

Constraints on the Function of the Algerian University in the Service of Society

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Abstract

In the earliest period of its emergence, the university performed a single role: preparing trained, qualified cadres able to carry out their part in society. Over time, further roles emerged, namely scientific research and community service. Community service now draws considerable attention from universities, because current developments require the university to open onto its external surroundings by meeting their needs and resolving their various problems. This article sets out the principal constraints affecting the Algerian university, concentrating on the problems that stand between the university and its function in the service of society, and it advances a proposed vision for consolidating the relationship between the university and society.

Keywords: the Algerian university; constraints; community service.

ملخص:

كانت الجامعة في بدايات ظهورها الأولى، تقوم بدور واحد وهو إعداد الإطارات والكفاءات المدربة والمؤهلة لأداء دورها في المجتمع، ومع مرور الزمن ظهرت أدوار أخرى للجامعة، والتي تتمثل في البحث العلمي وخدمة المجتمع. هذه الأخيرة التي تعرف اهتمام كبير من قبل الجامعات في الوقت الحالي، لأن التطورات الحاصلة تتطلب ضرورة انفتاح الجامعة على محيطها الخارجي، وذلك من خلال تلبية احتياجاته وحل مختلف مشكلاته.

ونحن من خلال هذا المقال العلمي، سنعرض أهم المعوقات التي تعاني منها الجامعة الجزائرية، وبالتركيز على المشكلات التي تقف حائلا بين وظيفة الجامعة في خدمة المجتمع، مع وضع تصور مقترح لتوثيق العلاقة بين الجامعة والمجتمع.
الكلمات المفتاحية: الجامعة الجزائرية – معوقات - خدمة المجتمع.

Introduction

The university occupies a prominent and important position in developed and developing societies alike, as a center of intellectual radiance and scientific enlightenment and as the beating heart of the nation that moves society and directs its course. When it first appeared in the Middle Ages, whether in European or Islamic societies, the university's role was confined to instruction, teaching, and the preparation of human resources to perform the roles assigned to them in society. In the modern era, however, with the appearance of many rapid and successive developments and changes, the university acquired further roles in scientific research and the production of knowledge.

The university is thus among the most important social institutions, influencing and being influenced by the social climate that surrounds it. It is, on one hand, a product of society and, on the other, society's instrument for forming its technical, professional, political, and intellectual leadership. Each university therefore has a mission that it undertakes to accomplish, and each type of society has the university that suits it, in terms of universities' connection with their societies and their provision of a range of roles, activities, and services to that society; contemporary changes have rendered this a necessity.¹

University education thus came to play a part in developing society and advancing it, and in broadening its cognitive and cultural horizons, through its institutions' contribution to graduating human cadres who possess the knowledge and learning needed to train for work across all the various fields and specializations. The university directs its energies and capacities toward achieving its aims in teaching,

¹ Layth Ḥamdūdī Ibrāhīm, "The Extent of the University Professor's Practice of His Educational and Research Roles and Community Service in General" (*Madā mumārasat al-ustādh al-jāmi'ī li-adwārihi al-tarbawīyah wa-al-baḥthīyah wa-khidmat al-mujtama'*), Journal of Educational and Psychological Research, University of Baghdad, no. 30, n.d., p. 202. Available at: <https://www.iasj.net/iasj?func=article&ald=29540>

the preparation of human resources, and scientific research, as well as community service.²

The university's third function, community service, has its justifications, for the university is among the most important educational institutions: it is the offspring of society and an instrument for qualifying leaders at every level.³

The Algerian university represents one of the sectors of society that work to drive the country's development toward advancement and progress. The relationship between the university and the professional, social, and economic environment has begun to witness tangible development, through the university's being linked to the needs and problems of the production and service sectors, in its pursuit of the society's flourishing and of keeping pace with the developments of the age, by means of the competent and experienced cadres that the university supplies.

This paper defines the basic terms of the subject and reviews some of the literature on the objectives and functions of the university; it addresses the importance and role of community service for the university institution and the university's methods in the community-service function; it identifies the constraints on the Algerian university's function in the service of society; and, finally, it offers a proposed vision for activating the university's role in the service of society.

First: Defining the basic terms

1. The concept of the university

Etymologically, the term *university* derives from the word *universitas*, which denotes the union that brought together the families of greatest political influence in the city for the exercise of power. The word came to designate the assembly of professors and students from different countries and peoples, an assembly formed

² 'Ā'idah Bākīr, "The Development of the University's Role in Community Service in Light of Modern Global Trends" (*Taṭawwur dawr al-jāmi'ah fī khidmat al-mujtama' fī ḍaw' al-ittijāhāt al-'ālamīyah al-ḥadīthah*), 2007. Available at: Pd.colleges.jazanu.edu.sa/saf/document/.../

³ "The Third Function of the University" (*al-Waṣīfah al-thālithah lil-jāmi'ah*), Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Higher Education, General Directorate of Planning, Ministry Agency for Planning and Information, 2014. Available at: <https://www.moe.gov.sa/ar/docs/.../>

on the model of the industrial and craft guilds that performed an important educational role in the Middle Ages.⁴

