oil and gas. At the same time, the other Arab non-oil countries have no significant share in the world economy. Hinnebusch argues that many of the basic characteristics of dependency can be found in the Middle East economies: they are mostly primary product producers, they fail to transform their raw materials into high-value goods, and their human capital remains underdeveloped (2003, p. 35).

One of the most critical root causes why modern Arab nation does not contribute to the production of global value-added is that they do not make sufficient investment in research and development (R&D). The Arab world lags many nations in terms of investment in R&D. None of the Arab countries (and the Islamic world at large) have significant parentage of investment in R&D; in fact, none of them invest more than 0.8% of GDP. From the Islamic world, only two countries exceed 1%, namely Malaysia (1.30% of GDP in 2015) and Turkey (1.01% in 2014) (UNESCO, 2016). For the last century, scientific advancement has created value-added in international value chains. The Arab world is

highly dependent on industrial countries for its technology and machinery and other crucial sectors such as medicine.

The reason behind this poor investment in R&D are many; the lack of resources, the poor public sector and public policies, the inability of the private sector to create value-added, and the lack of democratic systems and organizations. This poor investment in scientific infrastructure and support of researchers has also led to the so-called brain drain, which has also contributed to the reproduction of the same systems and has negatively affected scientific and economic convergence with advanced economies.

## **2.2 World-system and international division of labor**

What is important in the World-system theory for the present study is the implications for the international division of labor. Division of labor is the separation of work processes into several tasks, with each task performed by a separate person or group of persons (Britannica, par. 1). The concept was originally coined by Adam Smith in his book *A Wealth of Nations*. On the global level, division of labor means the geographic concentration of economic functions where core countries are based on capital and perform skill-intensive tasks while peripheral countries perform labor-intensive work (Hutchinson, 2004).

The international division of labor is a dynamic process that has shifted over time. Historically, there have been three major shifts in the international division of labor. The first international division of labor dates to the early European colonization. It was characterized by a “rudimentary exchange between core countries and extraction from the economic periphery” (Hutchinson, 2004, p. 3). The Second international division of labor lasted from the early nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century and was characterized by the emergence of industrial production in core countries (Hutchinson, 2004). According to Coffey, “economic links deepened between core nations, and trade, as opposed to extraction, began to develop between core and peripheral areas. This consisted of the export of primary commodities from the periphery to the core and the export of manufactures in the opposite direction” (Coffey, 1996, as cited in Hutchinson, 2004, p. 4).

The third international division of labor emerged in the 1960s and was characterized by the “internationalization of production among core and peripheral countries. It was for the first time that foreign direct investment (FDI) was directed to countries in the economic periphery” (Coffey, 1996, as cited in Hutchinson, 2004, p. 4).

Core economies, which through several institutional arrangements and international relations, try to perpetuate the global economic hegemony by monopolizing the value-added of the production chains. Miller (2017) puts it this way, “global system saw value-added and enjoyed in the Global North, where rich societies had become affluent through their colonial and international advantages. The global core imported ideas, fashions, resources, and people from the world's periphery and exported manufactures” (p. 94).

Despite the shifts in the international division of labor, the global value-added remained for the most part controlled by core countries. Nonetheless, few non-western economies have developed a certain level of competitive industry and technology. These emerging economies have transformed from peripheral to semi-peripheral positions in the international system. Some of these countries have become economic rivals (in certain economic activities) to classic advanced (core) economies. These include the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). However, even though Globalization has brought several changes to the international economic scene, particularly in the knowledge economy. This knowledge-based economy is much like the classic global division of labor.

### **2.3 International division of intellectual labor**

Knowledge production and scientific practices are usually seen (or promoted) as neutral and independent from politics and the economy. However, several studies reveal that inequalities and power imbalances exist between different global geographies in knowledge production (for example, Girvan, 2007; Kwiek, 2015; Demeter, 2019). Demeter argues that the illuminating reality here is that science's self-definition includes the assumption that science is a meritocratic pursuit in which power relations are insignificant. Nonetheless, both empirical investigations and theoretical traditions agree that global

science was and continues to be a distorted field that favors more strong, central agents (2019, p. 79).

knowledge and scientific production are also subjected to the international division of labor. Imbalances in the global division of intellectual labor are still clearly manifested in several ways and spaces including academia, science networks, international accreditation and awarding bodies, innovation, and patents. Core countries dominate the world's scientific efforts and employ the most complex technologies (Girvan, 2007). Also, top-ranked universities, research and development institutions, and top-ranked academic journals are in core countries. Graham (2014) asserts this by noting that “Almost all mediums of information in the early twenty-first century are still characterized by huge geographic inequalities: with the Global North producing, consuming, and controlling much of the world's codified knowledge, and the Global South largely left out of these processes” (p. 285).

The knowledge economy is also based on an international division of labor where Northern elite knowledge institutions dominate the global spaces of knowledge production and dissemination. Connell *et al.* depict a comprehensive image of these disparities:

The global metropole accumulates data (in libraries, museums, botanic gardens, journals, databanks etc.), and most importantly is the site of the production of methods and theories (in elite universities and scientific societies, by specialized instrument-makers and mathematicians). Peripheral regions, by contrast, are a massive source of data, collected by travelers from the metropole (officials, missionaries, data-collecting expeditions), by local knowledge workers acting as informants, and now also by automatic instruments and remote sensing. (2018, p. 2)

A clear and evident case of inequality is witnessed in the fields of social sciences and humanities. Western hegemony in the production and dissemination of knowledge in these fields is manifested in many ways including the theories of reference, the international ranking, the language of publication, and international recognition (symbolic capital). The modern specialized social sciences, as we know it today in academia, are considered the sole creation of Western researchers and institutions, specifically in Europe and the United States. This status has provided western academics with more social and symbolic capital than their peers in the global south. This hegemony is an extension of the world system described above, which has given the upper hand in knowledge production for the West

since the rise of modern sciences. Of course, this is reflected in the translation flows of social sciences between north and south for the benefit of northern scholars. We will explain in detail in later parts of this study how this hegemony in science, as well as in language, particularly for English becoming the lingua franca in science and knowledge production, has been influencing translation exchanges between core countries and peripheries.

Connell examines how modern social science embeds the viewpoints, perspectives, and problems of metropolitan society while presenting itself as universal knowledge. According to her, “the world is pictured as seen from the rich capital-exporting countries of Europe and North America-the global metropole. To ground knowledge of society in other experiences remains a fragile project” (2007, p. vii). Connell investigates the branch of the social sciences which is sociology. She provides a rigorous account of the inequality exerted in this field. She explores the “relations, authority, exclusion and inclusion, hegemony, partnership, sponsorship, appropriation-between intellectuals and institutions in the metropole and those in the world periphery” (Connell, 2007, p. ix). The inequality in knowledge production between the North and the South extends to all fields of knowledge.

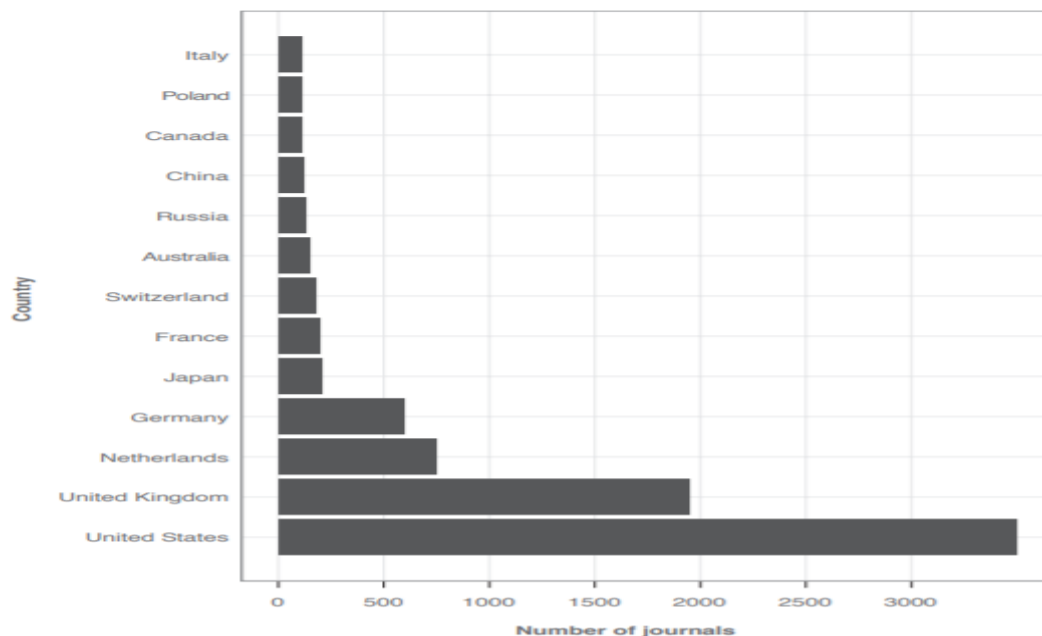
The global North leads the world in producing organized knowledge of the kind recognized in refereed journals and the current university curriculum. Familiar quantitative indicators show this, across different fields: natural science, technology and professional knowledge, social sciences, and the humanities. In 2008, for instance, North America and the European Union together produced 67.6 percent of the world’s scientific publications recorded in the ‘Web of Science’ (UNESCO, 2010, p. 10). Not only do most research publications come from the North Atlantic region; most high-ranking journals are published there, and most high-ranking universities and research institutes are located there (Connell, 2007, p. 1).

What is perhaps more critical than the superiority in power and institutions is the dominance of the theoretical models created and circulated to the world as the only accredited knowledge. Connell et al. indicate that “[t]he pre-eminence is not just quantitative. The imperial metropole long provided intellectual models for other regions, whether under

colonial rule or, in cases like Japan and China, responding to a European power” (2017, p. 2).

The *Geographies of the World's Knowledge* report (2011) presents concrete examples of the inequalities in knowledge production and dissemination. It provides comprehensive macro data on the locations (geographical concentration) of academic knowledge and the locations of academic journals and their language of production. The chart below shows the locations of producing the top-ranked academic journal (9,500 surveyed journals in this report).

Figure 1: Number of journals by country



The report reveals a dramatic scene of the global inequalities in academic knowledge production and exchanges; it finds that:

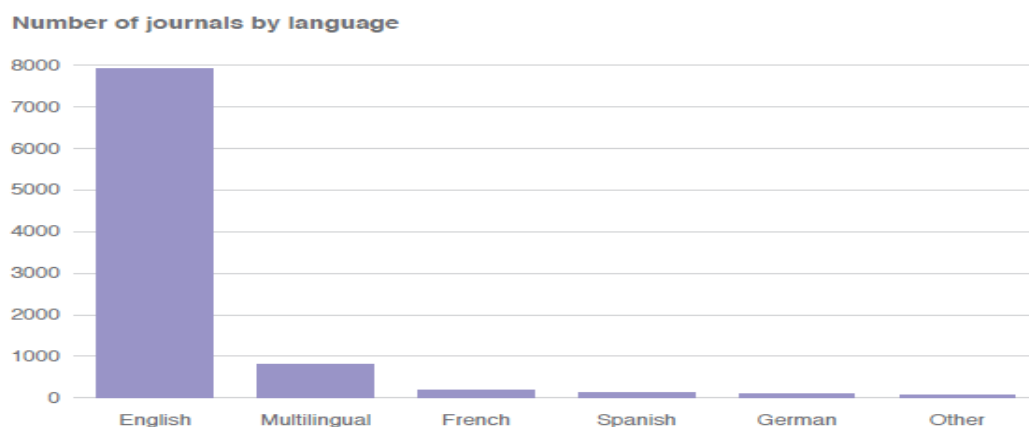
The United States and the United Kingdom publish more indexed journals than the rest of the world combined. Western Europe also scores relatively well. Most of the rest of the world then scarcely shows up in these rankings. The non-Western world is not only under-represented in these rankings, but also ranks poorly on average citation score measures.

