

Call for Papers

Graduate Conference, September 18-19, 2017

Central European University, Budapest

Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

Teaching and Learning in Democracies under Threat: Production and Transmission of Knowledge in Changing Societies

In recent years, the autonomy of universities has been under attack from myriad sides. Governments intervened in an attempt to shut down universities labeled as producers of “political knowledge” that might undermine “state authority” -- examples abound: Russia, Turkey and, more recently, Hungary. In some cases, individual academics are targeted and fired from universities, while in others curriculums were victims of interventions. If to these tendencies we add the fact that in the last three or four decades models of higher education have been put into a lot of stress to satisfy market necessities and abandon their exclusively academic *raison d'être*, we end up with a clear picture of the main social forces that are unrelentingly transforming the oldest institutions of production and transmission of knowledge in our societies. These processes are having and will continue to have deep consequences for the role universities play in societies.

How do universities respond to the new challenges? Are they turning into spaces of resistance against the hegemony of knowledge production in line with the dominant ideologies, or become the sites of reproduction of market forces? This graduate conference aims to enter the debate believing that attack to higher education inevitably affects other spheres of political, social and cultural life.

The conference hopes to address these questions in order to understand how the attack on higher education affects other spheres of political, social and cultural life. In order to understand how universities as official sites of production and transmission of knowledge change, we aim to tackle other less visible, less institutionalized processes of production and transmission of knowledge that do not seemingly *belong* to the university, but are necessarily attached to it through a complex network of explicit and implicit public dialogues.

The conference stems from the strong belief that young social scientists, at the beginning of their careers, have a special responsibility to provide explanations and explore alternatives to counteract the deep transformations that are occurring in the different social spheres of knowledge.

We are interested in contributions that address the recent transformations of educational institutions, particularly universities, but also schools, learning platforms, alternative educative projects, and social movements in education. Some of the suggested topics, but not limited to, are:

- The challenges of academic freedom in the age of neoliberal reform
- Political aspects of hierarchies of knowledge and the way some social movements have been trying to overcome that hierarchy, instrumentalizing education for social change
- De-colonizing teaching and de-constructing the West-the East and the South-the North dichotomies within classroom
- Teachers' and students' movements against political and economical forces that threaten their intellectual autonomy and produce the rapid precarization of living and working conditions in schools and universities
- Historical revisionism and the role of primary-secondary schools in changing societies
- The consequences of the marginal roles that the humanities and the social sciences have been pushed to play in a public sphere dominated by utilitarian discourses.
- Disciplines and theories under political threat such as open attacks to gender studies under the name of anti-gender movements
- Future of disciplinary bounded production of knowledge
- Influence of smart technologies on education
- Non/institutional - institutional education relationship
- Non-institutional sites of knowledge production and transmission

MA and PhD Students, Postdoc and affiliated young researchers are welcomed as well as independent researchers and activist in the realm of education.

Please send a 250-word abstract with a short (one paragraph) biography by August 1, 2017 to gradconference2017@gmail.com. Selected panelists will be announced by August 15th.