The Arabic word *jāmiʿa* is a precise rendering of its English counterpart, for reflection on the etymological root shows that it conveys the sense of "gathering" (*jam*), which corresponds in English to *universalize*, a word that likewise carries the sense of making something general.⁵

Attention is also due here to the term *kullīyah*, given its close connection with the term university. In one sense it corresponds to *college*, a word derived from the Latin *collegio*, meaning to read together; the Romans used the word in the 12th century to denote groups of craftsmen and merchants.⁶ The word *college* in this sense was used at Oxford from the 13th century to denote the place where students found lodging, shelter, sustenance, and instruction together. In another sense, *kullīyah* corresponds to *faculty*, a word derived from the Latin *facultas*, meaning power or ability, first applied to the professors of letters. These professors did not belong to a single university but moved from one to another, and there were professors of theology, letters, law, and medicine. The professors joined together in a single union, on the model of the commercial and industrial guilds, and when they found strength in this union it came to be known as the faculty. These scattered faculties of professors were brought together into a single union under the leadership of the faculty of letters at the end of the 13th century, and a professor from that faculty would be elected to lead the union for a period of time.⁷

As for the terminological definition of the university, it "represents the place in which free and open discussion takes place between teacher and learner, with the aim of evaluating different ideas and concepts; it is also the place in which interaction takes place among faculty members from different specializations, as well as the students enrolled in those specializations."⁸

⁴ ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Gharīb Ṣaqr, *The University and Authority: An Analytical Study of the Relationship between the University and Authority (al-Jāmiʿah wa-al-sulṭah)*, al-Dār al-ʿĀlamīyah for Publishing and Distribution, Cairo, 2005, p. 39.

⁵ Ṣaqr, op. cit., p. 39.

⁶ Ṣaqr, op. cit., p. 40.

⁷ Muḥammad Munīr Mursī, *Modern Trends in Contemporary University Education and Its Teaching Methods (al-Ittijāhāt al-ḥadīthah fī al-taʿlīm al-jāmiʿī ʿal-muʿāṣir wa-asālīb tadrīsihi)*, ʿĀlam al-Kutub, Cairo, 2002, pp. 9 to 10.

⁸ ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Gharīb Ṣaqr, op. cit., p. 39.

This definition indicates that the university is the place in which ideas and opinions are exchanged among the parties around whom the educational process revolves, or the place in which students and professors alike interact in a situation of dialogue and discussion concerning matters of importance to the educational process or matters of importance to society.

Others define it as "an institution with an important role in preserving knowledge, developing it, and critiquing it, and in fostering creative talents."⁹

This definition extols the university's role in preserving knowledge, transmitting it, disseminating it, developing it, and sifting out what is sound, and in relying on world-class competencies to do so.

The university is also defined as "a social, cultural, and scientific institution, functioning as complex organizations in continuous interaction with the nature of the external environment."¹⁰

It is further defined as "a scientific institution that takes objective, empirical scientific research as its highest ideal in protecting social values, and that consolidates the foundations of the existing social order."¹¹

It is also defined as "a group of people who make a common effort in the search for truth and in the pursuit of the virtuous life for individuals and societies."¹²

These definitions show that the university is a social institution that society has developed for its own growth and advancement, and they affirm the university's pioneering role in scientific research and in the discovery of truth, so as to find solutions to the various crises and problems that confront society.

2. The concept of community service

⁹ Şaqr, op. cit., p. 40.

¹⁰ 'Abd Allāh 'Abd al-Rahmān, *Sociology of University Education: A Study in the Sociology of Education* (*Sūsiyūlūjiyā al-ta'lim al-jāmi'ī*), Alexandria, Dār al-Ma'rifah al-Jāmi'iyah, 1991, p. 25.

¹¹ Muḥammad Salīm al-Sayyid, "The University and the Greater Function of Science" (*al-Jāmi'ah wa-al-waẓīfah al-kubrā lil-'ilm*), *Journal of Arab Thought*, no. 20, April 1987, p. 191.

¹² Rābiḥ Turkī, *Foundations of Education and Instruction* (*Uṣūl al-tarbiyah wa-al-ta'lim*), Algiers, Dīwān al-Maṭbū'āt al-Jāmi'iyah, 1190, p. 73.

Community service is defined as "a set of efforts made by individuals, groups, or organizations, or by some individuals, groups, or organizations, or by certain members of society, to improve social, economic, or political conditions."¹³

It is also defined as the societal needs of individuals, groups, and institutions, together with the design of activities and programs that meet these needs through the university, its faculties, and its various research centers, with a view to bringing about desired developmental and behavioral changes.

Community service has also been defined as "an activity undertaken by the university to solve a society's problems or to achieve comprehensive development across multiple fields."¹⁴

It may therefore be said that community service comprises all the various programs and activities that the university provides to society across its different scientific specializations.