## 2.4 English as the lingua franca of science and knowledge production

English has become the lingua franca of science and knowledge production which manifested in many ways in this realm and has emerged as the unrivaled vehicle for the transmission of knowledge in the modern world (de Swann, 1993). English is the language of the most prestigious international conference and scientific publication including books and journals and increasingly the medium of higher-level instruction in universities across the world (Bennett 2013, p. 169). Furthermore, since English has become the dominant language, publication in the non-Anglo-American world has also moved gradually to comply with the English traditions (Bennett, 2013, pp. 170-171).

The *Geographies of the World's Knowledge* report reveals a staggering picture of the predominance of English in knowledge dissemination. The report findings confirm the dominance of the Anglophone sphere in academic publishing. It finds that English is dominant not only because the largest number of journals are published in the United States and the United Kingdom, but also English-language journals are also published from much of the world. The report finds that English accounts for 86% of academic journals in the dataset (p. 16).

Figure 2: Number of journals by language



The two charts above show an astonishing contrast between the size of speakers of some peripheral language groups and their corresponding contribution to scientific publishing. Chinese is a clear example, and Arabic is another example; in the charts, Arabic is the fourth spoken language globally but does not appear in international academic publishing.

Hamel (2007) had also studied the dominance of English in international scientific periodicals. Hamel finds that “more than 75 percent of the articles in the social sciences and humanities and over 90 percent in the natural sciences are written in English” (p. 53).

Moreover, the scientific production in the Anglo-American systems seems to be self-sufficient. For example, the United States is the most central and most prestigious part of the scientific world-system as indicated by citation patterns and scientific research. Scientific production in the United States is also “characterized by the lowest percentage of foreign references, foreign co-authors and publication abroad. Instead of equilibrium between import and export, the reality of transnational exchange is a process of uneven exchange” (Heilbron, 1999, p. 439).

Academic publishing in Arabic suffers from structural problems. The lack of investment in research and development (R&D) in both the public and private sectors, the absence of scientific culture and traditions, the lack of utilizing scientific production in policy formulation, and the absence of university presses. Moreover, the absence of encouragement to innovation in primary and tertiary education and political censorship and repression limits critical approaches, especially in public institutions (Hanafi, 2011).

Several academic journals are published in Arabic in the Arab world including journals published by universities, public and private institutions. However, none of these journals has any significant impact factor. Taking into consideration that research production is the most important criterion for academic promotion, this pushes Arab academics to publish in English journals with a significant impact factor. In fact, the universities themselves encourage scholars to publish in foreign languages, particularly in English, as this will potentially support the university ranking. Also, Arab academics who want to advance their academic career and talk to their peers and the larger academic community need to publish their academic work in foreign languages, particularly in English. Hanafi (2011) gives a critical point in his research about academic publishing regarding whether to publish in English or Arabic; he argues that universities are becoming more globalized, but only in the sense that they have access to worldwide conventions and resources, not necessarily in the sense that they participate in the production of global science (p. 295).

## 2.5 English lingua franca and translation

There are contrasting views about the impact of English lingua Franca on translation. Some scholars argue that English as a lingua franca has not threatened translation but has increased it, mainly because English lingua franca has accompanied globalization where the need for translation between the different languages has increased with the increased transaction and interactions. However, translation has increased only in one direction, i.e., from English into the rest of the world's languages but not the other way around. As far as we are concerned with scientific (academic) translation in this study, there is evidence that the need to translate academic texts from peripheral languages has decreased, and production of texts in English from peripheral has increased. In fact, English Lingua franca has affected not only the size of translation in the academic field but also the politics of inclusion and exclusion of scholars based on language. For example, Snell-Hornby discusses the role that the continued dominance of English in scientific and knowledge production has played. According to her, English has had an essential role in shaping disciplinary agendas across different academic fields. She also argues that the dominance of English in academia has excluded many scholars lacking sufficient knowledge of English from the arena of academic discourse (Snell-Hornby, 2010, as cited in House, 2016).

The following table shows the worldwide percentage distribution of the translation market which clearly indicates the dominance of English. It forms 50% of all source languages translated worldwide, while peripheral languages form forms less than 1%.

Table 1: Worldwide % distribution of translation

Hyper- Central	Central	Semi – peripheral	Peripheral
Source language English: 50%	Source language German: 10% French: 12%	Source language 8 languages including Spanish 3% Italian 1%	Rest other languages Less than 1%

(Sources: Heilbron 1999)

## 2.6 World system and world translation system

In the last few years, there has been a growing interest in employing the concepts of center/core, periphery, and the semi-periphery in translation studies, or more generally

theorizing around the world-system approach and related concepts (Karpińska, 2016; Moe *et al.*, 2019; Pięta, 2016; Zajas, 2016). In fact, it is Johan Heilbron, of the University of Amsterdam (and later Gisele Sapiro) who has been writing systematically on the topic of world translation system by utilizing Wallerstein's theoretical framework (Heilbron, 1999, 2000, 2010; Heilbron & Sapiro, 2007; Sapiro, 2016). However, system-thinking in translation studies was introduced much earlier by Itamar Even-Zohar, who also used the concepts of center and periphery. Even-Zohar developed the theory of polysystems structured along with center-periphery relations (Karpińska, 2016, p. 329). According to Even-Zohar, literature does not function in a void, but it highly depends on its cultural, social, and political environment. The literature constitutes an enormous polysystem, i.e., a system comprised of numerous other, smaller systems. Those systems interact with each other on the global and national scale and fight to assume certain positions within the polysystem (Munday, 2004, p. 109). Even-Zohar and Gidon Toury were pioneers in theorizing for a 'descriptive approach' in translation, which has made a shift from the normative approach (shifted the focus from the source-text to a more broadly target-culture). Translations, according to these polysystem theorists, must be understood in reference to the system in which they function (Heilbron, 1999). However, Heilbron considers this approach, although fruitful, but insufficient to a sociological approach of translation Heilbron argues that it is far from adequate to comprehend the role of translations in a target culture by analyzing them as part of the target nation's literary system. It's critical to think of target culture as part of a global system (1999, p. 440).

To move the analyses beyond descriptive analysis and towards a broader sociological approach, Heilbron has developed his approach, with Jaselle Sapiro, who co-authored several articles. Their central thesis is that “[to] understand the act of translating, one should in a first stage analyze it as embedded within the power relations among national states and their languages. These power relations are of three types – political, economic, and cultural” (Heilbron & Sapiro, 2007, p. 95).

The present study utilizes Heilbron's (and Sapiro) perspective to analyze translation flows from the Arab world, for a particular case of nonfiction translation from Arabic. Although Heilbron and Sapiro did not provide a sole account of nonfiction translation, they did study

book markets in general. However, their framework is also valid for the case of nonfiction. Heilbron ideas and discussion is key here. Heilbron has developed what is now known as the World Translation System. The starting points on which his model is based are economic and sociological concepts developed inter alia by Wallerstein (2004) and De Swaan (2001). The basic thesis of the model is that the role occupied by languages in the world translation system has an essential impact on the likelihood (and extent) of translation taking place between specific (central or peripheral) languages, as well as on the translation strategies translators opt for in the translation of individual texts (in whole or in part) and text types (Moe *et al.* 2019). Heilbron (1999, 2000, 2007, 2016) writes from a sociological and economic perspective on translation as a total world system.

Heilbron builds on Abram de Swaan's idea of the emerging world language system. De Swaan's main argument is that the multiple world language groups form one coherent world language system, which is dynamically connected by multilingual speakers. A language's possibilities of thriving are determined by its location in the system. There are thousands of small peripheral languages that are related to one of a hundred central languages in this linguistic system. One universal language binds the entire system together; English: the 'hyper-central' language (de Swaan, 2001). In other words, "the global language system consists of a vast constellation in which minor languages revolve around "central" languages, "central" languages revolve around "super-central" languages, and the entire system revolves around the "hyper-central" English language" (Tonkin, 2005, p. 201). According to Heilbron, translation is still a major means of communication between language groups, although a growing number of people learn a foreign language, mainly English, the lingua franca of our time (Heilbron, 1999, p. 429). Tonkin also asserts that this structure of the system "has come about through economic and political competition and compromise, in which trade-offs and power plays have produced the particular language ecology that we find in the world today" (2005, p. 201).

This global language system is closely related to the global translation flows and exchanges. Building on the global language system, Heilbron has developed a sociological system approach to analyze the global translation exchanges. He divides the system into center and periphery to explore the dynamics of production and exchanges of translations,

with particular attention to book translation According to Heilbron, “[t]ranslation practice must be analyzed specifically within the field or the subfield in which it actually functions and considering it from sociological and economic perspectives” (1999, p. 430).

Heilbron seeks to answer the following two main questions: “How can one account for the uneven flows of book translations between various language groups? And how can one explain the varying role of translations within different language groups? (1999, p. 430).

In proposing an answer to both questions, Heilbron emphasizes that “the various activities involved are considered interdependent and are therefore best understood as constituting an international or even a world-system” (1999, p. 431). The dynamics of this international translation system are “based on a core-periphery structure, and the analyses of this world-system and the position that various language groups occupy within it is a precondition for understanding the role of translations in specific local or national contexts” (Heilbron, 1999, p. 432). The significance of translations within language groups is shown to depend primarily on the position of the language within the international system.

## **2.7 Characteristics of the world translation system**

Heilbron (1999) provides a detailed and comprehensive description of the main characteristics of the world translation system. The following points summarize its characteristics:

- It forms a hierarchical structure. Language groups are structured as central, semi-peripheral, and peripheral. A language is more central in the world system of translation “when it has a larger share in the total number of translated books worldwide” (p. 433). Today, English is the most central language in the international translation system. English, using de Swaan's term, plays a ‘hyper-central’ role. The biggest share of translated books in the global market are translations from English. UNESCO figures indicate that English was the source language for an average of 41 percent of all translations in 1978–1980. This proportion may have been as high as 49 percent in 1987 (Venuti, 1998, p. 160). The same thing applies to the other direction, the hyper-central language will translate much less from peripheral and (semi) peripheral languages.

Translations account for only 2 to 4 percent of books published in the United States or the United Kingdom (Pym and Chrupala, 2005). According to Pym, “[w]e must accept that the disparity between what is translated into English (not much) and what is rendered from it (a lot) is great” (Pym and Chrupala, 2005, p. 27).

- Heilbron considers “all languages with a share of less than one percent of the world market occupy a peripheral position in the international translation system” (1999, p. 434). These peripheral languages include Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, and Portuguese. Although all these languages represent a vast number of speakers, yet they occupy a peripheral position in the translation system. Heilbron concludes that “the size of language groups is clearly not decisive for their degree of centrality in the translation system. “(1999, p. 434)
- Changes in the international position of languages are by no means simple or occur abruptly. The process requires several social, cultural, and economic reorientations, which takes a change of generations. According to Heilbron, “changes in the position of languages and language groups occur suddenly only if the position of the language depends closely on the political power of a regime. For example, the central position of Russian, which is clear from the UNESCO statistics of the 1980s, will undoubtedly have declined rapidly since 1989” (1999, p. 435).
- For publishers outside the centers, the decision to publish a translation from a periphery language still depends on the existence of their translation in a central language. This means, for example, if a translation is made from Arabic into Chinese, then it is usually preceded by a translation of the same work into English. This is because international communication of books is dependent on the role of leading centers in the international system. . According to Heilbron, “once a book is translated into a central language by an authoritative publisher, it immediately catches the attention of publishers in other parts of the globe” (Heilbron, 1999, p. 436).

Moreover, when a central language translates an author from the periphery, then usually their local recognition and fame are enhanced. Additionally, “being recognized as an international author means being exclusively recognized in central languages, particularly in the Anglo-American circles” (Heilbron, 1999, p. 436).

As for the position in the system and the variety of topics translated, the more central a language is in the international translation system, the more types of books are translated from this language (Heilbron, 2010, p. 5). Heilbron asserts that centrality implies variety; “since the small number of books translated from peripheral languages is generally concentrated in very few categories, the opposite also holds true: book translations from peripheral languages lack the variety that increases with the degree of centrality” (Heilbron 2000, p. 19). We will notice this issue clearly when we look at the translation market in the Arab world; we find translations into Arabic in all literary and scientific subjects and audio-visual/multimedia.

