

**International Political Geography Colloquium
Call for Papers**

Spaces of Politics: Concepts and Scales

Reims, 2-4 April 2008

**Université de Reims Champagne Ardennes (URCA)
Campus Croix Rouge, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines**

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International scientific Committee :

The international scientific committee will be in charge of the review of abstracts and full papers

- Pr. Michel Bussi (Université de Rouen)
- Pr. Kevin Cox (Ohio State University)
- Pr. Carl T. Dahlman (Miami University, Ohio)
- Pr. Ina Elias de Castro (Université fédérale de Rio de Janeiro)
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- Pr. Maria Paola Pagnini (Université de Trieste)
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- Pr. Andre-Louis Sanguin (Université Paris IV-Sorbonne)
- Pr. Gerard Toal (Virginia Tech University)
- Pr. Christian Vandermotten (Université Libre de Bruxelles)

Partenaires

- Département de géographie, URCA et Laboratoire Habiter (EA 2076)
- Commission de géographie politique et géopolitique du Comité Français de Géographie
- Commission on Political Geography of the International Geographical Union (IGU)
- *L'Espace Politique* (revue en ligne) espacepolitique.org

Why this colloquium?

Political geography remains a relatively closed discipline in the francophone countries and is most clearly developed in the English speaking world (cf. the journal *Political Geography*). This colloquium aims to take stock of a research direction which derives, variably, from geopolitics, from human geography, and from other social sciences, particularly political science.

Objectives

The idea of arriving at a common definition of this discipline seems hard to achieve even useless. This colloquium aims a more reasonable objective would be to sketch out a set of major themes. These themes are not necessarily new, but most of them have been profoundly reworked in the course of the twentieth century.

Accordingly the organizers of this event would like to:

- Situate research carried out in political geography.

- Underline the hiatus between the relatively marginal position of this discipline and the increasing demand for information and analytic skills with respect to the political aspects of space.

- Bring together the scientific community concerned with themes of space and power (whether they be geographers or not) and to promote professional connections within it.

The Themes

Proposals for papers can develop one or several of these themes. They will accordingly be integrated into the plenary sessions, or into the workshops.

- **The State.** The state, which was the central focus of what might be called the 'first' political geography (from F. Ratzel to N. Pounds) is put in question today.

Between the two poles of hollowing out and redeployment, its role is often seen as a diminishing one. Is this a purely neo-liberal view or an objective reading of globalized space? If one agrees that weakening is indeed occurring, is it irremediable or transitory?

- **The frontier** is a theme quite as old as that of the State and is linked dialectically to it. Frontiers assume new forms that are tied to contemporary socio-economic change and to the imperatives of security.

Assuming a general weakening of the state, their role as barriers (United States/Mexico, etc.) appears – paradoxically – enhanced (immigration, security). How might one analyze this contradiction?

- **Territory** is a concept that has entered into widespread use more recently but has now become central.

It poses several fundamental questions: its applicability, how it gets constructed through territoriality, and those raised by the issue of jurisdictional partition. How might one judge its role between the two extremes of object of contestation and symbol of state power;?

- **Agency** is a current focus of geopolitics (at the world scale), as it is in International Relations but also in Political Geography.

Agency attaches to a huge variety of institutional forms: states and their local branches, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, firms, professional associations, as well as to more informal groups. At what scales do these agents act and what are their strategies? What resources do they call upon? And what forms do their contestation and cooperation assume?

- **Power** occupies a central position in International Relations and in geopolitics. But does it have a place in political geography? What exactly is meant by a geography of power? How does power structure space in order to facilitate its realization? On the other hand, how does space condition the exercise of power?

- **Democracy**: The question of power is clearly linked to that of democracy. Following Lévy, Badarionti and Bussi have been able to make this theme the basis of a 'new political geography.' So what are the implications of globalization for democracy? Or for a revolution in the political relations between agents?

- **Flows** are increasingly determinant in a world characterized by pervasive mobility. Material flows, as in the case of people and commodities, and immaterial ones like those of capital and information, underline the importance of networks and of mobility. Do they put the notion of territory in question or do they indicate the advent of a 'liquid society', to use Zygmunt Bauman's expression?

- **Nature** : The connection with the natural environment is one of the earliest themes in political geography (Ratzel). Characterized initially by determinism, today it has been completely reworked. The development of political ecology is the best example of this. But does this mean that we are witnessing no more than a (periodic) return to research around environmental problematics?

- **The city** now occupies a more important place in contemporary political geography than it used to. The major themes are varied and multiscale and include: the role of urban networks and of world cities, urban power and violence, urban governance, environment and lived space, etc. Is the urban a defensible scale of action in the logics of power or simply a scale of analysis?

- **General epistemology**: Several different approaches, each with its own distinct historical period, can be distinguished and examined: the functionalist or classical approach in political geography which is essentially represented by people working in the United States (from R. Hartshorne to N. Pounds); systems approaches as in the idea of world systems; modeling and quantitative work; and the post-modern approach, including post-colonial studies, minority studies, and the like. The question of a distinction between political geography and geopolitics also appears pertinent: Are they redundant terms, or quite different approaches? It would appear necessary to deconstruct them and to inquire into that very particular politics which has tied them together.

All these themes can be broached at three scales:

- **The macro**, or the global. Is research at the global level specific to geopolitics? Is the 'clash of civilizations' an appropriate interpretive framework? What is the contribution of political geography to the understanding of globalization?
- **The meso**: The state and the region, along with spaces that are interstitial between the global and the local.
- **The micro**: The local and place. The local in an age of the global (glocalization). Is it a new scale for political geography? Key places and symbolic places as stakes in the competition between actors.

Schedule and deadlines

15 september 2007	Deadline for abstracts
15 november 2007	Communication of accepted proposals
1st January 2008	Opening of registration
29 february 2008	Deadline for full papers
15 march08	End of registration
2-4 april8	Colloquium

Conference fees

A nominal conference fee will be charged for academics and professionals.

- The regular registration is 160 euros
- Student fee (PhD or others) is 60 euros

The fees include 3 lunches, 2 dinners and the CD with all papers.

Accommodation

List of hotels on request

Template for abstracts and full papers

Languages : french and english

File : word and pdf

• **Abstract (before 15/09/2007):**

Title

Author (s)

Position

Address

Phone, Fax

E-mail

Abstract: *500 words maximum*

Keywords

• **Full paper (before 29/02/2008) :**

- Font : Times New Roman, Size 12, simple

- Size: 40 000 characters maximum

- Graphic elements (maps, charts, tables and figures) must be inserted at the appropriate point in your text. Titles must be below the graphic element.

- References :

- JONES S B, 1954, "A Unified Field Theory of Political Geography", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol 44, 111-23.
- NEWMAN D., 2001, "Boundaries, Borders, and Barriers: Changing Geographic Perspectives on Territorial Lines" in *Identities, Borders, Orders: Rethinking International Relations Theory*, M. Albert, D. Jacobson & Y. Lapid (eds), Minneapolis, Minnesota University Press, pp.137-50.
- COX K., 2002, *Political Geography, territory, State and Society*, Malden, Blackwell.