Second: The objectives of the university in community service

The aim of universities today is to build an information society in which every individual can generate information and knowledge, access it, use it, and share it, so that individuals, peoples, and societies can harness their full capacities to advance their sustainable development and improve the quality of their lives. The efficient dissemination, production, and deployment of knowledge across all fields of societal activity, including the economy, civil society, politics, and private life, elevates the human condition and leads to human development.¹⁵

Specialists identify three sets of objectives for the university, summarized as follows:

- Cognitive objectives, which concern what relates to knowledge, whether its evolution, its development, or its diffusion.
- Economic objectives, which serve to develop the society's economy and to supply it with the human raw material and the expertise it requires, assisting

¹³ Fayṣal Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and Bushrā al-Fāḍil Ibrāhīm, "A Proposed Vision for Developing the University in Community Service in Light of the National Standards for Quality Assurance in Higher Education" (*Taṣawwur muqtaraḥ li-taṭwīr al-jāmi‘ah fī khidmat al-mujtama’*), Sixth Arab International Conference for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2016, p. 494. Available at: [Sustech.edu/files/workshop/2016051105614963.pdf](https://sustech.edu/files/workshop/2016051105614963.pdf)

¹⁴ ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and Ibrāhīm, op. cit., p. 494.

¹⁵ ‘Ā’idah Bākīr, op. cit., p. 10.

it in overcoming its economic problems and cultivating the economic skills and values it needs.

- Social objectives, which serve to stabilize society and to surmount the social problems it faces.¹⁶

The social objectives are as follows:

- Supplying society with its needs in trained labor, trained in a manner suited to the changing nature of the professions.
- Training students to engage in social activities such as combating illiteracy and addiction, spreading health awareness, and the like.
- Forming a mentality alert to the problems of society in general and of the local environment in particular.
- Linking universities with productive institutions in a reciprocal relationship.
- Connecting the character of scientific research with the problems of the local community.
- Interpreting research findings and disseminating them so that society may benefit from them.
- Conducting comprehensive environmental research that addresses certain interrelated problems.¹⁷

The foregoing indicates that the purpose of establishing universities and expanding them is to provide a service to the local environment, by supplying the local community with cadres qualified in various specializations and by deploying the findings of scientific research to confront and solve its problems. The university thus plays an important role in developing its society and advancing it, through the study of the various problems of the society to which it belongs, through the use of various means to develop and enhance that society's resources across many fields, and through the effort to find suitable solutions for its betterment.

Third: Functions of the university

¹⁶ Balqāsim Salāṭnīyah and Asmā' Turkī, "The Integrative Relationship between the University and Society and the Question of Social Development" (*al- 'Alāqah al-takāmulīyah bayna al-jāmi 'ah wa-al-mujtama ' wa-mas 'alat al-tanmiyah al-ijtimā 'iyah*), Journal of Human Sciences, University of Mohamed Khider, Biskra, no. 34/35, March 2014. Available at: Revues.univ-biskara.dz/index.php/sh/article/view/582

¹⁷ Gharbī Šabāh, "The Role of Higher Education in Developing the Local Community" (*Dawr al-ta 'līm al- 'ālī fī tanmiyat al-mujtama ' al-maḥallī*), doctoral dissertation in the sociology of development, Department of Social Sciences, University of Biskra, 2013/2014, pp. 154 to 155.

The functions of the university aim at building the human being and developing individuals' capacities in an integrated manner, taking into account the individuality of the person, the aims of that person's society, and the constituents of a future that encompasses all the orientations and influences the age contains (Amīrah, n.d., p. 8). The functions of the university contribute to strengthening the relationship between it and society. Teaching and scientific research were the university's two principal functions, and a third was later added, namely community service, on the understanding that the university, as an institution of higher learning, must maintain a strong connection with society; community service thus became one of the functions the university performs and one that has won the social endorsement of specialists in the field of education.¹⁸

There is broad agreement among researchers and those concerned with the functions of the university that these functions can be confined to three principal ones:

1. Preparing human resources

Among the most important functions associated with university education since its emergence in the Middle Ages is preparation for the various professions in letters, law, medicine, and theology. This is the basis of the fourfold division of the university that prevailed from that period, passed into the modern universities, influenced their emergence, and governed their orientation until modern times. University specializations developed alongside the development of the various sciences and the creation of new fields of study. In the 19th century the university began to concern itself with preparation for the teaching profession and for other professions such as engineering, agriculture, and the natural and social sciences. In the 20th century further specializations were added, such as business administration, journalism, media, library science, economics, politics, and international affairs. With the great scientific advance, the university finds itself compelled to make room for new specializations that continually impose themselves. From here the principal aim of the university became specialization, which rests on providing specialized higher education and a high level of knowledge; this is what distinguishes the university from general education. The university must cultivate in its students the correct orientation toward

¹⁸ Gharbī Šabāḥ, op. cit., p. 7.

specialization and toward knowledge in general, and must equip them with the skills that enable them to acquire knowledge on their own.¹⁹

The university also carries out the process of teaching, or instruction, which means providing educational programs across all kinds of specializations to learners, with the aim of preparing and qualifying them for life so that they are able to adapt to the environment of life and work and to contribute to the development of their own societies and of human society as a whole. This task stands at the head of the university's priorities, since its contribution to preparing and readying coming generations for work and for participation in comprehensive development is a fundamental element in the advancement of society and its progress in every other field.²⁰