The structure of the world system of translation also determines the level of importation between center and periphery. The more central a language is, the smaller the proportion of translations into this language. There is an inverse relationship between the centrality of a language in the international translation system and the proportion of translations in national production. This situation is very apparent in the US and UK markets of translation.

## **2.8 Previous (case) studies**

In recent years, there have been several studies that investigate translation flows and exchanges between central, (semi) peripheral, and peripheral language groups, using aspects of world translation systems. We provide below a few examples of these studies.

Paweł Zajas (2016) provided an ethnographic study of the production of literary translation from Dutch (a semi-peripheral language) into German (a central language). The study also asserts that the German translation market is dominated by other hyper-central and central languages; around 58 percent of the translations are works translated from English, followed by 10 percent from French, 3.9 percent from Spanish, and 2.9 percent from Italian, while the rest of the other peripheral languages comprise a minor share (pp. 154-155). This study confirms two main points of the characteristics of the world translation system; that English, the hyper-central language, dominates the translation market; and that

the exchanges between central languages are much higher than between central and peripheral languages.

Hanna Pięta (2016) studied translation between two semi-peripheral languages; from Polish literature into European Portuguese for the long period between 1855–2010. Pięta also studied and analyzed translation flows and dynamics in subperiods (four subperiods) and studied several internal factors and their influences on the translation process and production. To give a concrete example, Pięta noticed a sudden increase in the number of translations from Polish into Portuguese in the early 1900s of the works of the Polish novelist Sienkiewicz. The study observes that this attention to translating Polish literature coincides with a period of peak concentration of French translation of this Polish author (Pięta, 2016, p. 12). This finding confirms one of the main characteristics of the world translation system suggested by Heilbrun that translation between peripheries often occurs via centers.

Another study conducted by Bojana Budimir (2020) also applied Heilbrun (and Sapiro) theoretical framework to study translation from Dutch (a semi-peripheral) into Serbian (a peripheral language) for the period between 1991-2015. The study findings also confirm the general framework of the world translation system, particularly for the size of translation flows between semi-peripheral and peripheral languages and the central intermediary language. The study shows that translation flows more from peripheral to the semi-peripheral. Additionally, the study explores other important aspects pertinent to this study regarding “the profile of the translators, the role of the international and regional centers in the selection process and the dependence on the funding provided by the source language institutions” (2020, p. 232). This last point regarding the financial support provided by source language institutions is very important to this study. We will discuss later in the analysis part to study the supply-demand aspect, i.e., we will see who sponsored the translations from Arabic to understand whether there is natural demand on Arabic nonfiction texts, or that the source text institutions are promoting the translated texts.

Another study was conducted by Moe *et al.* (2019), the study provided a detailed account of translation exchanges between the Slovene (a peripheral language) and several other European peripheral, semi-peripheral, and central languages. The study applied the world

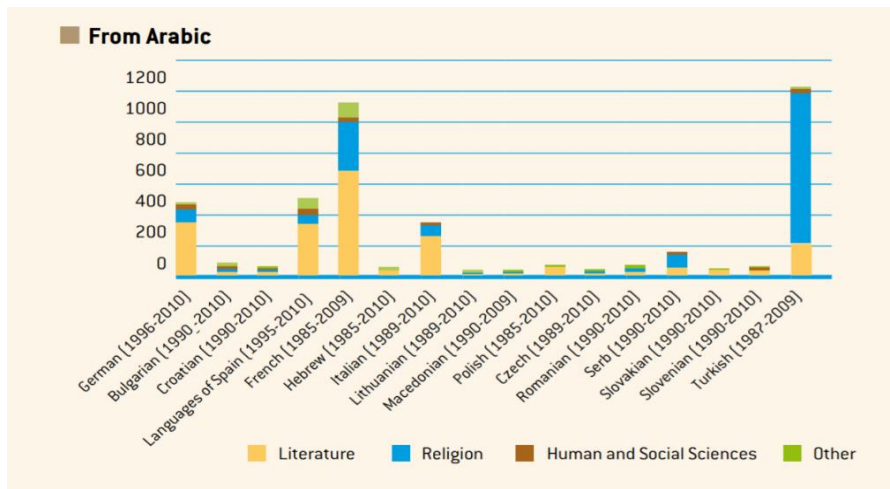
translation system and investigated the differences of translation production agents including the translators and publishers. The study concluded that “the amount and variety of translated texts and genres, the number of translators, editors, and publishers publishing translations from a given language will differ between translation from one of the central or semi-peripheral languages and from one of the peripheral” (2019, p. 57). The study confirms the main characteristics of the world translation system. For example, translation between peripheral languages is influenced by an intermediary translation in a central language.

Gürçağlar & Pokorn (2013) studied translation exchanges between Turkish and Slovene. Historically, these two peripheral languages have minimal communication between them. The study shows how English, the hyper-central language, enabled the two languages to communicate with each other and created indirect cultural contact between them. For example, the surveys of literary works translated between Turkish and Slovene show that “the majority of works translated between the two languages travel through English and are second-hand translations” (Gürçağlar & Pokorn, 2013, p. 164). Meanwhile, English pushed the two languages to the periphery of global cultural exchange. This study also supports the idea that the central language, in this case, English serves as an intermediary language in encouraging translation between peripheral and semi-peripheral languages.

A comprehensive mapping study on translation in the Euro-Mediterranean region provided detailed statistics on translation from Arabic of several genres, including human and social sciences. One of the project’s main objectives is to “clarify the crucial role of the translation of works of the imagination and thought (literature, human and social sciences, theatre, children's writing), in the development of an interculturality, while bringing to light the numerous difficulties that it poses in economic, cultural and political terms.” (A Mapping of Translation, 2010, p. 7)

The chart below, presented in the report, shows the numbers of works translated from Arabic and distributed by several European languages and major categories/genres during 1985-2010. What is important in this report, although not updated since 2010, is that it provides data on nonfiction translation, particularly for the social sciences.

Figure 3: Translation from Arabic into other languages by genre



It might be important here to list some findings of the report which mostly confirm the characteristics of the world translation system:

Arabic as a source language accounts for barely one in a thousand of all books translated in continental Europe. Arabic translations are almost nonexistent in certain countries in Central and Eastern Europe, like Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, and in the Baltic states (2010, p. 13).

An interesting finding of the report is that the largest number of books were translated from Arabic into Turkish when compared to translation into the European Union countries (1161 books). Although Heilbron did not go into detail about other factors that may influence translation flows between language groups, such as religion, shared history, traditions, and geographic proximity, these factors may be critical in the case of Arabic and Turkish.

Literary works entirely dominate-Translation from Arabic into the languages of the EU; at the same time, there is no evidence that other genres such as humanities and social sciences have increased over time, religious publications seem to be increased as well. (2010, p. 14).

As for translating the human and social sciences from Arabic, they represent less than 10%, even 5% of translations. For example, “in France, the EU country that translates the most Arab authors, the human and social sciences represent only 20 out of 1065 titles – that is

to say, 1. 87% (2010, p.14). This indicates that modern and contemporary Arab thought represents a smaller part of the already small percentage of Arabic translations.

According to the report, English is the most common source language for Arabic translation. In the Gulf States, English accounts for 95 percent of translations, over 75 percent in Egypt, 72 percent in Lebanon, and between 20 and 30 percent in the Maghreb. The average number of books translated every year is estimated to be between 1500 and 2000. One can estimate that around 35000 titles have been translated into Arabic in the last 20 years (1990-2020) (The Mapping Report, 2010, p. 15).

The report concludes that the inequalities in translation between the Arab world and the European Union countries are a reproduction of the inequalities in people's movements between the shores of the Mediterranean (The Mapping Report, 2010, p. 20).

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

#### **Overview**

Translation Studies is a relatively new academic discipline compared to other already well-established disciplines in the social science and humanities. Being interdisciplinary, Translation Studies has been drawing methodologies from other disciplines including linguistics, comparative literature, sociology, anthropology, cognitive sciences, technology media, among many others. The endeavor is to customize those methodologies to its own subject of inquiry. This in return has offered Translation Studies the flexibility to explore different approaches and methodologies; however, the fact that it has not fully developed its own methodologies is still a debatable issue. Shuttleworth and Cowie have noted two decades ago that “[t]he result of such a situation has often been that different branches of the discipline have at times experimented with widely differing methodologies, some of which have been imported wholesale from other areas of academic study, and not all of which, unfortunately, have been entirely germane to the study of translation” (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997, p. VI). However, during the last two decades, there has been a growing volume of publications on the methodologies in Translation Studies (e.g., Mellinger & Hanson, 2017; Saldanha & O’Brien 2013; Troop 2007; Williams & Chesterman, 2002). As Translation Studies has been evolving, “investigators have incorporated novel research designs and methods to glean new insights on a broad range of research questions. Innovative data collection methods and their associated samples are drawn from a variety of sources for the purpose of describing specific phenomena and generalizing findings to larger populations” (C. Han, 2018, p. 10). This nature of the discipline has offered it an

experimental dimension in terms of methods applied which has enriched the discipline overall.

The present study uses deductive reasoning, i.e., testing an existing theory(ies), or approach(es), by exploring a specific empirical case (or data). The theoretical reference to this study is the world-system approach with three hierarchical levels of analysis: the world-systems of political economy, the world language system, and the world translation system. As for the case study, it is the translation of contemporary Arab thought into foreign languages, with particular attention to English translations. However, unlike deductive reasoning in hard sciences, testing a theory in the social sciences is yet debatable since the number of factors contributing to a certain social phenomenon is by no means can be fully monitored or adjusted with complete certainty or precision. Yet, it can provide insights and legitimate ways of thinking about the phenomena through the lens of a certain theory or approach. This is feasible particularly when we have data about the phenomena, as well as comparative studies about it.

The general thematic framework of this study is ‘context-oriented’ research of translation as classified by Saldanha & O’Brien (2013). This thematic category of research is classified in comparison to the other three categories, namely: product-oriented, process-oriented, and participant-oriented. The main difference between the three is on the focus of inquiry of translation when considered as a process, or a product, or when the attention is given to the agents and context of translation production. Context-oriented research falls within what Marco (2009) calls the culturalist and sociological models. Culturalist models are described as aiming to uncover “the complex social, political, cultural and ideological forces which shape translation practices” (2009, p. 15). Sociological models have similar aims, the main difference between the two being the disciplines they draw on. In fact, we have indications for “context-oriented” research in earlier studies, particularly in the realm of literary translation. For example, these indications are found in the Literary Translation Project at the University of Gottingen that was initiated in the late 1980s, or simply called the “Göttingen group” which was specialized in the field of translation history. The group also had insights on how texts cross borders between different languages and distinguish between the internal and external translation histories. According to Frank, , “unlike

internal translation history, concerned with the texts themselves [...], external translation history, is focused on the circumstances, the institutions, as well as the agents” (Frank 1990, as cited in Pieta 2017, p. 3).

External translation history can therefore be defined as “the kind of history to be constructed from context and the internal as the kind of history to be construed from the text” (Koster 2002, p. 24).

Pym (1992) has also provided a detailed account of translation history. Pym elaborates on how translation history is important to the wider issues of intercultural communication, he states that “[t]ranslation history can be a source of ideas and data for the political or sociological study of international relations; it might have more than a few words to say in the development of language policies (1998, p. vii).

Pym adds that “[a]ny attempt to develop a method for translation history must thus be prepared to address at least two related questions: first, how to do translation history; second, why it should be done one way rather than” (1998, p. vii). According to Pym, “[t]ranslation history should explain why translations were produced in a particular social time and place” (1998, p. ix). Pym proposes four general principles for conducting translation history: “attention to causation, a focus on the human translator (and patrons), a hypothesis projecting intercultural belonging, and the priority of the present” (1998, p. xi).

