

## INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

### METROPOLITAN AREAS AND REGIONS: FROM COMPETITION TO COMPLEMENTARITY? CONVERGING VIEWS FROM FRANCE AND ITALY

9–11 APRIL 2014, PARIS

#### ABSTRACT

*In a context marked by ever more discussions and reforms concerning metropolitan structures in Europe, this international symposium seeks to contribute to the contemporary debate on the relationships between regional and metropolitan tiers of government. Its aim is to combine and contrast the territorial standpoint with that of public policy, in particular through comparisons between France and Italy. Organized by the École Française de Rome, in partnership with the Géographie-Cités mixed research unit (Université Paris-7 Diderot, Université Paris-1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, CNRS) and Lab'Urba (Université Paris-Est), and with the collaboration of the Universities of Rome and Turin, this symposium will bring together lecturers and researchers from the fields of geography, urban planning, history, and the political and social sciences, as well as political leaders and technical experts in metropolitan and regional planning.*

#### PRESENTATION: A STRUCTURAL QUESTION OF RENEWED RELEVANCE IN THE LIGHT OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

The question of competition and complementarity between regions and cities is one that has arisen with renewed urgency over the last two decades within a dual context: globalization, which, in Europe as elsewhere, has accentuated competition between "winner" and "loser" territories; and decentralization, which has helped redefine forms of governance as part of a constantly evolving process. Since 2008, this process has experienced significant fluctuations as a result of the global financial crisis: throughout Europe, the crisis has made it necessary to rethink the methods and structures of local and regional government in the face of the harsh reality of public deficits and a need to make savings through economies of scale.

The question of the relationship between cities and regions – addressed both in the social sciences (Luxembourg symposium, June 2011) and in the fields of political science and urban planning (symposium jointly organized by the Centre de Recherches sur l'Action Politique en Europe [CRAPE] and Sciences Po Rennes, October 2011; Paris symposium, November 2012) – is one that is also being raised directly by public stakeholders: municipal councils, regions, intermunicipal bodies, provinces/counties/départements, management structures and project



structures are all seeking and developing new means of organizing and regulating the relationships between these two tiers of government. In parallel, legislative developments currently under way in Italy and France (French draft laws of 26 and 23 July 2013) have given a new urgency to the debate on the relationships between municipalities, intermunicipal bodies, emergent metropolitan structures, and regions.

Against this backdrop, the objective of the symposium is to help stimulate this debate, on the one hand by comparing and contrasting the territorial and public-policy viewpoints as closely as possible, and on the other by focusing on France and Italy from a comparative perspective.

While Italy has long been considered as being midway between French-style political and institutional models based on a centralized matrix and German-style federal models, it has, over the last two decades, become a test bed for advanced but conflictual decentralization, at both regional level and local level. In this "country of a hundred cities", decentralization has therefore raised questions regarding the role and remit of regionalization and its relationship with metropolitan realities. The Italian situation can also be considered a precursor to the situation in France in certain respects, as Italy has had something of a head start, its debate on these matters being built on two decades of reforms. Some of these reforms are profound, modifying the very nature of the state – such as the constitutional reforms of 2001 and 2009 – while others, theoretically much more superficial, have remodelled territorial powers in favour of municipalities and regions, and while others still have repeatedly featured on the political agenda, yet without producing any concrete results to date, such as the 1990 law on "metropolitan areas".

In France, the debate on the country's largest cities has emerged above all since the late 2000s, within the context of the recently revived "territorial reform". However, questions relating to the creation of metropolitan structures and of their relationships with the regional tier of government have been raised from the 1990s onwards, and have sometimes resulted in conflict, as illustrated by the recurrent debate on Greater Paris, for example.

Adopting a comparative point of view also fulfils the aim of encouraging discussion and exchanges, if not in operational terms then at the very least by interacting with the social and political demand expressed in both countries.



## KEY THEMES

Papers should correspond to one of three key thematic categories.

### 1) Lived space, institutional boundaries and questions of identity: a geographical history of regional and metropolitan structures

The tandem of regional identities and local (more than metropolitan) identities is often presented as a structural pairing for residents and public action alike, but to what extent is this true today, given the administrative and territorial changes afoot vis-à-vis the phenomenon of metropolitanization? What can be gained from a retrospective view of the construction and representation of institutional, regional and metropolitan territories in France and Italy?

### 2) Metropolitan governance, planning and development

The recurrent and unavoidable question of what represent the most relevant scales for metropolitan governance and planning will be addressed via three entry points: first, major projects and processes, as markers of metropolitanization and objects of inter-territorial competition and cooperation; second, urban and regional transport, as examples of the complex issues at stake in the management of major metropolitan services; and third, infra-metropolitan solidarity and the way in which public stakeholders take charge of those marginalized by metropolitanization, in a context of increasing socio-spatial inequalities at every level.

### 3) What are the roles of the capital city regions?

Although the metropolitan realities of Rome – representative of the “average European metropolis” (3–4 million inhabitants, depending on the statistical definitions used) and confronted with stiff competition from Milan – and Paris – the archetypal primate city and, with 11 million inhabitants, comparable in Europe only to London – are disparate, there are nevertheless a number of questions that can be expressed in very similar terms for both cities, in particular regarding the specific processes of decentralization or recentralization in the capital cities and regions, from Le Grand Paris to Roma Capitale.

## SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

The symposium seeks to bring together PhD students, lecturers and researchers from the fields of geography, urban planning, history, and the political and social sciences, as well as political leaders and technical experts in metropolitan and regional planning.

Authors are invited to submit an abstract of **2,500 to 3,000 characters** in a Word document (.doc or .docx format), in Times New Roman, font size 12 pt.



Proposals for papers must include the **following elements**:

- precise contact details for the author(s);
- the title of the paper (in bold capitals, font size 14 pt), specifying the key theme envisaged;
- 3 to 5 keywords;
- a bibliography (10 key references maximum).

Proposals for papers should be sent as attachments via email to the following address:  
**metrop-regio.efr@parisgeo.cnrs.fr**

A second selection of papers will be made after the symposium for publication.

**Deadlines:**

- abstract to be received by: **15 December 2013** ;
- reply from the scientific committee by: 31 January 2014 ;
- symposium: 9–11 April 2014.

**Locations:** Université Paris-7 Diderot and the École d'Urbanisme de Paris (Université Paris-Est)

**Working languages:** French and English (exceptionally Italian with electronic documentation in French or English).

**COMMITTEES**

**Organizing committee:** the symposium is organized by the "Italie : recompositions territoriales du local à l'Europe" group within the École Française de Rome. The coordinators are Marco Cremaschi (Università degli Studi di Roma Tre), Aurélien Delpirou (Université Paris-Est Créteil Val-de-Marne), Dominique Rivière (Université Paris-7 Diderot) and Carlo Salone (Università degli Studi e Politecnico di Torino).

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