‘Uthmān ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṣāliḥ, in his article "The Competitiveness of Higher-Education Institutions: A Proposed Framework," notes that the first and most common task in higher education institutions is teaching and the conversion of human inputs from ordinary persons into competencies with particular capacities, able to perform their role in society and to contribute to national development through their various roles. Teaching and instruction should focus on equipping students with a blend of knowledge, conduct, and skills that prepares graduates to meet the needs of the labor market and to compete with the graduates of other higher education institutions, whether local or international.²¹

2. Scientific research

Scientific research is considered one of the three activities on which university education rests in its contemporary conception, for the university has an important role in developing knowledge, increasing it, and advancing it through the scientific research activities it undertakes, which constitute a principal pillar of the university. There can be no university in the true sense if it neglects scientific research or does not give it the attention it deserves.²²

¹⁹ Muḥammad Munīr Mursī, op. cit., p. 22.

²⁰ Sa‘d ibn Ḥamad al-Rubay‘ī, *Higher Education in the Age of Knowledge (al-Ta‘līm al-‘ālī fī ‘aṣr al-ma‘rifah)*, Amman, Dār al-Shurūq for Publishing and Distribution, 2008, p. 27.

²¹ ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṣāliḥ, "The Competitiveness of Higher Education Institutions: A Proposed Framework" (*Tanāfusīyat mu‘assasāt al-ta‘līm al-‘ālī: iṭār muqtarah*), al-Bāḥith Journal, no. 10, Saudi Arabia, University of Majma‘ah, 2012, p. 300.

²² Sa‘d ibn Ḥamad al-Rubay‘ī, op. cit., p. 26.

Many of the studies and investigations conducted on the relationship between the university and scientific research confirm that the earliest concern of universities with scientific research appeared with the emergence of the modern university in Europe during the 19th century. This is manifested most clearly in the German universities and is linked to the founding of the University of Berlin in 1809 as an institution that devoted its activity to scientific research in various fields, aiming to study the problems of German society and to advance it after its defeat in the wars against Napoleon.²³ The most important characteristic observed in these universities is the view that knowledge is the product of scientific research and discovery, that this is an essential function of the university, and that its function is not confined to transmitting knowledge through teaching and passing knowledge on to coming generations.

The development of basic scientific research in universities was the important next step in the development of rational ideas and functions, and so the universities of the European continent in general, and of Germany in particular, moved toward increasing the function of scientific research as the university's fundamental activity.²⁴ These ideas influenced many American researchers, such as Veblen, who wrote at the beginning of the 20th century: "Teaching undergraduates in the university is pale and unengaging in comparison with the function of scientific research, with its interesting significance and social value."²⁵

In Britain, scientific research was tied to the view that it invigorates teaching rather than justifying it as an important activity in its own right; modern teaching thus benefited from its close connection with creative research, teaching being a primary university function for training the elite, while scientific research is directed toward social development and the production of knowledge.

In France, the principal difference from the continental model appeared in the preparation and qualification of senior leadership outside the university, that is, in the higher entities, institutions, and schools of the 19th century, which sought to train and qualify distinguished administrators, particularly following the French Revolution, because the education and training of administrators and of the

²³ al-Rubay'ī, op. cit., p. 25.

²⁴ Roger King, *The University in the Global Age*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 41.

²⁵ Thorstein Veblen, *The Higher Learning in America: A Memorandum on the Conduct of Universities by Business Men*, New York, B. W. Huebsch, 1918, p. 15.

scientific elite took place outside the universities, away from the clergy, and within modern organizations.²⁶

The German universities were distinguished by their disciplined scientific specialization and by their focus on scientific research and on graduate study rather than on undergraduate university teaching. In other parts of Europe, the development of universities oriented toward scientific research was an extension of the founding of the nation state and its growing need for a national identity and for new forms of applied knowledge. During the 20th century, and especially after the Second World War, science came to be regarded as the source of wealth, power, and expansion.²⁷

From this brief account of the earliest beginnings of scientific research in the university, it may be said that it is bound up with the renaissance of the modern German universities in the 19th century, when a further task was added to universities, relating to the generation of knowledge alongside teaching and the preparation of an educated workforce. This German model, in which the university undertook both scientific research and teaching, had a broad global effect at the beginning of the 20th century, not only through its wide spread in the United States but also through the application of training and scientific research in many European universities and states, such as France, Britain, and the Scandinavian countries, and so on; the model then spread to the various universities in different parts of the world.

3. Community service

This role emerged at the beginning of the spread of higher education in America and came about as the result of an intellectual, social, and cultural climate particular to that society. Many universities were established in accordance with this role and came to carry out several subsidiary activities alongside their fundamental roles in producing knowledge, transmitting it, and applying it. Through this role the university was transformed from a center for free inquiry aimed at reaching knowledge and for teaching aimed at transmitting knowledge. Community service and the advancement of society are therefore among the principal roles of universities. This role denotes the indirect activities directed at

²⁶ Roger King, op. cit., p. 43.

