Academic Freedom and the Transnational Production of Knowledge

Public debates on academic freedom have become increasingly contentious, and understandings of what it is and its purposes are contested within the academy by policymakers and amongst the general public. Drawing on rich empirical interview data, this book critically examines the understudied relationship between academic freedom and its role in knowledge production across four country contexts – Lebanon, the UAE, the United Kingdom, and the United States – through the lived experiences of academics conducting 'controversial' research. It provides an empirically informed transnational theory of academic freedom, contesting the predominantly national constructions of academic freedom and knowledge production and the methodological nationalism of the field. It is essential reading for academics and students of the sociology of education, as well as anyone interested in this topic of global public concern. This title is part of the 'Flip It Open Programme' and may also be available as Open Access. Check our website Cambridge Core for details.

Dina Kiwan is a comparative sociologist of education at the University of Birmingham, UK, educated at the University of Oxford, Harvard University, and University College London. She was previously the Centre for Lebanese Studies Fellow at St. Antony's College, University of Oxford, and Associate Professor in Sociology at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon.

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'This is a powerful book by a distinguished scholar who has assembled a remarkable collection of compelling reflections on academic freedom and its relationship to the production of knowledge, and to (de-)legitimized and forbidden knowledge. Unlike Western-centric educational studies, this book uncovers many examples not only from the US and UK but also from Lebanon and the UAE of the violation of academic freedom that challenge us all to think through what it would mean for politics, culture and economy in academia.'

Sari Hanafi, Professor of Sociology, American University of Beirut and President, International Sociological Association

'In this brave book Kiwan courageously lifts the lid on the seething cauldron of academic freedom. Armed with her weapons of searing clarity and academic rigour she exposes the political machinations of not only the left and right, but uniquely the gulf between the Global North and South. A much-needed compass in these times of "woke" culture wars on our campuses.'

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'Breaking new ground by deconstructing the methodological nationalism inherent in debates about academic freedom, this text offers fresh insights and new research which de-exceptionalizes the presumed sites of liberal expression. Dina Kiwan has produced a masterfully synthesized account of how knowledge, and those who produce it, are continually under constraint, politically, materially, and institutionally.'

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