The key methodological takeaway of the translation history approach is the research questions asked; there are four basic questions to ask when conducting translation history: who, what, why, and how. The “who” question is concerned with the translators (i.e., who translates); the ‘what’ question is concerned with investigating which texts were translated (or not translated) in particular cultures in particular times; the ‘why’ question is concerned with understanding the reason(s) why particular texts are translated at particular times; and the ‘how’ question is concerned with how “translators’ strategies through the ages have varied enormously, depending on the demands of commissioners, publishers, readers, as well as their own personal preferences. In the analysis section of this study, the focus will be given to two of these four questions above, namely the ‘what’ and the ‘why’ as far as

this study is concerned with what is being translated from Arabic and why. Equally important are two additional fundamental questions to ask here; the “how much” as an indicative element of the research question regarding the flows of translations from Arabic, and the ‘who’ question, particularly asked about the publishers and sponsors to understand the supply and demand sides as discussed earlier. These four questions will form the basis on which the analysis will be structured.

The methods employed in cultural and sociological studies are broader than those in Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS); Marco claims that “unlike scholars in the DTS paradigm, those working within the culturalist approach aim to go beyond description and uncover the socio-economic and political motives hidden behind norms” (2009, p. 26). Sociology is a discipline with a long-standing tradition that has developed a variety of research methods, many of which have also been used in Translation Studies. However, in terms of context-oriented research, the “impact of sociology has been felt not so much in terms of research methodology but in the conceptual frameworks and explanatory procedures borrowed from that discipline” (Saldanha & O’Brien 2013, p. 206). However, there is no clear-cut distinction between descriptive and explanatory research; as “any research that attempts to place a certain phenomenon in context, even though its main aim may be descriptive, will inevitably establish links between different factors influencing that phenomenon and, in that way, will create a descriptive model that prioritizes certain explanations over others” (Saldanha & O’Brien 2013, p. 205).

### **3.1 Method**

The study involves exploratory, conceptual, and empirical aspects. Exploratory research intends to “explore the research questions and does not intend to offer final and conclusive solutions to existing problems. This type of research is usually conducted to study a problem that has not been clearly defined yet” (Dash 2019, p. 3). Basically, it is concerned about what can we find about a certain question or data about a new topic, or a topic that has not yet been fully explored. In the case of this present study, the topic and related data or analysis have never been explored in the way this study seeks to do. Conceptual research “aims to define and clarify concepts, to interpret or reinterpret new ideas, to relate concepts

into larger systems, to introduce new concepts or metaphors or frameworks that allow a better understanding of the object of research” (Williams & Chesterman, 2002, p. 58). This dimension is also essential in this study, it is about how the theoretical framework is applied to the topic of study and as a framework employed that introduces concepts, such as the world system, to study the translation phenomena. Finally, empirical research “seeks new data, new information derived from the observation of data and experimental work; it seeks evidence which supports or disconfirms hypotheses or generates new ones” (Williams & Chesterman, 2002, p. 58). The present study will present such data (data about the translated works of eighteen Arab thinkers). Saldanha & O’Brien call this “argument-centered” which mixes “elements from conceptual research and empirical research, where the “researcher often starts by proposing a new argument (or hypothesis) and then proceeds to support it with examples” (2013, p. 64). While the research is deductive in the sense that “it moves from the general to the particular. The aim is not exactly to test hypotheses but rather to propose new avenues for research. It is different from purely conceptual research in the sense that it is grounded in empirical evidence” (Saldanha & O’Brien, 2013, p. 64). Argument-centered research is exploratory in nature; the examples, while aiming to support the theoretical argument, are “not intended to prove that the argument presented is the only valid way of looking at the phenomenon under investigation. Rather, it seeks to lay the groundwork for further empirical studies that might use comparable datasets, either falsify or support the emerging hypothesis” (2013, 64). These three methodological dimensions are naturally imposed themselves on the study which corresponds to the multiple levels of theorization and inquiry of the study.

### **3.2 Data collection**

A representative sample of eighteen prominent Arab scholars and thinkers will be identified based on several criteria (such as their influence on modern Arab thought, citations and reviews, and the size of their production). The names will also be selected based on the research’s experience and familiarity with who he or she is in contemporary Arab thought. The sample does not aim to be exhaustive but will be comprehensive and evident to draw conclusions about the entire issue of translating contemporary Arab

thought. More about how to approach contemporary Arab thought will be discussed at the outset of the next chapter.

However, it is not only about the size of the sample in terms of the number, but also about other key information and details about the specific translations. Thus, among all the available data sources, Amazon website is the most useful source of information for this study. Other websites, such as the publishers' websites are also consulted. It will be discussed below why Amazon is a powerful tool for the present study and will also present examples of the use of Amazon in previous studies.

Poupaud *et al.* (2009) have studied three different means for data collection in three different research projects. The first project uses the UNESCO Index Translationum in a study that investigates the relations and translation flow between Spanish and French in a specific period. The second project uses a professional book-industry database of literary translation called "Electre", used to study translation from Spanish into French in the period 1980-2000. And the third project uses Amazon, which is a bookseller website, to study translations from Korean into US English in the period following the Korean War in the early 1950s.

This last project described above about translations from Korean into US English is the most relevant to this study. It shares several aspects with translating contemporary Arab thought in terms of the time, the hierarchy of both languages in the world translation system (the two are peripheral languages), and the potential size of translation flaws with a central, or hyper-central language, such as English. Thus, the data collection for the present study will be based on Amazon website. Amazon is not only an E-store with different kinds of products but also one of the most important researchable databases for books of all kinds (mainly books in English). According to Poupaud *et al.*, Amazon gives an accurate image of what is available to English speaking world, particularly in the US and UK. Additionally, any book entered Amazon database is permanently kept even if the book is out-of-print which gives an idea about the books available to English readers at certain periods of time (2009, p. 276).

Amazon has also very useful tools in its advanced-search engine. One can search for books by author, title, and other keywords. It also provides a search by year (before or after a

certain year). However, Amazon has some limitations as, originally, it was not designed as a data base for translation research. There is no search option dedicated specifically to translated books. Usually, if the translator appears somewhere, it appears as another author of the book and not as translator, and actually not many books are described as translations in the review section on the book page. However, in the case of this study, as the size of data is small, this limitation is not significant.

Additional search might be required to look at the covers and inside the books themselves to find more about the translators and the publishers. Also, extra information should be available on other sites including books reviews in journals or other websites.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Analysis and Discussion**

#### **Overview**

Contemporary Arab thought is a general expression that encompasses a wide variety of issues. Thus, contextualizing and capturing all aspects of what we mean by contemporary Arab thought is a complex task. For simplicity, we define contemporary Arabic thought as all the intellectual output and knowledge produced (particularly in the form of books) by renowned Arab thinkers/intellectuals since the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century. In fact, there are no clear-cut criteria to assert what is meant by “renowned” Arab thinker, although one could think of several factors, or elements of criteria, such as the volume of production, the number of editions, the originality of their publications, the positions they hold in academia, awards, reviews and writings from other scholars about the author, number theses and dissertations written about the author, translated works, among many others. However, a case-by-case documentation of such factors is far beyond the scope of this study. Other scholars define Arab thought in terms of the questions asked; for example, Abu Rabi’ defines it as “all those tendencies, trends, and patterns of thought that reflect the bewildering number of questions and issues that have preoccupied modern Arab thought” (1997, p. 85). Of course, in all fields, there are key scholars and other scholars with lesser contribution to the production of original knowledge.

The knowledge and ideas produced in contemporary Arab thought are far from homogeneous; they reflect a wide range of social, historical, and political circumstances and changes that have taken place in the Arab world since the second half of the twentieth century, which were particularly concentrated after the 1967 defeat. These thoughts encompass various intellectual currents, trends, themes, and traditions such as Marxism,

nationalism, liberal secularism, political-Islamism, among many others. They represent a broad range of viewpoints that include social, political, religious, and ideological criticism of post-independence Arab states.

The contemporary Arab states and societies have gone through several stages and transformations which have impacted and formed contemporary Arab thinking. While taking in mind the differences between each Arab state, four main stages for the formation of contemporary Arab states can be identified: 1) the period between 1948-1967, which is a period between two defeats in front of Israel and its Western supporters. It is characterized by a strong sense of national independence and the willingness to the establishment of sovereign political systems, usually under authoritarian leaders; 2) the period between 1967-1990, which was characterized by depression after the harsh defeat of 1967, and with an increased turning to and dependence on the West and failed economic and political systems; 3) the period between 1990-2011 characterized by complete economic and political dependence on the West, defragmentation of the Arab states, and failed economic and social development and dictatorship, particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, also characterized by the demise of the Arab left and the idea of the Arab unity. This period also witnessed a noticeable rise of political Islamic movements; 4) the period from 2011 to the present, i.e., after the so-called Arab spring, with a new wave of political adjustment which is still an open issue (Owen 2015, p. 11).

Kassab (2009) contends in her depiction of the intellectual scene in the Arab world in the second half of the twentieth century that the Arab intellectual and political milieu was divided between totalizing notions and radical critique. Arab philosophers were reacting to Arab nations' disillusionment following independence, as well as authoritarianism, intolerance, and failed development. They were also reacting to Israel's ongoing defeats (p. 1).

Several internal and external factors have influenced and shaped the ways of thinking and topics researched and debated by contemporary Arab intellectuals; one of the most significant factors was the defeat of 1967 (the Naksa), which was a watershed moment in the shaping of contemporary Arab thought. According to Kassab, the defeat “was a political and intellectual crisis that called for a reassessment and a revisiting of the modes of

thinking that had prevailed as well as of the political and intellectual struggles that had hitherto been adopted.” (2009, p. 167).

Yassin Al-Hafez also asserts that “the defeated in the 1967 war was not only the army but the whole nation. It has put all Arab achievements under the test and shed light on all aspects of the current Arab existence. The Six-Day War was a real test for the structures, movements, and progress of Arab society” (1997, p. 121). Al-Jabiri also describes the intellectual situation after the 1967 defeat, he asserts that “since the defeat of the Arabs in 1967, the feeling of frustration has become the dominant phenomenon on the Arab renaissance consciousness. This is evident in most of the writings that dealt in one way or another with the Arab renaissance experience, especially those who were theorists of the ‘revolution’ before the defeat” (2000, p. 132)

The failure of the post-colonial Arab state on all economic, political, and cultural levels has had a great impact on the formation of contemporary Arab thought, just as the defeat of 1967 had a critical impact on Arab intellectual and political criticism. The political and cultural censorship and absence of freedoms and democracy have had a great deal as well. Criticism of religious thought and Islamic traditions also had a large share of intellectual debates particularly on the issue of modernizing Islamic discourse (the tradition and modernization debate). At the same time, the Arab world has not been isolated from international political and economic influences and changes including globalization and American hegemony and the imbalanced relations within. Abu-Rabi‘ argues that “the Arab world has moved from being dominated by colonial modernity to being dominated by global capitalism. This transition has engendered many political, social, economic, and ideological movements within the Arab world” (2003, p. xvi).

Abu-Rabi‘ adds that “before 1967, some Arab countries launched hopeful programs of modernization. However, After the 1967 defeat with Israel, many of these hopes were dashed” (2003, p. xiv). Additionally, the changes in the international scene in politics and economy since the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly the growing international hegemony of the United States, and the dependency of many Arab regimes on it, and the spread of globalization have as well a huge influence on the topics and orientations of contemporary Arab thought. The collapse of the Soviet Union is another

important factor, particularly on the demise of the Arab leftist discourse which was influential during the 1960-70s.

In general, contemporary Arab thinkers and their intellectual output can be classified into three main directions; first, those who might be called “radical transformists” who, according to Ballotah, “see nothing useful short of a cultural revolution. They are not equally radical but generally tend to be leftists. Arab culture in their views should be so changed that it will be fully remade” (1990, p. 3). They also call for discarding religious views about life and the universe and call for secularism, rationalism, and the advancement of science and technology. Second, those who might be called “reformists”; they “consider traditional Arab culture to be viable in modern times if only it is interpreted and understood better, and if certain aspects of its elements are developed in the light of modern needs and the experience of modern nations. Their major thrust is towards renewal rather than radical change” (Ballotah, 1990, p. 4). Third, those who might be called ‘traditionalists’; those are mainly “committed to the religious aspect of Arab culture. They view the Islamic elements of Arab culture as the principal ones that must predominate. They advocate the elimination from Arab society of all external cultural influences, mainly Western ones” (Ballotah, 1990, p. x). This group does not want to transform or reform Arab culture but to adhere to what they consider to be authentic Islamic origins. This general classification of the main trends of contemporary Arab thinkers will help us to approximate the understanding of Western attention in Arab thought by looking into which classifications were translated more and the implications of this focus.