²⁷ King, op. cit., p. 44.

the university's students to meet the needs of the surrounding environment across the various specializations, together with the effort to link scientific research to that environment's problems, as well as the direct activities directed at others with the aim of bringing about desired changes that lead to the growth and progress of society. Achieving this role requires the university to place itself, with its human and material resources, in the service of society, including the environment surrounding it, from which it receives support and endorsement so as to achieve the utmost results within the limits of its capacities. Creativity and innovation flourish and develop only through the accumulation of experiences that connect and interweave among the networks of society and that create a healthy climate for the accumulation of scientific, intellectual, and cultural activity, or a state of renewal and civilizational communication.²⁸

It has become a mark of the university's quality that it should strive to achieve the third function, through its endeavor to develop the local community and to work for its growth in light of the modern trends of quality assurance, by broadening the community's cognitive and cultural horizons through its institutions' contribution to graduating human cadres who possess the knowledge and learning needed to train for work across all the various fields and specializations.²⁹

Fourth: The importance and role of community service for the university institution

Community service is among the most important roles that higher education institutions undertake, since everything the universities do by way of educational or research activity must ultimately be devoted to the service of society at its various levels and among its various segments. The universities' concern with community service is also one of the most important factors that earn them the trust of society and of public opinion.

This role emerged at the beginning of the spread of university education in America under the influence of the pragmatist philosophy, a philosophy that took shape as the result of an intellectual, social, and cultural climate particular to that society. The first signs of the influence of pragmatism on university education

²⁸ Hāshim Fawzī Dabbās al-‘Abbādī, Yūsuf Hujaym al-Ṭā’ī, and Afnān ‘Abd al-‘Alī al-Asadī, *Higher Education Management: A Modern Concept in Contemporary Administrative Thought (Idārat al-ta’līm al-‘ālī)*, Amman, Dār al-Warrāq for Publishing and Distribution, 2008, p. 95.

²⁹ Fayṣal Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and Bushrā al-Fāḍil Ibrāhīm, *op. cit.*, p. 493.

appeared in the report of the Massachusetts legislative committee at Harvard in 1850, which stated: "The colleges have failed to respond to the hopes and aspirations of the people of the state. The college should open its doors to the young men who seek a specific education, for specific purposes they pursue; it should provide people with the practical (applied) education they need, not the classical readings that suit only the aristocratic classes. We should help young people to become farmers, mechanics, or merchants."³⁰

In 1850, Jonathan Baldwin Turner set out a plan for spreading higher and university education among the members of American society, entitled "Industrial Universities for the People." This plan had a profound effect on those who framed the Morrill Act, issued in 1862. Under the Morrill Act the land grant colleges appeared, colleges that were granted gifts of agricultural land to fund study within them, on condition that they aimed to teach agriculture, the mechanical arts, or commerce, alongside the other scientific and classical studies. These colleges are the true beginning of university education's assumption of the role of serving the local community.³¹

The land grant colleges were subsequently transformed into universities, and their aims multiplied, no longer confined to preparation for obtaining a university degree; rather, they provided varied services to society in the fields of vocational and craft training, agricultural and health extension, education, and awareness raising. Many universities were established in accordance with this philosophy, universities that had no defined campus but whose campus extended to encompass the entire state. The universities came to carry out several subsidiary activities alongside their fundamental roles in producing, transmitting, and applying knowledge.³²

The university, according to this orientation, was transformed from a center for free inquiry aimed at reaching knowledge and for teaching aimed at transmitting knowledge, as John Henry Newman affirmed in the last century in his book *The Idea of a University*, and as more than one researcher on university education calls for, among them Jaroslav Pelikan in his book *The Idea of the University: A*

³⁰ Yūsuf Sayyid Maḥmūd, *The Crisis of Arab Universities (Azmat al-jāmi'āt al-'Arabīyah)*, Beirut, al-Dār al-Miṣrīyah, 2008, p. 35.

³¹ Maḥmūd, op. cit., p. 35.

³² Maḥmūd, op. cit., p. 35.

Reexamination and Allan Bloom in his book *The Closing of the American Mind*, toward a multifunction university according to the concept coined for it by Clark Kerr; the universities then became, as Parsons called it, the parent organization that forms the organizational complex in modern society. This means that the university underwent an organizational transformation, evident in the development of its administrative structure so that it can communicate flexibly with the local community, and evident also in the centers that universities established inside and outside themselves to market university education, and in the multiplicity of their funding sources.³³

After this presentation, the university must be regarded as having a dual role, social and scientific, at a time when development accelerates on every front. The university, as one of society's institutions, is subject to its influences, just as society too is subject to the influences of the university. This is the question that drives the search for the function of the university and the necessity of this function in a life founded on science in its various aspects, until the university has come to have a permanent function that cannot cease so long as life is thus. This explains the spread of university education and the eagerness of the various popular circles to interact with it and to work for the success of its function. Moreover, the age itself has urged the strengthening of the bond between society and the university, which increases the latter's responsibility and distinguishes its engagement in the fields of life by injecting two principal factors: culture on one hand and development on the other. Hence this implicit agreement on the dual function of the university, which is called upon in one way or another to integrate fully into its societies so as to participate with them in everything. To the extent that the authority the state acquires over the affairs of society increases, the function and mission of the university grow greater, and to the extent that there is eagerness to plan life and direct thought, the universities must retain their critical mission and be careful to exercise it so as to remain fortresses of thought and creativity.³⁴

