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CALL FOR PAPERS

CONFERENCE

**INEQUALITIES OF ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION
THE ROLE OF POLICIES, INSTITUTIONS AND MARKETS**

Sciences Po - LIEPP
Paris, October 8-9, 2015

Conference Theme

This conference is a follow-up to the research project “Transition to higher education in France: the role of networks, institutions and markets” funded by LIEPP (Laboratory for the Interdisciplinary Evaluation of Public Policies) in 2013-2015. It intends to create a new dialogue between social science researchers working on inequalities of access to higher education and to foster the development of a comparative perspective on the issue, particularly across European countries.

While the conference welcomes contributions that describe existing inequalities on the basis of social class, ethnicity, gender and age, and especially how these different factors interact with each other, the focus is, more specifically, on the ways in which policies, institutions and markets influence the shape and extent of access inequalities. Each of these dimensions, which constitute the sub-themes of the conference, can be treated separately or simultaneously. Contributors might focus on a specific level (macro, meso or micro) or on their interrelation, on a single set of actors (policy-makers, secondary or higher education administrators, professors or counsellors, market professionals, students and parents...) or on their interaction and on various types of schemes, devices, processes and practices. Statistical and qualitative as well as mixed-methods studies are equally welcome. Cross-country comparisons are encouraged but proposals can focus on specific countries and localities if they show awareness of global dynamics and/or processes in other national settings.

Sub-theme 1: Supranational, national and local policies

One of the main purposes of the conference is to understand the influence of both entrenched policy choices and new policy developments on access inequalities to higher education. Contributors might focus on supranational policies, including the higher education framework promoted by the Bologna process or directives and guidelines on higher education targets and goals from the European Union. Papers addressing the dynamics at work in a specific country or comparing various countries might focus on a wide range of policies affecting inequalities, including the organisation of transition from secondary to higher education and the prevalent rules of admission in public universities or other public higher education institutions as well as policies related to fees, financial aid and housing provision for students. Contributors might also analyse policies explicitly designed to reduce inequalities of access between social groups such as affirmative action and widening participation schemes, their specific national features and dissemination across countries and their effects. Proposals focusing on higher education policies developed by regional or local

political authorities are also welcome, as well as comparisons across regions and localities within the same country.

Sub-theme 2: Institutional processes and practices

A second purpose of the conference is to examine more closely how institutional processes and the practices of institutional actors contribute to the reproduction or reduction of inequalities. Contributors might focus on differences between secondary schools in the way they prepare students to access higher education or certain types of higher education institutions depending on their provision of tracks and options and on their curriculum, and how it is enacted through teachers' selection of subjects of study, pedagogical practices and evaluation techniques, as well as on the type of counselling on higher education choices provided by teachers and other personnel. Proposals might also address the activities developed by higher education institutions to attract and advise incoming students including information on their websites, open doors, campus visits, summer courses, etc., as well as institutional admission procedures and how they affect the profiles of students who apply and who integrate into the institution. Contributions focusing on informal and formal links and partnerships between secondary schools and higher education institutions, including those developed within the framework of widening participation policies, are also welcome.

Sub-theme 3: Market dynamics, actors and devices

The third main focus of the conference concerns the influence of markets in higher education and their effects on access inequalities. Contributions might focus on market dynamics at the global level fostered by the strategies of leading worldwide higher education institutions but also by actors involved in the development of higher education as a global business, as well as by devices such as international rankings. Papers can also address the influence of markets at the national level. This might include the analysis of competition between higher education institutions for students in general or for specific categories of students and the influence on these processes of the existence or recent development of private institutions. Another possible focus is the role of private agencies and actors offering services to help students fund their studies, study abroad, prepare for entrance examinations, tests or interviews and make decisions about choices of institutions and fields of study. Papers focusing on market devices providing information and advice on higher education such as student guides or student fairs as well as on institutional and/or market devices that organize access to higher education such as central application services are also encouraged.

International Scientific Committee

- **Mikael Börjesson**, University of Uppsala
- **Gaële Goastellec**, University of Lausanne
- **Laura Perna**, University of Pennsylvania
- **Marco Pitzalis**, University of Cagliari
- **Agnès van Zanten**, Sciences Po/CNRS

Organizing Committee

- **Anne-Claudine Oller**, University of Paris East, Creteil
- **Alice Olivier**, Sciences Po/INED
- **Agnès van Zanten**, Sciences Po/CNRS

The conference language will be English. The conference will comprise keynotes by specialists of access to higher education in various countries including:

- Mikael Börjesson, University of Uppsala
- Rachel Brooks, University of Surrey
- Gaële Goastellec, University of Lausanne
- Laura Perna, University of Pennsylvania
- Marco Pitzalis, University of Cagliari
- Agnès van Zanten, Sciences Po/CNRS

It will also include workshops on the three themes outlined in this call for papers. We invite both established researchers and doctoral students to submit abstracts in English including a presentation of the topic, the research methodology and the main results of the study on which the presentation will be based. The expected length of an abstract is between 500 and 800 words and it should include a title, the names and institutional affiliations of authors and a short bibliography. The Scientific Committee will select participants based on the quality and relevance of submitted abstracts.

Submission of abstracts

August 15, 2015

To: alice.olivier@sciencespo.fr

Announcement of selected proposals

September 7, 2015

Final programme sent to participants

September 21, 2015

The organisers cannot pay for participants' travel and accommodation but will send information on hotels near the conference venue. Coffee and lunch during the conference will be provided for all participants.

Contact information

- For all practical information please contact: alice.olivier@sciencespo.fr
- For other information about the conference please contact: alice.olivier@sciencespo.fr and agnes.vanzanten@sciencespo.fr

CONFERENCE VENUE

Sciences Po, 98, rue de l'Université, 75007 Paris

From 10:00 on Thursday October 8 to 18:00 on Friday October 9

LIEPP (Laboratory for Interdisciplinary Evaluation of Public Policies) has been selected by an international scientific jury as a "Laboratoire d'excellence" (Labex). It aims to play a major role in evaluating various aspects of public policies through an innovative method based on multidisciplinary and the combination of qualitative, comparative, and quantitative analysis.

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