#### **4.1 Contemporary Arab thought in the West**

For a variety of reasons, including the nature of the North-South relationship in the production and dissemination of knowledge, which we discussed in previous sections, contemporary Arab thought and internal debates about society and politics in the Arab world do not seem to have intrigued the interest of publishers and readers in the West. according to Daifallah, “the large volume of intellectual production and debates has seldom been presented to the western readers. The English language literature on contemporary (post-1967) Arab thought is generally characterized by dearth” (2012, p. 5). Abu Rabi also

asserts that “the field of contemporary Arab thought is still virgin territory, unmapped by studies in English” (2004, p. 7).

Some features of the policies relating to the translation of Arabic literature, particularly the orientalist view of Arab society, appear to apply, in some way or another, to the views on Arab thought. Corm (2015) argues that “the rich [Arab] thought has generally been marginalized in academic works and the media. At the core of this narrative are the Orientalist and exotic romanticism that emerged in the wake of the disenchantment with Third Worldism” (p. xii).

The way the West perceives Arab philosophy is influenced by the power dynamics that have existed between the two throughout their long history of colonization and orientalist beliefs. Corm adds an important observation about how contemporary Arab thought is portrayed in the media. Corm argues that “contrary to the predominant image portrayed in the media and by some academic research since the 1980s, Arab thought is complex, varied, and vibrant. Indeed, it has vigorously responded over and over again to numerous historical challenges” (Corm, 2015, p. 2).

#### **4.2 Overview of the collected data**

We provide below an overview of the main features of the collected data as presented in Table 1 below as well as highlighting some methodological notes:

First, the eighteen intellectuals listed in Table 1 are among the most well-known contemporary Arab thinkers. Although the primary goal of this list is not representation, the list does include a significant number of Arab thinkers. The premise is that if this list includes the most prominent authors, then the other thinkers who are not included are those who have been less translated. There was no considerable amount of translated works after conducting a primary search on additional authors who were not included in the list (either no translations or a maximum of one). This means that if we add more names to the list, the results will not be substantially different. However, a complete list will be required for additional research to provide a global picture of the issue, which will necessitate extensive work on data that is outside the scope of this study. Thus, the list could be regarded to include the most translated Arab thinkers, while also including thinkers whose writings

were not translated into English but were translated into other languages other than English. The inclusion of such thinkers will be greatly useful for conducting comparative analyses between what is translated into central languages such as English, French, and German and what is translated into peripheral languages such as Turkish and Persian.

Second, the list reflects the diversity of thinkers' perspectives and the issues on which they write. It encompasses the three previously mentioned groups: transformists, reformists, and traditionalists. However, it should be noted that the distinction between the three is not distinct, and there are other publications that do not exactly belong to such a classification, but this is merely to simplify the method for the sake of this study.

Third, the list includes books that have been translated into languages other than English. Translations into other central languages, such as French and German, as well as translations into peripheral languages, such as Turkish and Persian, are provided.

Fourth, some components of the data had small margins of error. For example, it was not always feasible to locate information on some books, such as whether they were translated or initially written in English by the author, especially since some authors write in two or more languages. There is also a margin of error in calculating the number of works written in Arabic by each author. This margin of error, however, has no substantial impact on data quality.

Fifth, some authors have a peculiar phenomenon in that, while some of their books have been published directly in English, some of their works, which were initially written in Arabic, have also been translated into English. For example, Sadiq Jalal Al-Azm published several books in English while also having two of his Arabic books translated into English by a translator (not by the author).

Table 1 below shows the general data and additional information collected on eighteen Arab thinkers, including the number of books published in Arabic, translated books into English and other languages, percentages of English translations from total published Arabic books, and information on publishers and sponsors.

Table 2: master data sample of the selected Arab thinkers

No.	Author	Number of books in Arabic (numbers are rounded to integers)	Percentage of English translations (of total number of books in Arabic)	English translations	Publisher/s	Translator	Translation into other languages
1	Mohammed Abed Al-Jabiri	28	10%	1-Democracy, Human Rights and Law in Islamic Thought (Contemporary Arab Scholarship in the Social Sciences)	I. B. Tauris Publishers (Bloomsburg)  In Association With  The Centre for Arab Unity Studies	Translated by the Center for Arab Unity Studies   The translation and publication of this book was made possible by the generous financial support of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation.	Translated into German, French, Portuguese, Persian:  1. Kritik der arabischen Vernunft. Die Einführung (German Edition) 2. Introduction à la critique de la raison arabe (French Edition) 3. Introducao A Critica Da Razao Arabe (Em Portuguese do Brasil) 4. La raison politique en islam (French Edition) by Mohammed Abed al Jabiri (Author), Boussif Ouasti (Translator)
				2-The Formation of Arab Reason: Text, Tradition and the Construction of Modernity in the Arab World	I. B. Tauris Publishers (Bloomsburg)  In Association With  The Centre for Arab Unity Studies	Translated by the Center for Arab Unity Studies   The translation and publication of this book was made possible by the generous financial support of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation.	

				3-Arab-Islamic Philosophy: A Contemporary Critique (Middle East Monograph Series)	Center for Middle Eastern Studies, The University of Texas at Austin (1999)	Aziz Abbassi  (Translated from French)	5. Rahyafti Be Ghorane Karim (Persian Edition)
2	Mohammed Arkoun	18 Arabic	15%	1 Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers	Routledge; 1st edition (1994)	Robert D. Lee  (Translated from French)	24 books written in French  Translations into: Arabic, English, Spanish, Swedish and Italian, Dutch, Malay, Persian, Indonesian
				1- Islam: To Reform or to Subvert? (Saqi Essentials)	<i>Saqi Books (2007) in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies</i>	unknown	
				2- The Unthought in Contemporary Islamic Thought	Saqi Books (March 1, 2002) in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies	unknown	
3	Nasr Hamed Abu- Zaid	14	=21%	1- Critique of Religious Discourse (World Thought in Translation)	Yale University Press (January 9, 2018)	Jonathan Wright	Translated into: German, Dutch, French, Italian, Persian, Turkish, Indonesian.
				2- Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis (WRR Verkenningen)	Amsterdam University Press (April 1, 2006)	with the assistance of Dr. Katajun Amirpur and Dr. Mohamad Nur Kholis Setiawan	
				3- Voice of an Exile: Reflections on Islam by Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (2004-03-01)	Praeger (March 30, 2004)	Esther Ruth Nelson	
4	George Tarabichi	27	=3%	Woman Against Her Sex	Saqi Books (February 1, 2001)	Translated by Basil Hatim and Elisabeth Orsini	

5	Sadeq Jalal al-Azm	13	=15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self-Criticism After the Defeat</li> </ol>	Saqi Books (April 10, 2012)	George Stergios and Mansour Ajami	<p>One book translated into French:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ces interdits qui nous hantent - islam, censure. . . (parcours mediterraneens)</li> </ul> <p>* There are 5 books written originally in English</p>
				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Critique of Religious Thought</li> </ol>	Saqi Books, 2011	translated from the Arabic by George Stergios	
6	Abdel Wahab Almessiri	40	=0	<p>No English translations</p> <p>Books originally written in English</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Israel: Base of Western imperialism</li> <li>- Israel and South Africa: The Progression of a Relationship</li> <li>- Land of Promise: A Critique of Political Zionism</li> <li>- The Palestinian Wedding: A Bilingual Anthology of Contemporary Palestinian Resistance Poetry</li> </ul>			<p>Translated into:</p> <p>Persian, Turkish, Portuguese, French</p>
7	Hichem Djait	16	=18%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Europe and Islam: Cultures and Modernity, Berkeley, ed.</li> </ol>	University of California Press	Peter Heinegg	12 books in French

				University of California Press, 1985			(Originally written in French)
				2. Islamic Culture in Crisis: A Reflection on Civilizations in History, New Jersey, ed. Transaction Publishers, 2011	Routledge; 1st edition (2011)	Janet Fouli	
				3. The Life of Muhammad, 3 vols, Carthage, ed. Beit El Hikma, 2012[15]	Tunisian Academy of Sciences, Letters and Arts (2014)	Tunisian Academy of Sciences	
8.	Taha Abdelrahman	27	=0	None			-2 books in French -5 books translated into Turkish 1-Dinin Ruhü: Sekülerizmin Sigligindan İlahi Sözlesme ve Emanet Paradigmasinin Enginligine 2-Amel Sorunsali: Bilim ve Düsüncenin Pratik Temelleri Üzerine Bir Arastirma 3-Ahlak Sorunsali: Batı Modernitesinin Ahlaki Elestirisine Bir Katki 4-Dini Amel ve Aklin Yenilenmesi

							5-Bilgi Ahlaktan Ayrıldığında
9	Abdallah Laroui	28	=7%	1- The History of the Maghrib: An Interpretive Essay (Acls History E-book Project Reprint Series)-translated from French	Princeton University Press; 1st edition (September 21, 1977)	Ralph Manheim (Translator)	10 books written in French  2 books translated to Spanish
				2- The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual: Traditionalism or Historicism? (UCLA Latin American Studies Series)	University of California Press (January 6, 1977)	Diarmid Cammell (Translator)	
10	Azmi Bishara	20	=15%	1. Sectarianism without Sects	C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd (27 May 2021)	Chris Hitchcock (translator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checkpoint (Romans, nouvelles, récits) (French Edition)</li> <li>• Qu'est-ce que le salafisme? (Essais) (French Edition)</li> </ul>
				2. What's Next for Palestine?	Verso	unknown	
				3. Revolution in Tunisia: Uprisings and Popular Protest in the Middle East	I. B. Tauris <u>Bloomsbury Publishing PLC</u>	unknown	
11	Mahdi Amel	9	=11%	Arab Marxism and National Liberation: Selected Writings of Mahdi Amel (Historical Materialism)	BRILL	Angela Giordani (Translator)	

1	Aziz Al-Azmeh	13 Arabic	=7%	<p>1- Secularism in the Arab World: Contexts, Ideas and Consequences</p> <p>Books Written originally in English</p> <p>2- The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allah and His People</p> <p>3- Islams and Modernities</p> <p>4- The Arabs and Islam in Late Antiquity: A Critique of Approaches to Arabic Sources (Theories and Paradigms of Islamic Studies) Hardcover</p> <p>5- Muslim Kingship: Power and the Sacred Muslim, Christian and Pagan Polities</p> <p>6- Times of History: Universal Topics in Islamic Historiography</p>	Edinburgh University Press;	David Bond (Translator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Islamlar ve Moderniteler</li> </ul> <p>Turkish</p>
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1	Fuad Zakaria	16	=12%	1- Myth and Reality in the Contemporary Islamic Movement	Pluto Press, 2005.	Ibrahim Abu Rabi	
				2- A History of the Middle East: From Antiquity to the Present Day	Garnet Publishing Ltd., 2010	Translated by Hala Khawam	
1	Gorege Corm	21	=10%	1- Fragmentation of the Middle East: The Last Thirty Years	Hutchinson, London, 1989.	translated by Selina Cohen, Raj Isar, and Margaret Owen.	
				2- Arab Political Thought: Past and Present	Hurst	Raj Isar (Translator), Selina Cohen (Translator)	
1	Muhammad Shahrour	13	=15%	1- The Qur'an, Morality and Critical Reason	Brill (The publication of this book has been financially supported by the Institute of Contemporary Intellectual Studies, Beirut – Lebanon)	Andreas Christmann	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Pour un islam humaniste - Une lecture contemporaine du Coran (French Edition)</li> <li>•Inwiefern lässt sich Jana Scholzes Konzept der Museumsanalyse auf das 'Deutsche Historische (German Edition)</li> <li>•Definitionen und Konzepte von Erziehung. Ihre Wichtigkeit für Gesellschaft, Staat und Individuum (German Edition)</li> </ul>
				2- Islam and Humanity: Consequences of a Contemporary Reading:	Gerlach Press (Islamic Studies at Gerlach Press)	George Stergios	
1	Ali Alwardi	12	=%16	1- Social Glimpses of Iraq's Modern History	LAP Lambert Academic Publishing; abridged edition	Yasin T. al-Jibouri	

