

The 1st 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**:

G.1. Challenging discourses of merit and choice: Students' experiences and policy development in contemporary higher education

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Keywords: **Higher education; educational inequalities; higher education policies; educational transitions.**

Higher education (HE) participation has grown significantly over recent decades at a global level. It is ever more important for individual allocation in the labour market and has been shown to have a positive impact on multiple economic and non-economic behaviours such as those related to consumptions, health, civic and political engagement. The importance of growing participation rates is deemed to be crucial to cope with the complex and intertwined challenges (environmental, technological, democratic, economic) faced by contemporary global societies. Consequently, there has been a strong policy focus across the globe on expanding the higher education system and stimulating demand. A focus which has been largely underpinned by discourses of choice and merit and has gone hand in hand with increasing institutional diversification and differentiation.

Yet, sociological research has crucially drawn attention to the relevance of enduring inequalities in higher education participation, experiences and rewards across class, ethnic, racial and gender lines. Increasing global competition, boosted by neoliberal policies at national and supranational level, is producing increasing stratification of universities and colleges which has consequences in deepening the gap between a small, wealthy elite pursuing extremely rewarding HE trajectories and a great mass of middle and lower-income students. These trends highlight the need to move beyond a narrow focus on widening access and participation of students from 'non-traditional backgrounds' to look more holistically at their experiences and graduate prospects and unravel the factors that contribute to shape them.

Besides broad similarities boosted by a global and, more significantly, European HE policy agenda, students' transitions and participation to higher education are also significantly shaped by national educational and welfare systems. At this level, individuals face different sets of constraints and opportunities based for example on funding systems and extents of tracking and selectivity. Systemic inequalities of class, gender, race and ethnicity also intermesh with other aspects such as geographical disparities and (im)mobilities, and the unequal rewards of different degree subjects as well as institutions. It is thus imperative to explore the complex set of forces and structures (pertaining the global, European and national level) giving HE inequalities a particular shape and meaning in different countries. It is also key to examine how HE choices, transitions and departure experiences are subjectively experienced by students in different national contexts.

This session welcomes researchers working on higher education with a particular eye on inequalities and the mechanisms of their production, reproduction and potential transformation in

different national contexts. We especially appreciate papers reflecting on the interrelations between recent policy developments in the field of HE and student subjectivities and experiences. We also particularly welcome theoretically informed research paying attention to the interplay among multiple dimensions of inequality throughout HE trajectories.

ABSTRACTS SUBMISSION

HOW TO SUBMIT

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

Abstracts should 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*th... 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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