Community service thus constitutes one of the fundamental functions of universities and higher education institutions, and so their role does not stop at teaching, research, and development but extends to serving the causes of society

³³ Maḥmūd, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

³⁴ Sālim al-Muʿawwash, *Globalization and Education (al-ʿAwlamah wa-al-tarbiyah)*, Beirut, al-Dār al-Miṣrīyah al-Lubnānīyah, pp. 156 to 157.

through their units, centers, facilities, and laboratories, which offer their expertise and contributions to all institutions and bodies.³⁵

The fields of community service vary and are numerous according to the circumstances and capacities of each university individually, and likewise according to the changing circumstances of society. There is therefore a clear disparity between what universities offer in this domain; and whatever those fields may be, they consist of activities and practices aimed at achieving the comprehensive development of society in its various aspects (economic, social, political, and environmental), through the deployment of all the actual capacities and material resources of higher education institutions to improve the conditions of societies.³⁶

Specialists have classified the services that universities provide to society into three fields:

- Applied research: aimed at solving a particular problem facing society.
- Consultations: represented in the services that faculty members provide in their various fields of specialization.
- Organizing and implementing training programs: for state institutions, the private sector, and members of society in their various sectors.³⁷

Some have classified the fields of community service into two types:

- Inside the university: summed up in participation in extracurricular student activities and their guidance according to the fields of interest or the hobbies of the faculty member in cultural, social, sporting, or artistic affairs and the like, or in the service camps organized for the local environment.
- Outside the university: pertaining to each in the field of specialization, and comprising the following:
 - Carrying out applied research that addresses society's problems and contributes to solving them.

³⁵ Sa'd ibn Hamad al-Rubay'i, op. cit., p. 27.

³⁶ Tāriq 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Muḥammad 'Āmir, "A Proposed Vision for Developing the University in Community Service in Light of Modern Global Trends" (*Taṣawwur muqtaraḥ li-taṭwīr al-jāmi'ah fī khidmat al-mujtama' fī daw' al-ittijāhāt al-'ālamīyah al-ḥadīthah*), 2007, p. 12. Available at: <http://faculty.mu.edu.sa/download.php?Fid=3399>

³⁷ Fayṣal Muḥammad 'Abd al-Waḥhāb and Bushrā al-Fāḍil Ibrāhīm, op. cit., pp. 495 to 496.

- Providing expertise and counsel to state institutions and the private sector.
- Participating in symposia and preparing important lectures.
- Contributing to the training courses that qualify the latter in the state.
- Transferring the findings of research and the new discoveries in the world into the Arabic language.
- Authoring scientific books directed at readers who are not students.³⁸

The university thus provides educational services and applied research, and uses its resources to assist the needs and interests of young people outside the university and of adults, regardless of age, sex, or prior educational experiences. Every change that befalls society is reflected in the university, and every development that affects the university is accompanied by a change in the society in which we live. The university is not separate from society, and its relationship to society is that of the part to the whole.³⁹

Fifth: The university's methods in the community-service function

Ḥasan (2007) holds that the most important ways in which universities pursue integration with society are the following:

- The university's aims must accord with the fundamental requirements of society, and it should seek to achieve them through its various programs in accordance with the development of its philosophy, the affirmation of its essential mission, and the review of the aims set for its scientific, research, and administrative competencies, in light of a review of the general conditions of society, its needs, and its rapid movement of change.
- Communication between the university and the scientific institutions of the state, while at the same time being careful to open onto the world and to maintain organized contact with scientific research centers so that it may be marked by currency, development, and technology.
- The university's focus on the available local capacities, particularly the material and human ones, which in turn focus on local leadership, through

³⁸ Muṣṭafā Ḥaddād, "Preparing and Qualifying Faculty Members" (*I'dād a 'dā' hay'at al-tadrīs wa-ta'hīlūhum*), Journal of Educational Sciences, Institute of Educational Studies, Cairo, no. 1, July 1993, p. 70.

³⁹ 'Ā'idah Bākīr, op. cit., p. 7.

its training and its encouragement to participate positively in deepening the relationship of trust between the university and society.

