

**CALL FOR ABSTRACTS**

**Justice in the XXI Century: New Challenges, New Directions of Inquiry**

**Department of Political and Social Sciences - University of Catania, Italy**

**February 25-27, 2026**

Over the past three decades, profound socioeconomic, political, and technological shifts have reshaped our world. It has become evident—not only to scholars but also to the broader public—that the assumption of liberal democracy's inevitable, continuous expansion is unfounded. This is especially true if the forces undermining liberal democracy, and preventing it from fulfilling its promises of freedom, non-domination, and self-determination, remain unaddressed. Unsurprisingly, the liberal paradigm now faces explicit scrutiny over its capacity to provide valid and effective normative guidance at both domestic and global levels. Many contend that the challenges confronting today's democracies stem from the paradigm's intrinsic limitations—particularly its failure to address the root causes of pressing social problems. These include: the sharp rise in economic inequality, now approaching levels reminiscent of the Belle Époque; the persistence of structural racism and patriarchy; the exclusion of large segments of the population from the benefits of cooperation, fueling new forms of populism and authoritarianism; the inability to counter a distorted marketplace of ideas saturated with misinformation, echo chambers, and polarization; and the political backsliding and apathy surrounding climate change. We invite contributions that explore new, plural, and context-sensitive approaches to justice, and that encourage robust interdisciplinary engagement.

**Confirmed Keynote Speakers:**

- **Alessandro Pinzani** (Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina – Brazil)
- **Gianfranco Casuso** (Pontifical Catholic University of Peru – Peru)
- **Laura Quintana** (University of the Andes – Colombia)
- **Lisa Herzog** (University of Groningen – The Netherlands)
- **Lukas Meyer** (University of Graz – Austria)
- **Mariarosaria Taddeo** (Oxford University – United Kingdom)
- **Martin O'Neill** (University of York – United Kingdom)

The Department of Political and Social Sciences at the University of Catania is pleased to host the inaugural conference of the Horizon-MSCA Staff Exchanges project ***Justice in the XXI Century: A Perspective from Latin America*** – JUSTLA (Grant 101183054). JUSTLA is a consortium of 7 EU universities and 11 Latin American academic institutions, bringing together 148 scholars. The project promotes a North–South dialogue and concentrates on new lines of research in political theory that promise to challenge the dominant liberal paradigm of justice. We welcome papers from philosophy, political theory, sociology, and related disciplines, especially those engaging with the following Work Packages (WP) of the JUSTLA project:

**1. Democracy and Economic Inequality**

- Wealth concentration and democratic erosion
- Limits to inequality and pre-distributive justice
- Economic power and political participation
- Workplace democracy, post-work, and basic income

**2. Cultural Identities: Gender, Race, and Decolonial Theories**

- Recognition and symbolic injustice
- Intersectional and decolonial approaches to justice
- Epistemologies of the Global South
- Resistance movements and identity politics

**3. Science, Post-Truth, and Democratic Deliberation**

- Scientific authority and epistemic justice
- Populism, political emotions, and post-truth
- The boundaries of free speech in the digital age
- Socio-political causes in the time of disinformation and polarization

**4. Climate Justice**

- Distributive and intergenerational aspects of climate justice
- Nature's intrinsic value and environmental epistemologies
- Political and ethical conflicts in the Green transition
- Green actions: democratic consent, public reason, and individual motivation

**Submission Guidelines**

Abstracts should be between 400 and 500 words, with 5 keywords, clearly outlining the argument and its relevance for the conference themes. Please include a short bio (max. 150 words) with your institutional affiliation, academic position, contact information, and the WP where, in your opinion, your paper falls. The conference will be held **in person**. The official language is English. ***There is no registration fee.***

**Deadline for abstract submission: November 10, 2025**

**Notification of acceptance:** November 30, 2025

**Submissions should be sent to:** [justla.msca@gmail.com](mailto:justla.msca@gmail.com)

**Conference Website:** <https://justla.eu/initial-conference-home>

**Organization Team:**

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