					(Support from the Iraqi Ministry of Culture)		
				2- Understanding Iraq: Society, Culture, and Personality	Edwin Mellen Pr	Translated by Fuad Baali	
1	Rached Ghannouchi	12	=8%	Public Freedoms in the Islamic State	Yale University Press (World Thought in Translation)	<u>David L. Johnston</u> (Translator)	Laiklik ve Sivil Toplum
1	Abd Al-‘Azīz Al-Duri	27	=11%	1- The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs	Edited and translated by Lawrence I. Conrad		German translation of Arab Economic History  Arabische Wirtschaftsgeschichte (Die Bibliothek des Morgenlandes) (German Edition)
			2- The Historical Formation of the Arab Nation	Lawrence I. Conrad			
			3- Early Islamic Institutions: Administration and Taxation from the Caliphate to the Umayyads and Abbasids (Contemporary Arab Scholarship in the Social Sciences)	Translated for the Centre for Arab Unity Studies by Razia Ali			

### 4.3 Main Findings

- The intellectual production of Arab thinkers is abundant and diversified. There are some Arab thinkers whose works exceeded thirty books. This means that these Arab thinkers have surpassed many international authors in this aspect. Of course, the number of publications does not always indicate the reception or scholarly value of a work. There are variations in reception and celebration not only among the scholars themselves but also for publications of the same author. usually, some books for the same author are widely received while other publications are not. For example, among the thirty books or more of Muhammad Abed Al-Jabiri, he is best known for his four-volume work ‘Critique of the Arab Reason’, which is considered his major intellectual project. In fact, usually, this is the case for most of the authors that among the many publications they had, they were only known for one or two of their publications. And usually, these well-known publications are the ones that have potential for translation.
- The percentages of translation into English of the works of the Arab thinkers listed in Table 1 are in the range between 21 percent as the highest and zero percent (the English translations from the total books written originally in Arabic). The calculated average percentage (the total percentages for each author divided by the total number of authors) the result is around 10 percent. Of course, this is considered a small percentage, especially if we compare what the Arab world translates from foreign languages (mainly English); the complete works of many Western thinkers were translated into Arabic, not only this but many works were also re-translated several times. Of course, this is in addition to the inequality of reception and influence on the target culture.
- The data shows that some Arabic works were not only translated into English but also into other central, semi-peripheral, and peripheral languages. Translations into other central languages include German and French, and the semi-peripheral include Dutch, and translations into peripheral languages include Turkish, Persian, and Indonesian. The data shows that translations into Southern peripheral languages are much less than translations into central languages. This result is usually predicted when we look at the characteristics of the world translation system we discussed in the theoretical framework. However, in our case here, there are some aspects of translations into other peripheral languages that do not necessarily comply with the world system regarding translation flows between peripheral

languages. The data shows, for example, that there are some cases where there are more translations into peripheral languages than into English. One example is Taha Abdelrahman, who has five translations into Turkish while has not any translation into English. We will discuss this case later below.

- According to the data, most of the translations were completed by Arab translators. This raises some questions about the translation process, such as how and why the translation was commissioned in the first place, particularly given that these are highly complex intellectual and philosophical texts requiring a great deal of subject matter knowledge. Unfortunately, the current study is unable to provide additional information on the translator selection process.
- Regarding the publishers, the data indicates that there are two main types: private publishers and university presses. Private publishers range from small scale to well-established publishers owned by Arabs as well as foreigners (mainly Europeans and Americans). As for university presses, the list includes some prominent universities such as Yale and Princeton.
- According to the data, many translations are sponsored or funded by Arab entities, whether private, public, or non-governmental. Furthermore, foreign sponsors funded some of the translations produced by university presses.
- The data shows that most of the authors are bilingual; specifically, scholars from the Arab east region write in both Arabic and English, and authors from the Arab North African region (with francophone traditions) write in both Arabic and French with noticeable more writing in French than in Arabic. This issue is related to the colonial past in the region. The data also shows that many books of Arab thinkers were translated in reverse order, i.e., translated from English or French into Arabic. This issue also has an impact on the need to translate from Arabic. We have discussed earlier the impact of English as a lingua franca and the pressure it exerted on world academia to write directly into English. Of course, there are other important reasons related to the individual career trajectory of the author.

#### **4.4 Analysis and discussion**

In reference to what we have discussed earlier in the methodology part, the analysis will be based on the questions raised by the external translation history approach proposed by the Göttingen group. External translation history is focused on “the circumstances, the institutions

as well as the agents” (Frank, 1990, p. 9, as cited in Pieta 2013, p. v). External translation history can therefore be defined as “the kind of history to be constructed from context” (Koster, 2002, p. 24, as cited in Pieta, 2016, p. 153). However, the questions will be tailored to reflect the inquiry to answer the main thesis of this study. To recall, there are five main questions to ask when conducting external translation history research, which in turn lead to more specific queries, these are:

- what was translated (which genres, authors, etc.)?
  - when was it translated (how frequently, when was it not translated)?
  - where were translations produced (where were they published and distributed, by which publishers, etc.)?
  - who translated (what was their gender, training, cultural background, etc.)?
  - how was it translated (in what way, according to which norms, directly or indirectly, etc.)?
- (Pieta, 2016, pp. 3-4)

However, Pym has criticized these questions as “being geared towards description but no explanation” (as cited in Pieta 2016, p. c4). Pym argues that for these questions to be historical they need to emphasize the “why” question, he states that “[a]lthough these two activities roughly correspond to what the Göttingen group terms external and internal translation history (Frank, 1989), I believe that neither can become properly historical until they project substantial responses to the questions ‘why this text? (Why not another?)’, ‘why in this way? (Why not another)’” (Pym 1992, p. 224).

Pym's comments are essential if we want to explain rather than just describe, thus, we will extend our analysis and accommodate Pym's notes. One also can ask the “why” question about the publishers and translators, i.e., why these specific publishers and translators were involved. Although all five questions apply to this present study, however, we will only focus on three main questions that will keep the inquiry within the initially suggested scope of the thesis. The “why” question suggested by Pym will be emphasized particularly in the last two questions. The questions are: how many (books) are translated and to which languages? Which authors and which texts were translated and why? Who published and sponsored the translations and why?

In fact, the “why” questions in the case of inquiry about translations usually require some ethnographic research or qualitative methods and tools such as conducting interviews with

authors, translators and published in trying to find out how the idea of translating a certain book was initiated and what was the motivation behind it. There is usually a network analysis in such a process that involves data from a variety of stakeholders where each has their motives. Such a methodology is beyond the aim of this present study; however, there are some indications found in the translated text that offers us some information that helps provide basic analysis.

#### **4. 4.1 How many (books) are translated and to which languages?**

The imbalanced power relations and inequalities in knowledge production and dissemination between central nations and peripheries predicate that the volume of translations from peripheral languages into central languages is proportional with comparative advantage for the benefit of central nations. The world translation system, as proposed by Heilbron and others, is hierarchically structured where translation flows seem to be trafficking in one direction: from the center to the periphery. The data presented in this study shows that the case of translating contemporary Arabic thought is no exception to the world translation system.

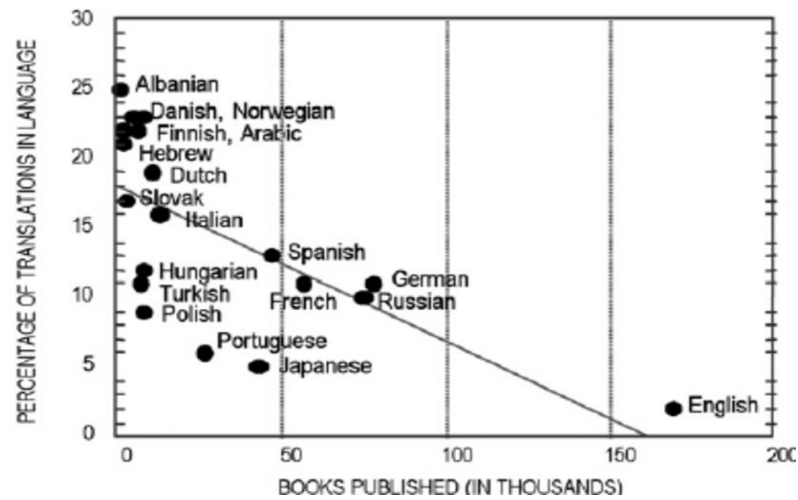
Jacquemond (1992) identifies three directions (streams) of translation flows in the world translation system: a) the North-South and South-North, b) from the North to the North, and c) from the South to the South. Jacquemond notes that, unsurprisingly, major flows of the global translation streams are flowing mainly from the North to the North (1992, p. 43), i.e., between central languages themselves, and particularly from English, the hyper-central language of the world language system as described by de Swaan (2013). At the same time, the flows between Southern nations are almost non-existent, and the exchanges between the North and the South in both directions are characterized by uneven exchanges. Although Jacquemond concludes that “cultural hegemony largely confirms economic domination” (1992, p. 43), which also confirm the characteristics of the world translation system; however, we will see in this study that some features are influenced by some factors that were not elaborated before in the world translation system. One of these factors is religion (Islam) as a common factor between the Arab world and other non-Arab Muslim countries. This factor has a great influence on the translation flows, for certain genres, between Arabic and other peripheral languages in these Muslim countries.

##### **4.4.1.1 Translations into English**

English is a hyper-central language that is characterized by a low importation percentage of translations from other languages, while at the same time it has become the language with the

highest percentages of exportation of translations. Translations into English do not exceed three to four percent of the total books published in English, while some semi-peripheral and peripheral languages translate more than thirty percent of the published books in their languages (see Figure 4 below). Moreover, English is also putting pressure on other languages, particularly in academia, favoring publishing in English.

Figure 4: Percentages of translations from published books



(Source: Pym 2009)

The data shows that the maximum percentage of translations into English from the total books published by an Arab thinker of those included in the list does not exceed 21 percent, and the range is between zero and 21 percent, while the average was around 10 percent. This includes translations made directly from Arabic or translation into English from books written originally in French. As we have indicated earlier, these percentages are tentative, and for full accuracy, they need further investigation. The issue that some Arab thinkers write both in Arabic and English or Arabic and French make it difficult to know whether some books were translations or originally written in English or French, especially that some of these books are not available to see any indication in the book that it is a translation or not. This was problematic particularly for four thinkers: Sadeq Jalal Al-Azm, Abdelwahhab Al-Messiri, Aziz Al-Azmeh, and Azmi Bichara. Moreover, some thinkers who write in English have also books translated from Arabic into English, not translated by the author but by another translator. This applies, for example, to Sadeq Jalal Al-Azm, who has 2 books translated from Arabic while he himself wrote at least

four books directly in English. It is not certain if such a phenomenon exists among Western thinkers, who usually write in one language. In this case, it seems that the translations from Arabic came at a later stage, particularly after the author has published directly in the English language and after he gained some fame in specialized circles in the West through a professional network.

It's worth emphasizing that most contemporary Arab thinkers either completed their academic education in the West (in Europe and America) or afterward worked as visiting researchers specializing in Arab-Islamic civilization and its history in Western academia. In fact, many of them moved to the West and acquired citizenships of the nations where they were based, which influenced the language they used to write in. For example, most of the writings of Algerian intellectual and thinker Mohammed Arkoun were written in French, and most of his works were translated from French to Arabic rather than the other way around. Because of his presence in France as a professional scholar specializing in Islamic studies and a professor at numerous French universities, his works have been translated into several languages, including English and Arabic. Another example is Egyptian intellectual Nasr Hamid Abu-Zayd, who relocated from Egypt to the Netherlands after being accused of heresy in Egypt. Where he then worked in Dutch and other European universities. The case of Abu-Zayd may also imply that other elements, particularly personal stories, can impact the demand for translation and reception in the West. The case of Salman Rushdie comes to mind when we think of literary translation in this regard.

