

Abstracts for sessions for the UISPP Congress in Meknes in September 2020

Examining cultural change and variability during the MSA over multiple spatial and temporal scales

Nicholas J. Conard & M. Gema Chacón

As work on the Middle Stone Age (MSA) progresses, researchers are increasingly improving the temporal and spatial resolution of their data and comparative analyses. This is true to varying degrees in all regions of Africa, and gradually a less schematic and more realistic record of cultural change and variability during the MSA is emerging. These improved data are providing new insights and fostering the development of new explanatory models that highlight different forms of causality. In this session, we encourage researchers leading field and laboratory studies to exam critically the ideas that shape our understanding of archaeological record of the MSA at the intra-site, regional and interregional scales. We plan to identify innovative ideas for studying settlement dynamics, technological change and cultural variability on multiple spatial and temporal scales ranging from high resolution intra-site to broad interregional studies. In this way we hope to examine potential commonalities between regions while highlighting the uniqueness and spatial-temporal variability during the MSA. The session will also consider what aspects of the MSA behavioral repertoire may have contributed the successful expansion of modern humans out of Africa.