- The university's openness to the members of society and its dealing with more of society's various productive and service institutions and bodies, its interaction with society's causes and aims, its anticipation of society's problems, its effort to provide scientific solutions, and its contribution to leading and enlightening public opinion.⁴⁰

Sixth: Constraints on the function of the Algerian university in community service

Through an examination of the reality of the Algerian university, it is found to suffer from several material, structural, organizational, and pedagogical constraints. The most important of these may be summarized as follows:

1. Material constraints

Higher education in Algeria expanded greatly in a relatively short period, and the number of students increased by enormous figures out of keeping with the limited material capacities, which led to several problems, the most important of which are:

- Shortage and unsuitability of facilities and buildings: Alongside the facilities and buildings constructed specifically as universities, the great expansion of the higher education sector led to the use of additional facilities, converted from their original activity to higher education. Some universities and national institutes also resort to using halls in scattered areas of the city, belonging to various services, in order to compensate for the shortage in capacities and basic facilities. The universities also suffer from a shortage of lecture halls, classrooms, and faculty offices, which compels the students of some universities to receive their lectures standing, owing to the narrowness of the halls, the scarcity of chairs, and the large number of students.
- Weakness of the university libraries: The university libraries suffer from a scarcity of scientific references in general, and especially in the national language, which has a negative effect on the performance of the university as a whole, particularly when one knows that higher education relies on references in the form of specialized and up to date scientific books and

⁴⁰ Fayṣal Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and Bushrā al-Fāḍil Ibrāhīm, op. cit., p. 497.

journals. Moreover, the available libraries follow antiquated methods in their organization and management.

- Shortage of pedagogical means: There is weakness in the equipping of the majority of the universities' laboratories, especially in chemical materials and spare parts for some scientific instruments, and in their maintenance and repair when needed. There is also a shortage of certain devices for presenting information, such as projectors, photocopiers, and computers, which hampers the work of the research professor and the student.
- The lack of general adoption of electronic communication (the internet): At a time when informatics has expanded greatly and entered the homes of many individuals to satisfy their curiosity, a not inconsiderable number of university professors have had no opportunity to make use of it.⁴¹

2. Organizational constraints

Alongside the material constraints, the Algerian university suffers from organizational constraints, represented in the following:

- Organizational instability: The Algerian university has experienced structural instability, having passed through a series of reforms, the most important of which is the reform of 1971, which structured the university in the form of institutes, followed by the opposite reform of 1998, which reorganized the university in the form of faculties. Academies of higher education were also established and then abolished after their ineffectiveness became clear. The current organization of the university is marked by a lack of uniformity in the organization of faculties from one university to another and by a deviation in the tasks of the scientific councils.
- The dominance of the administrative role over the pedagogical role among officials: Officials at the various levels, from department head to faculty dean to university president to the central authorities at the ministry, spend most of their time occupied with administrative and bureaucratic tasks rather than concerning themselves with the pedagogical side and the means of improving the educational level of students.⁴²

⁴¹ Būfaljah Ghayāth, *Higher Education and Education in Algeria (al-Ta'lim al-'ālī wa-al-tarbiyah bi-al-Jazā'ir)*, 2nd ed., Dār al-Gharb for Publishing and Distribution, Oran, 2006, p. 83.

⁴² Ghayāth, op. cit., p. 84.

3. Pedagogical constraints

The Algerian university experiences a set of pedagogical difficulties, represented in the curricula and the methods of preparing them and in the methods of evaluation and guidance followed.

- The curricula: The curricula of the Algerian university have undergone several changes and modifications. Yet for the most part they have remained below the required level, for several reasons:
- The difficulty of making modifications: The university curricula are unified across all the universities of the country, and any change or modification to the programs requires holding meetings and gatherings at various levels, among the various officials in the various universities, and meetings with the central authorities; the resulting programs are rarely satisfactory to everyone.
- Their failure to keep pace with the requirements of the region: The vastness of the country and the diversity of its geographical and economic characteristics are factors that require curricula adapted to the requirements of the region, which must be taken into account when devising the curricula. Yet the uniformity of the curricula prevents all these characteristics and differences from being taken into consideration.
- The rigidity of the curricula: The environment changes at an astonishing speed, and with it research and discoveries develop. The uniformity of the curricula across the various specializations at the national level, and the centralization of decisions concerning the modification and development of the curricula, lead to their rigidity and thus to their failure to keep pace with the changes occurring in the environment.⁴³
- Poor university guidance: The centralization of student guidance is a process contrary to pedagogy, since a number of students are directed toward specializations they do not desire, which leads to the weakening of their incentives and a lack of their desire to strive and exert effort, and this inevitably affects the level of students' academic attainment.
- Failure to respect the absorptive capacities of the educational facilities: The numbers of students admitted to each university and each specialization are determined at the central level according to considerations unrelated to the

⁴³ Ghayāth, op. cit., p. 85.

available capacities and pedagogical standards, since the number of students admitted annually is often beyond the capacity and absorptive abilities of the faculties and their resources, which negatively affects the effectiveness of training.

- Poor methods of evaluation: The Algerian university suffers from poor organization of examinations and of the methods of progressing from one year to the next. The method of integration among the modules, the multiplicity of examinations during the short academic year, which is usually filled with student disturbances, holidays, and absences, and the existence of the resit examination at the beginning of the academic year and the time it consumes, are factors that reduce the period of actual study at the university.⁴⁴ This complicates the problem of evaluation and the centralization of its determination, since the conditions of success and failure, the number of examinations that must be held, and the pass mark are specified at a central level. The ministry attempted to modify these in response to the wishes of the professors in order to raise the quality of training and the rigor of the methods of evaluation, but it retreated in the face of pressure from the student associations, which led to a negative effect on the seriousness of study and the rigor of evaluation.⁴⁵

4. Squandering in the spending of the higher education budget

There is no economic outlook regarding the management of the universities, for there is a large number of administrative workers, and the workers in the universities exceed what is needed, which increases the expenses of the Algerian university.

