

## **Speech of Dr. Sari Hanafi.**

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I am Sari Hanafi a Professor of sociology at the American University of Beirut. I have an international career, being a French citizen born as a Palestinian refugee in Syria, I did my university studies in Syria then France and have worked in different academic institutions in Egypt, Palestine, France and Lebanon. I served as a visiting professor at the University of Poitiers (France), University of Bologna and Ravenna (Italy) and CMI (Norway). I published and edited 14 books and a hundred articles and book chapters in English, Arabic and French.

I have extensive experience in organizing and managing collective activities in our discipline. I am currently the Vice-President of ISA, I was a member of its Executive Committee (2010-2014), head of its Human Rights Committee, and a member of RCs 22 and 23. I am also, in my region, supporting scientific communities as a former VP of the Board of the Arab Council of Social Science (2012-2016), and, currently, the Vice President of the Syrian Social Science Association. I have also raised funds from donors to support the participation of sociologists in the Yokohama and Toronto Congresses. I have also organized over 25 international academic conferences/workshops over the past two decades on different topics within and beyond sociology.

Being a member of the French, Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian Sociological Associations and different regional and international ones, and having spent several years researching the production of knowledge, I do believe in the internationalization of sociology so long as it is also anchored in local contexts. Because I am wary (very wary indeed) of antagonistic binary categories such as tradition/modernity, East/West, universalism/contextualism, I propose various

sociologies to always be in dialogue. Sociologies in dialogue was in fact the title of the Fourth ISA Conference of the Council of National Associations and the forthcoming edited volume with Sage to be co-edited by me and Chin Chun Yi. It is very important that some concepts in sociology claim universality, like in human rights, but I see their universality as possible only through an overlapping cross-cultural consensus, and not by universalizing values coming from Euroamerican context. For that, we need to construct Sociological Theory Beyond the Canon, and this is title of the terrific book of Syed Farid Alatas and Vineeta Sinha and to admit the existence of different patterns of civility (a dear concept to Norbert Elias and Armando Salvatore), and finally to talk like Sujata Patel “Social theory needs to assert the principle of diversities”. However, the postcolonial approach is not sufficient to account for the problems of knowledge production and should be supplemented by what I call a post-authoritarian approach i.e. considering not only the impact of colonialism but also the impact of local authoritarianism (whether Bashar al-Asad style or authoritarian neoliberalism) on knowledge production. I would like to see ISA being very sensitive to that. At the same time, a big effort needs to be invested in ISA to make it really global. Among the twenty elected ISA Presidents only two have come from outside Europe and North America.

Believing in the potential contribution of critical sociology in the current world situation (full of Trumps and mini-Trumps), I have spent much of my energy understanding the concrete difficulties and practices in the social sciences and I thus developed recently a Portal for the Social Impact of Scientific Research in/on the Arabic World. This portal benchmarks the life cycle of research including knowledge transfer and public or policy-oriented research activities. This effort is inspired by the amazing European project, “Social Impact Open Repository” developed by Marta Soler (our editor of *International Sociology*). As a presidential project, I would like to incorporate a similar portal and open it to all

sociologists worldwide, in order to foster more connectivity between research, civil society and policymakers. The portal will be an extension of the existing ISA's Global Mapping of Sociologists for Social Inclusion (GMSSI). Structured according to the ISA's research committees, this proposed project will continue and strengthen the work of our current and previous presidents, Margaret Abraham and Michael Burawoy. Also I should mention here the important presidential project of Michel Wieviorka, by the way he is my dear phd thesis supervisor, who made Sociopedia as a new concept in the production and dissemination of knowledge.

If elected as President of ISA, I will carry on with the unfinished work that I began as VP for National Associations (for instance, around 20 national and affiliated institutions become collective members of ISA from Africa, Middle East and Europe) and commit to the following four priorities.

- Encourage more North-South and South-South collaborations at the level of individuals, institutions, research committees and collective sociological communities.
- Address various structural inequalities, North-South, class, gender, race, disability, as they are reflected in participation to ISA activities.
- Develop better guidelines to make ISA more proactive in dealing with increasing human rights violations. We should indeed protect those who “commit sociology”.
- Raise funds to subsidize the participation of sociologists in international congresses, especially from the Global South, and help a wider circulation of writings by supporting the translation of key texts from different regions of the world. This can be inserted to all ISA publications.

Thank you for your attention