CALL FOR PAPERS
Deadline: November 30, 2015

Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship / Arab Studies Institute
Second Annual Conference
American University of Beirut, Lebanon, March 11-13, 2016

Academia and Social Justice

Faculty and students at institutions of higher learning have often played an important, galvanizing, and sometimes even game-changing role in their societies’ demands for equity, equality, and social and political justice. They have done so both in their academic and research production, and in their direct social and political activism within the community, sometimes paying a heavy price for this activism. This conference aims to query aspects of this relationship between academia and social justice in the Arab region and internationally. What are the debates and paradigms that define this engagement given the trends towards market-place economics, corporatization, and political orthodoxy?

Researchers and academics from the Arab region and beyond are invited to send one-page abstracts for papers that fall within the following themes.

Historical Narratives of particularly poignant and instructive examples of faculty and student efforts to promote social and political justice, their successes, failures and the challenges they faced. How have university administrations managed the requirements of open debate and institutional self-preservation? What can be concluded from those historical examples?

Academia Today: The role of universities today, and the current challenges and directions of social justice activism in the Arab region and internationally within each context. What issues resonate throughout university campuses, and what topics tend to be silenced and in what contexts? What is the impact of particular environments and political situations, such as war, occupation and political repression, on active involvement of academia?

Academia and the Marketplace: How the regional and globalized neoliberal economy has influenced academia. What have been the impacts of the corporate funding of faculties and the rise of private and franchised universities on social justice activism, knowledge production, and academic freedom? What modes of countering those influences have been employed?

Pedagogy for Social Justice: Discussion of programs and pedagogical tools that can deepen a culture of public engagement. Have the current scholarly production of knowledge and pedagogical practices encouraged or discouraged active engagements in the pursuit of social justice? To what degree are students empowered within academia, both by administrators and by faculty?

A Knowledge-building agenda: Based on the discussions of the above, what are the current gaps in knowledge and theory on the role of faculty and students within and beyond the academic environment? What do we propose as an agenda for future knowledge building and activism on the issue?

Please send one-page abstracts with summary biography and contact details to asfarih@cpi.aub.edu.lb
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