Grants are provided to all students automatically, without oversight, and in many cases the enrolled students do not study at all; nevertheless they continue to receive grants and university services such as accommodation and meals at nominal prices in the university residences. Their aim is merely to be away from their families and places of residence and to defer national service. Consequently the state bears vast expenses without return; indeed, these students work to disrupt the other, serious

⁴⁴ Ghayāth, op. cit., p. 86.

⁴⁵ Ghayāth, op. cit., p. 87.

students who wish to study, which contributes to the decline of the students' academic level.

In addition, the distribution of funds to the university residences in the current manner is a squandering of these resources, which are insufficient to begin with, and this is illogical in a time of crisis.⁴⁶

From this it is concluded that the Algerian university suffers from a set of problems at various levels, in terms of the performance of professors and students, the organization of the university and its material capacities, and its social, economic, and political environment, all of which are factors interacting with one another, which has led to the state the university has now reached.

Among the problems that impede the integration between the Algerian university and its role in serving its society are the following:

- The lack of awareness and knowledge and society's reluctance toward the university; and awareness is the first guarantee of the university's presence on the map of society.
- The absence of a single formula for achieving integration between the university and society, for each society has its particularities, its developmental orientations, its social circumstances, and its value frameworks, which influence the selection and adoption of the model suitable for bringing about this integration.
- The absence of channels of communication between the political leadership in society and the administrative leadership in the university, which makes many problems require solutions in numerous societies.
- The scarcity of the universities' material capacities, which limits the strengthening of the relationship between them and society.
- The narrowness of the outlook of many people, especially members of society, who view the university as merely a basis through which the student passes to obtain a university degree that qualifies the student for work, so that the student devotes effort to acquiring knowledge and gives no attention to research and scientific thinking.

⁴⁶ Ghayāth, op. cit., p. 88.

- The existence of a gap between university life and society and its requirements, which makes it ignorant of all that happens in society, with the result that the university fails to strengthen its connection with society and to solve its problems.⁴⁷

Seventh: A proposed vision for activating the university's role in community service

Linking the university to society and to the field of work serves two fundamental purposes: the first is harnessing the advanced qualitative capacities of the universities to serve the society of which they are a part, and the second is affirming the credibility of the university institutions and their role among the various sectors of society, affirming the fundamental role of science and technology in the nation's progress and renaissance, and giving them further support and trust. The universities must be active in this domain and devise the means that serve these purposes through numerous channels, such as:⁴⁸

- Holding continuing education courses to provide training and qualification in the various fields of specialization for those working in the various industrial, productive, service, and agricultural institutions, and to serve as a means of following up on the graduate, reinforcing and qualifying the graduate, and achieving a living and continuous connection between the graduate and the university, along with coordination and cooperation with the scientific associations in this domain.
- Holding symposia and conferences that serve the various segments of society and address the issues and problems that concern it.
- Directing the research of teaching staff and graduate students to address directly the dilemmas suffered by the various institutions in the state and society, in a way that strengthens national capacity and contributes to the country's civilizational progress.
- The contribution of faculty members to spreading scientific, educational, and value awareness in society through the various media.

⁴⁷ Amīrah Muḥammad, "Toward Strengthening the Relationship between the University and Society" (*Naḥwa tawthīq al-‘alāqah bayna al-jāmi‘ah wa-al-mujtama’*), Sixth Conference on Higher Education and the Requirements of Development, College of Education, n.d., p. 13. Available at: www.sustech.edu/staaf_publication/2009110616405454.pdf

⁴⁸ Hāshim Fawzī Dabbās al-‘Abbādī, Yūsuf Ḥujaym al-Ṭā’ī, and Afnān ‘Abd al-‘Alī al-Asadī, op. cit., p. 99.

- Attention to the various activities that create interaction between the university and society and acquaint society with the university's facilities and activities, such as holding open days at the university, in which the faculties open their doors, laboratories, and facilities to visitors, and holding art exhibitions, book fairs, permanent and temporary scientific exhibitions, sporting festivals, and various artistic events.
- Coordination and cooperation with the field of work in the councils of the universities, faculties, and departments, with the representatives of the field of work taking an active role in their deliberations, so as to increase the exchange of experience between the university and society and to benefit from the specializations and opinions that the field of work puts forward for developing the university and scientific situation.

Conclusion

Universities play a prominent role in development through the study of the various phenomena and problems that societies suffer from, and they work to find solutions to them. To achieve that goal, the university must open onto the various social, economic, and industrial institutions of society, strengthen its relationship with them, and participate with them in solving the various problems they face.

From what has been addressed concerning the aims and functions of the university, it is clear that the university, as a social institution, bears the responsibility for developing society; yet its functions and responsibilities differ from one society to another according to the nature, characteristics, and capacities of each society. This impels the Algerian university to become an active partner of society in working for its development and advancement. This is achieved through strengthening cooperation and partnership between the university and the local environment and overcoming everything that hinders the university from performing its role.

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