

PREFACE

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The idea of this book came into being following a panel on the theme: *Gender Discourse and the Indigenization of Knowledge Debate*, that Nelson organized for the Sixth Congress of the International Association of Middle Eastern Studies held at Bayt al-Ayn University, Mafrq, Jordan April 10-14, 1996. We broadened the theme to encompass issues of globalization and the indigenization of knowledge debates and, in addition to the five original panelists who presented at that conference (Nelson, Rouse, Abaza, Al-Ali, El-Kholy), we invited six additional scholars (Didier, Marfleet, Asdar Ali, Häusermann Fábos, Kuppinger, Tabishat) all with theoretical interest in and research experience on issues of globalization/localization in Egypt. The title *Situating Globalization: Views from Egypt* was chosen precisely to reflect the fact that not only did we all meet each other in Egypt but also because the many dialogues and debates we engaged in with each other catalyzed much of the original research reflected in this book. All authors have written original papers each of which explores a particular dimension of the indigenization of knowledge debate emerging from the intersection of local experience with the broader processes of globalization – one of the most timely and relevant issues that is being debated in both the North and South.

The range of perspectives and original materials dealt with by each author highlights the renewed urgency of the struggle for cultural autonomy and voice within the context of the globalization process. In other words each paper explores how the various processes at both the local and global level intersect to create new discourses and debates around the “indigenization of knowledge”. If a new wind of cultural decolonization is blowing through the Arab Middle East, which is

having profound impact on the lives of men and women, then we should expect a new scholarship to emerge in order to grasp and understand it. This book is a contribution in that direction.

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