A substantial disparity exists between the volume of translation of contemporary Arab thought into English and what is translated from modern and contemporary Western thought. According to the data, an Arab thinker can have three books translated into English out of fourteen books originally authored in Arabic (about 21 percent of books written in Arabic were translated). On the other hand, we find that many western thinkers have had their entire works translated (i.e., 100%) into tens of languages, including Arabic, and this includes both social and human scientists as well as natural scientists. Of course, the absolute number of translations from Arabic does not say a lot about other factors such as reception and influence in the target language, whether among specialists or other members of the public, even though we know that Western thought and philosophy has had a significant impact on Arabic thought in the social

sciences and humanities, where in many cases form intellectual dependency. Although more research is needed on this topic, which is beyond the scope of this study, it does not appear that translated books from Arabic are highly celebrated outside the very narrow circles of specialists in academia.

#### **4.4.1.2 Translations into other languages**

Although the primary focus of this study is on translating contemporary Arab thought into English, an overview of translating contemporary Arab thought into languages other than English is also pertinent. Translation into languages other than English provides useful indicators for understanding the global translation system, particularly translation flows between peripheral languages. Translation exchanges between Arabic and other peripheral languages have received very little attention in translation research. According to the global translation system, translation between peripheral languages is very weak, and translation from one peripheral language to another is usually done through an intermediate language, which is often English, the hyper-central language of the world translation and communication systems. The hegemony of English, and other central languages such as French and German, has focused primarily on works from the periphery that are translated into these central languages, determining what is to be translated between the peripheral nations themselves. Of course, there are additional factors to consider, such as a shortage of translators and sponsors between peripheral languages to translate from one another, whereas we can find many translators who can translate from central to the periphery or vice versa.

However, the findings of this study imply something different than what the world translation system suggests: some works of Arab thinkers were not translated into central languages, whereas we find these works translated into other peripheral languages. This phenomenon could be explained considering other common characteristics that connect these peripheral languages, such as religion. According to the data, almost all translations from Arabic into other peripheral languages were into the languages of other Islamic countries, such as Turkish, Persian, and Indonesian, especially for Islamic-related topics. Despite cultural, social, and economic disparities, Arab and non-Arab Islamic countries have a religious past that is still valid today. Indeed, among the most notable and influential figures in Islamic history are Islamic thinkers of non-Arabic origin (that is, not from the people of the Arabian Peninsula). As a result, we

anticipate that present arguments such as Islam and modernity, as well as other debates linked to Islam and modern politics, as well as Islamic history, will continue to pique the interest of these non-Arab Islamic countries. In addition, certain political literature about the Arab-Israeli conflict is being translated. Such writings are especially translated into Persian because Iran is participating in the conflict in some way.

To give examples of the kinds of books and topics translated by other non-Arab Islamic countries, we find the following books were translated into Persian: *Introduction to the Study of Holy Qur'an* by Muhammad Abed Al-Jabiri, *A Rational Approach to Tafsir* by Nasr Hamed Abu-Zaid, and the *Encyclopedia of the History of Zionism* by Abdel-Wahhab El-Messiri. Several titles are also translated into Turkish; Turkey is an Islamic country with a shared history and adjacency with the Arab world and not only religion is the common factor but also a large part of the culture. For example, five books by the Moroccan philosopher Taha Abdel Rahman, who seeks to establish modernity of morality and humanism based on the traditions of Islam, are translated into Turkish including the two books: *The Spirit of Religion* and *Religious Practice and Renewal of Mind*. We also find Aziz Al-Azm's book *Islam and Modernities* translated into Turkish. There is another example that confirms the interest of the Islamic states in issues related only to religion alone and not to other topics (compared to what is translated by European languages). This is clear, for example, in the translation of Al-Jabiri's books, while his book *Critic of the Arab Reason* was translated into English, French, German, Dutch, and Spanish, we note that this book was not translated in any language of the Islamic countries, whereas his book *Introduction to the Study of Holy Qur'an* was translated into Persian. A comparison between what is translated from Arabic into European languages and the Islamic countries is a topic that is worth further research.

With a shortage of translation databases from Arabic (and into Arabic), it is hard to construct a comprehensive picture of the status of translation exchanges from Arabic into other peripheral languages. Finding information on translations from Arabic into English, on the other hand, is a little easier and more accessible. As a result, the data offered about translation into languages other than English may be incomplete, and an exclusive listing necessitates extra study including a multilingual research team. Overall, the volume of translations remains minimal.

#### **4.4.2 Which authors and which texts were translated?**

The data sample offered in this study is limited. Extended data, on the other hand, may not indicate a major change in the findings we have from the presented sample. In fact, additional names that aren't on the list were searched and it found that they either had only one book translated into English or none. Other Arab thinkers do not appear to be more translated than those in the sample. However, a comprehensive list is required for further investigation.

Additionally, the number of renowned contemporary Arab thinkers is limited. The Arab world has about the same population as the European Union; nevertheless, the size of intellectual production and the number of scholars in the European Union and the Arab world are unmatched. Of course, this is related to various aspects, including the Arab world's knowledge production structure and position in the global knowledge production system, as well as internal investments in research and science. However, if we include those Arab researchers based in Western academia and other countries outside the Arab world who publish in the languages of their host countries, the picture becomes more optimistic. Ultimately, whether authored by Arabs or foreigners, what is accessible about Arab civilizations and history does not leave the English-speaking world uninformed.

Studying translation from Arabic at the author and topic levels to understand why certain writers and topics (texts) were translated (but not others) necessitates looking at the issue from many perspectives. These dimensions include internal and external influential factors; the internal dimension includes elements such as the author's accumulated symbolic capital in his community and outside, networks of relationships between the author, translators, publishers, universities, and funders (sponsors), as well as an important element related to the author's focus and career trajectory. For example, some Arab thinkers probably wrote in foreign languages more than they did in Arabic. This element is related to the author's professional path and position within the community of researchers. While some Arab thinkers focused on writing for the Arabic-speaking public and paid little attention to the worldwide audience, other authors took a different path by focusing on publishing for a global readership. Those that cater to a foreign audience have typically spent some time in the west, either living there or settling there. Of course, because English is the dominant language in academia, an increasing number of

young researchers are publishing in English for career advancement motives, as we previously discussed.

External variables are mainly related to translation policies in target countries, which are typically influenced by power dynamics between the source and target languages. In the instance of translating from Arabic, this could include, for example, orientalist conceptions about Arab society as viewed by some Western groups (such as publishers) and the extent to which this influences their selections for translation from a peripheral language like Arabic. Furthermore, the economic dimension is frequently a decisive factor in whether to translate. As a result, we find translations of controversial writers and issues, such as the relationship between religion and society and the issue of revitalization of Islamic discourse. The instances of Nasr Hamed Abu-Zaid and Muhammad Arkoun are examples of this type. These scholars advocate for a rebirth of Islamic discourse that challenges some conventional interpretations of Islamic traditions, and such discourse is welcomed in the West.

To give an example of one of the most prominent intellectuals who did not attain a reputation beyond the Arab world, we refer to Brahim (2018)'s study on the reception of the renowned Moroccan thinker Muhammad Abed Al-Jabiri in both the Arab world and the West. Brahim tries to explain why there was such a great celebration, presence, and reception for Al-Jabiri in the Arab world, yet he has no significant presence outside of the Arab world. Brahim attempted to investigate the causes behind this neglect outside of the Arab world, and to answer this question, Brahim proposed two levels of analysis: the first is Al- Jabiri's professional trajectory and how it led to him being well welcomed solely within the Arab world, while the second structural level is represented by symbolic and economic significance in the global system of knowledge production and exchange. Brahim concludes that “his success is among other things due to the make-up of the intellectual habitus, where Arabic occupied a crucial place, and to the rooting of his attitudes in Arabic-speaking intellectual fields” (2018, p. 142).

A case-by-case examination may show aspects that influence the reception of authors both within and outside of their communities. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to investigate the career paths of all listed thinkers, the authors' location and interactions with Western communities, such as living and working in the West or having worked with Western academia, may have a significant impact on the translation of that respective author.

Overall, the data shows that the translated Arab thinkers are diverse, and it does not seem that there is any Arab thinker were excluded from translation into English for any specific reason. We even find thinkers such as Lebanese Marxist *Mahdi Amel*, where his book *Arab Marxism and National Liberation* was translated into English, where we do not expect writing on Marxism to be translated from Arabic where there are tons of writings in English in this field. However, there are a variety of reasons why this book was translated. One explanation could be Amel's tragic death (he was assassinated) and the book's translation after his death. It also appears that the translation was done by another Lebanese Marxist academic (Hicham Safieddine), with an introduction by the same translator. That is to say, the translation was not based on demand from a Western publisher but rather promoted by a local scholar/translator who appreciates Amel's thoughts. As we see her, an individual analysis might reveal uncommon reasons behind the motivation for the translation.

#### **4.4.3 What texts (topics) are translated and why?**

The imbalanced power relations between the North and the South are reflected in the nature of the selected texts for translation in terms of genres and topics. We also know from the literary translation that these asymmetric power relations work on the micro-level, i.e., the followed translation strategies where dominant culture tends to domesticate translations while dominated cultures keep the foreignization (Venuti, 2008). Dominant cultures tend to select texts that meet the preconceived notions of the Southern cultures, which is seen as exotic, backward, primitive, and violent, or as Faiq (2004) puts it, in the case of translating from Arabic, “the Arab and Islamic cultures, which despite serious radical changes in their politics and socio-economic realities, are still seen through the eyes of a fixed system of representations” (p. 4). In other cases, translations are being reframed (for example, Baker, 2010) or manipulated, to serve their political agendas. Whereas dominated cultures translate all kinds of texts from dominant cultures. In terms of reception, Jacquemond states that “southern cultural production that reaches the North via translation hardly finds readers outside the very narrow circles of “concerned” readers and specialist, whereas the Northern cultural production that Southern readers receive is much broader, whether this reception is carried out through translation or in the original form” (1992, p. 44). Even though the status of translating social sciences and humanities is different from literature in terms of audience and reception, however, it seems

that they share some aspects when it comes to selecting texts for translations. It is noticeable that there is huge attention to translating controversial issues about Islam and critics of the Arab reason.

According to the data, approximately 20 of the 34 translated books in the sample are about issues relevant to the study of various elements of Islam, especially the understanding and interpretations of Islam in the contemporary world. In fact, the term “Islam” appears in more than two-thirds of the translated book titles. The interest in the philosophical understanding of Islam by Western academia, specialists, and publishers has a variety of causes and interpretations, which may be traced back to a series of political developments in the Arab world and around the world. The rise of political Islamic movements, particularly Jihadist movements, and the ramifications of this rise on the international political scene are among the most important concerns. Indeed, Western interest in Islam, particularly modern Islamic movements, has been growing since the late 1970s, if not before. The development of the Islamic Brotherhood in Egypt, the Islamic revolution in Iran, and jihadists in Afghanistan, on the other hand, were major factors that drew a lot of attention from the Western media and academia. Furthermore, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the war and subsequent invasion of Iraq, the 11 September 2001 attack, ISIS, and what followed the so-called “war on terror,” which is mostly connected with Islam, were all key turning moments in world politics regarding the region. Sayyid (2009) summarizes the West's recent interest in Islam:

Since at least the 1990s, there has been a huge growth in interest in the Muslim presence in Western plutocracies. Part of this interest has been due to series of moral panics which have centered on the figure of the Muslim. The mobilization of Muslims as Muslims has raised questions about national identity and belonging. Increasing interest is also due to how the security threat - as posited by the ‘war on terror’ - has been focused on the Muslim question as a means of reconfiguring the liberal-democratic contours of Western plutocracies. (p. 86)

It is not straightforward to assert that the volume of translation from Arabic has increased because of these events; precise data is required to support or contradict this claim, which is now unavailable. However, in terms of content, there appears to be an increasing interest in Islam-related topics among translated books. As previously stated, there are several factors that influence the volume of translation between language groups that are subjected to a structured world translation system. This system has remained relatively unchanged despite huge changes in transnational communications in terms of translation and knowledge production.

