



**AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY
OF BEIRUT**

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Beirut, October 29, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Book by Sari Hanafi Explores the Limits of Liberalism and Calls for Dialogical Sociology

Against Symbolic Liberalism: A Plea for Dialogical Sociology, the latest book by Sari Hanafi, professor of sociology and director of the Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies at AUB, has just been released in English, Arabic, and Persian, with additional translations to follow.

With a preface by Michael Burawoy, the book critiques what Hanafi terms “symbolic liberalism”—a tendency to champion liberal values in principle while undermining them in practice. He argues that this contradiction fuels today’s political polarization, societal intolerance, and erosion of academic freedom.

Instead, Hanafi calls for a turn toward “dialogical sociology,” a framework that engages diverse perspectives in genuine debate, reinforces social solidarity, and defends the values of justice and inclusion without silencing difference.

The book draws on Hanafi’s international experience, including his tenure as president of the International Sociological Association (2018–23), and combines political philosophy, statistical analysis, and ethnographic insight.

Ultimately, it offers not just a critique but also a hopeful roadmap for reclaiming meaningful intellectual exchange in times of deepening division.

Published by Liverpool University Press, the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, and Rowzaneh Press, Against Symbolic Liberalism is both a scholarly work and an urgent call for dialogue across political, cultural, and social divides.

ENDS

For more information please contact:

Simon Kachar, PhD

Executive Director of Communications

Lecturer – Political Studies and Public Administration Department

Founding Director – Good Governance and Citizenship Observatory

American University of Beirut

PO Box 11-0236, Riad El Solh, Beirut 1107 2020, Lebanon

T +961 1 35 00 00 – Ext 2650 | communications@aub.edu.lb

aub.edu.lb

Former Fellow – Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs
Member of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Research, Innovation, and Creativity Hub

T +961 1 37 43 74 Ext: 2676 | **M** +961 3 42 70 24
sk158@aub.edu.lb

Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 790 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 9000 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

Stay up to date on AUB news and events.

aub.edu.lb | [Facebook](#) | [X](#)