

The 1<sup>st</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of the JOURNAL [SCUOLA DEMOCRATICA](#) will be hosted at the [University of Cagliari](#) (Italy), **June 6 through 8, 2019**, by Scuola Democratica, [Centro Interuniversitario per la Ricerca Didattica](#) (University of Cagliari and University of Sassari), [Il Mulino Editore](#).

The Conference stands as an opportunity to present and discuss empirical and theoretical works from a variety of disciplines and fields covering education. The focal theme of the Conference is a trend currently affecting many countries invested by processes of globalization: the advent of what Colin Crouch called «post-democracy» ([check Keynote speakers list](#)). Organizers, promoters and partners of the Conference wish to invite educators, teachers, researchers, scholars, academics, scientists, professionals, experts and policy makers to join the conversation and bring the disciplines towards a more integrated set of alliances by:

- promoting a trans and inter disciplinary discussion on urgent topics;
- fostering debates among experts and professionals;
- diffusing research findings all over international scientific networks and practitioners' mainstreams;
- launching further strategies and networking alliances on local, national and international scale;
- providing a new space for debate and evidences to educational policies.

We invite you to submit abstracts for your presentation at the **track session**:

**A.12. Can liberal democracies be vaccinated against a Pseudoscientific Society?**

Convenor: Giuseppe Tipaldo (Università degli Studi di Torino, [giuseppe.tipaldo@unito.it](mailto:giuseppe.tipaldo@unito.it))

Keywords: **pseudoscience; social media; conspiracy theories.**

Red meat causes cancer. That a surprising number of online users would prefer to treat with the so-called "Di Bella method" ([https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metodo\\_Di\\_Bella](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metodo_Di_Bella)) or with the more rural "Bonifacio serum" ([https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siero\\_Bonifacio](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siero_Bonifacio)), extracted from goat feces, in place of practices approved by international scientific protocols. Meanwhile, while the vaccines become the subject of a new "war" on social media, with significant health and not few social consequences, the contemporary consumer reacts to palm oil as the child of "The Exorcist" in contact with the holy water, in a sort of collective poisoning hysteria that is a perfect re-enactment of the self-fulfilling prophecy. If Merton, more than half a century ago, cited as an empirical case of such a mechanism the panic of bank account holders, the contemporary chronicler has to report on the alternate fortunes of Nutella. Controversies and conflicts between expertise and laypublic are certainly not a recent discovery in social sciences [Nichols 2017: 16], nor necessarily a bad thing. No case of the past, however, involved Facebook, Google, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp, Linkedin, etc. Within the present social media ecosystem, it is unthinkable that controversies and conflicts between Science and Society remain limited to technoscientific issues, such as vaccines, alternative health treatments, earthquake forecasting, the Stamina method, animal experimentation, and so on. Anyone who has been trapped for some time in a group of parents on Whatsapp will have verified (at the risk of his own mental health) that the matter has evidently crystallized in the wider picture of the relationship between the contemporary social actor and any form of constituted authority.

The ongoing liberalization of the flow of mediated communication, promoted by the intense socialization to proprietary, filter-bubbled social platforms is convincing billions of individuals that the pervasive sharing of thoughts and behaviors (once mostly relegated to physical, often exclusive contexts), would promote them from passive recipients to proactive issuers. From viewers to micro-broadcasters propagating trillions of messages or, as we say today, influencers, of opinion leaders of the Self(fie), the reputation of whom is measured with quantitative indicators of satisfaction (views, likes, shares, comments, sentiment, etc.), regardless of the trustworthiness of the source.

At the same time, the chasm of distrust towards which European societies are moving, the Italian at a brisk pace than others, is a serious affair not only for the actors directly involved in the production, application and dissemination of scientific knowledge. When the lack of trust in institutions attacks the legitimacy of expertise – recent and longitudinal data from [EVS 2015] and [Eurobarometer 2005, 2010, 2013] prove it – an alteration occurs in the mix of "civic culture", the combination of "attitudes

of political activism and elements of respect and obedience to authority" [Sciolla 2012], which Almond and Verba [1963] identify as the most congenial political culture for representative democracy. This panel addresses the challenging question of whether it is possible to vaccinate our liberal democracies against (social) Pseudoscientific knowledge, which is becoming more and more popular among large strata of the society, no matter any empirically reliable evidence, and often in open contrast with expertise and authority. By doing so, the panel seeks to provide a space to reflect on these and other related questions regarding Science, Politics, Media and Society controversies and conflicts in the (social) fake news and "echo-chambers effect" era. Paper proposals – addressing these issues with theoretical and/or empirical approaches – are warmly welcome. The panel will be set up so as to open out possibilities for different perspectives to be brought in into conversation.

References

Eurobarometer

2005Wave EB63.1: Social values, Science and Technology - European Commission.

2010Wave EB73.1: The European Parliament, Biotechnology, and Science and Technology.

2013Wave EB79.2: Internal market, cultural activities, non-urban road use, science and technology, and undeclared work and tax fraud.

EVS 2015 European Values Study Longitudinal Data File 1981-2008 (EVS 1981-2008), Cologne, GESIS Data Archive.

Nichols, T. 2017 The death of expertise: the campaign against established knowledge and why it matters, Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press.

Sciolla, L. 2012 Sociologia dei processi culturali, Bologna, Il Mulino.

ABSTRACTS SUBMISSION

HOW TO SUBMIT

Abstracts should be submitted by **February 28, 2019** ([check Dates and Deadlines](#)).

Abstracts should to be edited in the **template form** ([click to download](#)) and then submitted via the [submission platform](#).

Please do not submit your abstract by e-mailing it to the Convenor(s) of the track session you chose. Convenor(s) will receive submitted abstracts automatically from the [submission platform](#) and they are going to reject all the abstracts sent to their e-mail addresses.

Abstracts should include:

1. Title (limited to 20 words in UPPER CASE);
2. author's name and surname, institution and email address;
3. five keywords;
4. abstract's text (limited to 500 words).

- The presenting author can submit **only 1 abstract** at the Conference.
- You may be co-author of a second, third ...*n*<sup>th</sup>... submitted abstract only in case you are not the submitter of this latter.
- Submitters that are accepted for oral presentation will be permitted to give only **1 oral presentation**.
- The submitting and presenting author must be listed as the first author in the [template form](#).
- Please note the submitting author will receive all correspondence about the abstract so we advise that the submitting author details that are entered are the same details as those of the presenting author.
- Abstracts may not be edited/updated after final submission. You are welcome to bring an updated abstract onsite with you at the Conference.

Before you begin, please prepare the following information:

- Abstracts must be allocated to a specific track session and therefore you have to select and report track session's code and title in the [template form](#). For a complete listing of track session please [click here](#).
- Abstract layout in the [template form](#) has the following sections: Methods, outcomes, references. However, suggestions are not obligatory. Word count is affected by inclusion of references.
- Convenors and the Scientific Committee will review all submitted abstracts. Notification regarding abstract acceptance and scheduling will be sent to the submitting author
- Please note, if your abstract is accepted for oral presentation, the presenting author will be permitted a maximum of 20 minutes oral presentation in the program.

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