#### 4.4.4 Publishers and sponsors

Publishers have an important role in the selection, production, and distribution of translations. They play a crucial role in determining whether a translation will be produced. Their job is motivated by a multitude of factors, including financial and symbolic ones. According to Sapiro, “publishers play a major role in the international circulation of books, in their original language as well as in translation. A sociological approach to translation, considered as a social practice, thus needs to consider this category of agents” (2008, p. 154). Sapiro elaborates on Bourdieu's approach and concepts of the economy of symbolic goods and field theory where she proposes three theoretical and methodological directions based on Bourdieu's model to analyze the circulation of translated books: “firstly a displacement from the national to the global market of translation; secondly a focus on publisher's strategy and booklist; and thirdly reception” (2008, p. 154).

One aim of this study is to investigate the supply and demand sides of contemporary Arab thought translation. That is, to explore whether the books translated from Arabic were commissioned in response to a market demand from the target language (English) or if they were produced in response to a desire from the source language (Arabic) to promote its very own intellectual production and culture, i.e., if they were initiated, sponsored, and promoted by Arab agents (the author, the translator, research institution, etc. ) rather than in response to a market demand from the target languages.

Regarding translation into Arabic, we can observe that translations are commissioned based on natural demand from within the Arab world. Concrete examples exist in all translation projects in the Arab world including the *Arab Organization for Translation*, the *National Translation* project in Egypt, *'Alam Almarifa in Kuwait*, and *kalima* in the United Arab Emirates, and other project in the rest of the Arab countries, which reflect the high demands for translation into Arabic. Unlike translation into Arabic, which is demand-driven, translation from Arabic appears to be supply-driven, i.e., there are no substantial market needs from Western languages for translating Arabic texts, and the few translated publications from Arabic are promoted and sponsored by Arab agents.

According to the findings of the study, the translations were published by two main types of publishers: private and university presses. Some well-known publishers, such as Routledge,

Verso, Bloomsbury, and Saqi Books, are among the private publishers. It is noticeable that Saqi Books has the biggest share of the translations presented in the list (5 books out of 34 books). Saqi Books, based in London, which was established by a Lebanese family, focuses on the promotion and publishing fiction and nonfiction from the Arab world (through translation). Thus, it might not be surprising that the maximum number of translations were made by this publisher which emphasizes the fact that translations from Arabic are supply driven. We also note that some translations were co-published between a Western publisher (for example, the I. B. Touris, which is now acquired by Bloomsbury) and The Center for Arab Unity Studies based in Beirut, which is one of the most important research centers in the Arab world since the 1970s, where most contemporary Arab thinkers have their works published through the support of this center including the works of Mohammed Abed Al-Jabiri. It is thus not surprising that two translations of Al-Jabiri were supported by this center. The Center for Arab Unity Studies is a not-for-profit center and is sponsored by several Arab parties. For the two specific translations of Al-Jabiri, we noticed that both translations were financially sponsored by Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation. The following statement is written on the internal cover of the two books: “This translation was made possible by the generous financial support of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation.”

Another form of charitable sponsorship may be found in some of the translations that have been published in the West and are supported by some western entities. A good example of this sponsorship is the “Contemporary Arab Scholarship in the Social Sciences” project at Bloomsbury (I. B. Touris) publishers, who has translated various works from Arabic in the social sciences, including the volumes of Rached Ghannouchi listed here. The translation project is supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities' translation program, and the publication is supported by a grant from Princeton University's Paul Mellon grant.

While the first group of translations were undertaken by private publishers, the others were done by university presses, including Yale, Princeton, Cambridge, and the University of California. University presses are academic publishers specializing in publishing academic books and scientific journals. Most university presses publish not for the purpose of profit making and they usually work as an integral part of a large research university, usually located within well-

establish universities in western academic institutions. The publications are usually subsidized by the university or by some external grants. Intellectual works from the South published by academic presses in the North are usually issued and promoted by specialized research centers within these academic institutions. For example, there is a series of translated books published and sponsored by A joint project of Yale University Press and the MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale University titled the *World Thought in Translation Series* which is “a selection of works from the Middle East, China, South Asia, and Latin America translated for English-speaking scholars, students, and other readers”. This project has translated several works including some of authors listed in the table above such as Rachid Ghannouchi and Nasr Hamed Abu-Zaid. The financial support for the translation and publication of this series is a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. This is another example of the supply and demand sides of translating contemporary Arab thought and the kinds of sponsorship. Unlike the economic forces that influence the translation market in the West, translation in the Arab world is mainly based on non-for-profit initiatives.

The data shows that around 70 percent of the translations were published by private publishers and 30 percent published by university presses. Also, the total number of publishers was 20, where all together have published around 34 translated books of contemporary Arab thought as presented in the sample. This is relatively a high number of publishers that could be explained considering the affiliations, locations, and own networks of the authors.

The case of translating contemporary Arab thought reveals a pattern of publishing that differs from what Sapiro proposes, namely the economic dimension of symbolic goods, although symbolic capital remains important in the selection and promotion process, it is not economic considerations that have the greatest influence on translation and publication decisions. Most of the translations reported in this study are funded by Arab public or non-profit entities, or by university presses in the West, which are mainly non-profit as well. Furthermore, some university presses' translations are supported by charity organizations through grants or endowments, rather than by direct funding from the universities themselves. This includes, for example, all the translations published by the Bloomsburg series “Contemporary Arab Scholarship in the Social Sciences,” which is coordinated by the Center for Arab Unity Studies and funded by the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation, as well as many other

translations funded by universities or foundations. This suggests that translating contemporary Arab thought is not strongly influenced by market economic forces. As a result, it is fair to conclude that translation from Arabic is supply-driven, i.e., there is no natural market demand for contemporary Arab thought, and it is promoted primarily through financial assistance and grants from charitable foundations from the source language to the target language. This could also imply that if no sponsorships or financial support were available to translate these works, the size would be considerably smaller.

Table 3 below shows the two main types of publishers and the number of books they published and the total percentages according to the data presented in the main list.

Table 3: number of books translated (published) per publisher

<b>Private publishers</b>	<b>Number of books translated</b>	<b>University press</b>	<b>Number of books translated</b>
I. B. Tauris Publishers (In Association With The Centre for Arab Unity Studies)	2	Center for Middle Eastern Studies, The University of Texas at Austin (January 1, 1999)	1
Praeger	1	James A. Blaisdell Programs in World Religions and Cultures, Claremont Graduate School	1
Routledge	2	Humanistics University Press	1
Saqi Books (in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies)	5	Yale University Press (January 9, 2018)	2
Gerlach Press	3	Amsterdam University Press (April 1, 2006)	1
C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd	2	University of California Press	2
Tunisian Academy of Sciences, Letters and Arts	1	Princeton University Press	1
Verso	1	Edinburgh University Press	1
Arris Books (1 May 2003)	1	Cambridge University Press	1
I. B. Tauris Bloomsbury Publishing PLC	1		
BRILL	2		
I. B. Tauris	1		
Pluto Press	1		
Garnet Publishing	1		
Hutchinson	1		
<b>Total</b>	26		11
	<b>=70%</b>		<b>=30%</b>

## **Chapter V**

### **Conclusion**

The translation movement from and into Arabic has a long history that extends for more than a thousand years. One of the earliest prosperous translation movements was witnessed in the golden age of the Arab Islamic civilization when scientific knowledge production was at its zenith. That period also witnessed the flourishing of Arabic sciences, philosophy, and knowledge, especially in Andalusia, and the Arabic language became the lingua France of science and knowledge. An important translation movement from Arabic emerged in Europe, which included the translation of Arabic science and knowledge into European languages, especially by the Toledo School in Spain. With the demise of the Arab-Islamic civilization of that era particularly after the expulsion of Muslims from Andalusia, the Arabic translation movement declined.

The colonial period and its aftermath were characterized by the division of the world into the North and the South. Southern nations have become markets for importation and consumption of all that the West. Southern countries are characterized in exporting raw materials, unskilled labor, low investment in research and development, while the Western nations are distinguished by skilled labor and extraction of the value-added. A complexity dependency of the Southern countries has been formed at all political, scientific, cultural, and economic levels. The inequalities between North and South is also reflected in the exchange of translation. Global translation markets form an international system that is analyzed in what we call the world translation system suggested by Johan Heilbronn. English has become the first global language in all fields of communication between nations and has occupied a leading position in the global language system as a hyper-central language. English dominance over translation is debatable, but it is clear English is the largest exporter of translations in the world market of translated books.

This study aimed at filling a gap in the literature concerning translating contemporary Arab thought. Previous studies on Arabic translation were, to a large part, limited to the study of translation into Arabic. The study employed a political-economic theoretical framework to explore the complexity of the factors influencing translating exchanges from Arabic.

The Global Translation System examines the characteristics of translation exchange at the global level and the market for books translation. The study was based on a set of theoretical approaches and theories and involved multiple levels of analysis to understand the phenomenon of translation from Arabic. The central point at this level is that the global division of labor in knowledge production shows Western superiority that imposes knowledge dependency on the countries of the South, including the Arab world. The discussions on the hierarchies of the world system: core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral, and on power relations and inequality between the North and the South also focused on the position of the Arabic language in that system. The study also presented several previous studies that applied the global system approach, all of which confirmed the characteristics of the global translation system. The study looked at how the English language became the lingua franca of global communication, and the impact on the translation system.

The study examines the history and contexts of translation at the macro level between Arabic and other foreign central and peripheral languages. It investigates the socio-economic and political conditions that influence translating (or not translating) from Arabic. The study entailed collecting data from various sources, of which the most important was the Amazon website. Amazon provides valuable information about books, especially books in English.

The analysis was based on the data collected about eighteen contemporary Arab thinkers. The data was collected around several aspects: the number of books authored by each thinker in Arabic, the English translations for each thinker, information about translators, publishers, and data about books translated into languages other than English. The analysis was based on three major questions about the volume of translation, the authors and texts selected for translation, and the publishers and sponsors of the translations.

The number of translated books on contemporary Arab thought was very few, especially if we compare what Arabs translate in turn from the West, especially what is translated from English. The study also provided new insights on the supply and demand of translation and showed that

translations from Arabic are supply-driven unlike translating into Arabic which is demand-driven. In this regard, financial sponsorship played a crucial role in translation production.

The population of the Arab world is currently almost the same as that of the European Union. However, if we compare what is translated from the languages of the EU into Arabic, the percentage is incomparable in terms of the number of authors and the diversity of topics. The data showed that the percentage of translations per author ranges from 21 percent to zero percent.

As for the translated topics: the results showed a clear interest in topics related to Islam. Western interest in issues related to Islam has various reasons, the most important of which is the political dimension and the related political economy and conflicts in the region. The most important has been the rise of political Islam since the eighties, especially after the dismantling of the Soviet Union. The data showed that among the titles translated, nearly 70 percent of their titles contained the word “Islam”.

The study also investigated the publishers and sponsors (the supply and demand). published varied between private and university press. Most of the translated books were translated with financial support and sponsorship from private or public institutions or through programs in Western universities. There is a group of books translated in partnership between Arab research institutions and foreign publishers. The study concluded that translation from Arabic is largely supply-driven, i. e., there is no real market demand from target languages.

This study has shed light on a new topic that was not previously investigated in a systematic manner. Arabic translation history in the different periods is yet a topic that lacks systematic studies with the relevant exhaustive data. Most of the Arabic studies on translation focus on translation into Arabic, literary translation, or descriptive and linguistic studies. Future research might include comparative studies between what is translated from Arabic and other languages of other Islamic countries. The issue of supply and demand, as well as sponsorship, also requires further elaborated research. Tracking the production and translation and the path of individual thinkers is another door for numerous studies. The study revealed the weakness and deficiency in the existence of classified and reliable data about the Arabic translation movement which requires concerted efforts from concerned institutions to work on this topic.

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