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## **Sociology of Education Research Network (RN10)**

**European Sociological Association**

**Biennial Report**

**September 2017 – September 2019**

### **Introduction**

The Sociology of Education Research Network aims at enhancing cooperation among sociologists of education in Europe. European countries nowadays face many changes in the functioning of educational systems. Increasing diversity is generally considered one of the main challenges. Moreover, there is a continuing expansion, with outcomes that are equally positive and negative for specific social groups and for societies at large. Investigating these processes, with the objective to preserve social cohesion and stability, is one of the most important tasks of current educational sociology. The aim of the Research Network Sociology of Education (RN10) is to provide a forum for a variety of educational research, ranging from broad comparative research to everyday practices and processes in school, at all levels of formal education.

We are interested more particularly in the following issues (not exhaustive):

- Theoretical developments in Sociology of Education
- Comparisons of educational systems
- Education and citizenship
- Expansion and transformation of Higher Education
- (Higher) education and the labour market
- Changes in education
- Education and transition in Europe
- Social justice, democracy and equality in education
- Making differences and bridging differences
- Educational attainment and family relations
- Social divisions (ethnicity, class, gender) and inequality

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## **Activities in the reported period**

### **1. Organisation of the midterm conference**

#### **Education and Social Cohesion**

##### ***UCL Institute of Education, London, UK, 30-31 August 2018***

The call for papers for the midterm conference of the ESA-network Sociology of Education was distributed broadly, mainly electronically. We received 37 abstracts, of which 13 were rejected as these did not fit the theme of the conference. The others were accepted for a paper presentation.

The conference lasted two days and consisted of 8 sessions and 2 keynotes. There were about 30 participants. In total, 24 papers were presented and discussed circumstantially. There was much interest in the papers and the discussion that followed with the public was lively and very informative. The fact that participants came from different countries in the world was an added value of the conference, which enriched the discussion a lot. Participants felt that the programme was successful and enjoyed the scientific and the social part.

Members of the coordinating board who were present were active in the contacting the participants and helping with the overall organization of the conference on the spot. Additionally, information was given at the end about our Research Network and participants were encouraged to join the ESA and send an abstract for the ESA 14<sup>th</sup> conference in Manchester.

We are grateful and thankful for the help we received from *Llakes Centre for Research on Learning and Life Chances* in University College (London, Institute of Education), and from ESA that made the organization of the conference possible.

### **2. Sociology of Education RN10 at ESA 14<sup>th</sup> Conference in Manchester 20-23 August 2019**

The RN Sociology of Education had 22 sessions covering all the time slots in the conference programme. Members of the Coordinating Board issued the call for papers and made the abstract selection from 119 submissions; 84 abstracts were accepted.

Members of CB assisted in preparing the conference programme and chaired most of the sessions during the conference.

The overall assessment was that it was a fruitful meeting generating 'food for thought' and facilitating further contacts among junior and senior researchers and faculty members.

### **3. Communication**

Information on the activities of the RN is widely distributed via Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1411403725748094/>) and through our mailing list. Currently (22/11/2019) the Facebook group of our network counts 670 members. The group is mainly used to spread information on upcoming events and conferences, and to share calls for papers.

### **4. Publications related to activity of SoE RN**

We have a strong tradition of publications arising out of the mid-terms. Since 2013, our network has published an e-book, conference proceedings and a Joint Special Issue. (See the 2013 e-book at: <http://ijse.padovauniversitypress.it/vol5-no2-2013>. See the 2015 mid-term proceedings at: <https://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/226/300>)

In this reporting period, we published a Joint Special Issue (Feb 2018) entitled 'Higher Education, Inclusivity and Organisational Change' in collaboration with the *All Ireland Journal For Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (AISHE-J) under the editorship of the RN10 Vice-Coordinator Bernadette Brereton. See the 2018 joint special issue at: <https://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/347/585>

### **5. Action to be taken to improve participation of PhD students and early career researchers**

We encourage PhD-students and early career researchers to take part in our conferences, as ESA Conferences form a great opportunity for younger scholars to present their work and establish links and partnerships for international cooperation. At our midterm conferences we reserve places for PhD-students with none or limited funds, who are exempted from the conference fee giving thus opportunity to young scholars to present their work.

### **6. Actions to be taken to expand membership, especially from countries with overall weaker ESA membership, also attracting members from outside Europe**

We have no special policy to invite scholars from outside Europe, but we are open for cooperation and during our midterm conferences as well as in the last ESA Conference there were several presentations given by colleagues outside Europe. For our up-coming mid-term conference in Ireland in 2020, we are proposing that each member of the CB would propose a specific session related to the theme but solidly in their specialist field. Members might of course agree to propose a session collaboratively with another board member or a colleague who would like to collaborate with them on a once-off basis. This would then make each of the members of the CB Strand Leaders for the mid-term conference and give them all ownership of this particular session, right from earliest stages of naming and writing a short summary of the session to recruiting among their networks and colleagues, reviewing abstracts, chairing the session and writing a short summary of the session for the mid-term report. We believe that this will make a novel addition to our mid-term tradition.

## **7. Collaboration within ESA with other RNs?**

Informal contacts between members of different RN coordinating boards exist. In general, we are open for cooperation. In addition, members of the coordinating board present their work during conferences in other RNs.

## **8. Action to be taken to improve opportunities for publication of papers presented at the SoE RN meetings and sessions:**

We worked on the subject of publishing successfully in the past. When discussing this topic with the board or in the business meeting, colleagues often indicate that their papers are already submitted or under review. We are currently considering possible means of disseminating the outputs of the Mid-term conference 2020.

## **9. Plans for further activities of SoE RN?**

For the next two years a general planning is as follow:

1. to keep the Facebook group up-to-date by regularly sharing interesting information
2. to organise a midterm conference in Ireland in August 2020
3. to seek opportunities for collaboration with other scientific organizations
4. to organise the sessions of the RN during the next ESA Conference in Barcelona.

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