

CALL FOR PROPOSITIONS

# CONTEMPORARY CRISIS AND CHANGES GEOECONOMICAL AND GEOPOLITICAL APPROACHES

International Conference - University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne (URCA)

26 and 27 May 2016

Conference organized by François Bost and Stéphane Rosière  
Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne, EA 2076 Habiter

With the support of the Commissions  
« Industrie et emploi » and « Géographie politique et géopolitique »  
of the Comité National Français de Géographie (CNFG)  
and of the Commission on Political Geography of the IGU-UGI

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**Frédéric Piantoni** (Associated professor);

**Sébastien Piantoni** (Research assistant);

**Stéphane Rosière** (Pr.);

**Céline Vacchiani-Marcuzzo** (Associated professor).



l'espacepolitique

## SCIENTIFIC ISSUES

For several years, the world seems to have entered a period of high instability. Economically, the "subprime mortgage crisis" appeared in 2007 in the USA and spread planet wide in all areas of activity. In 2015, economic difficulties still persist (growth stagnation in developed countries and lower growth in emerging markets, explosion of unemployment, deindustrialisation and offshoring, market tensions in China, the euro zone, etc.). In geopolitical terms, tension spots have also multiplied (Saharian and Sahelian Africa, Middle East, Far East and Eastern Europe) leading to strong migratory waves while power poles seem to be redeploying between the USA, China and other regional powers.

**The aim of the conference "Contemporary Crisis and changes" is to question these contemporary upheavals through both a geo-economic and a geopolitical reading.** The conference will provide elements of analysis and compare them especially with contemporary representations of globalisation emphasizing in particular the logic of closure that seems to characterize this phenomenon.

The organizers of the conference "Crisis and changes" wish to highlight three main themes.

1. Since 2007-2008, is the World facing a **"crisis"** or is it experiencing a very unprecedented **"change"**, heralding major and chain upheavals? In this regard, it will be the occasion to debate and choose the most relevant words to describe this crisis and/or these changes shaping another World.

2. The **"closure"** (isolationism, more or less latent forms of protectionism, competing logics of blocks, building of border barriers, etc.) seems to be one of the manifestations of the current situation. Is it one of the new dominant world logics? In which way do these "closure" processes, always relative, refer to an asymmetrical concept and create imbalances?

3. What links can be established between the economic and geopolitical fields as part of contemporary

world change? What about the overlap between these two fields? Is the paradigm of the **"end of territory"** (and so of geopolitics), often associated with **globalisation** and liberalism, still relevant? Is the current situation challenging the most common mental representations of globalisation?

Answers should be given at all scales (from local to global) and considering any type of actors.

### 1. ANOTHER WORLD?

The words "crisis" and "changes" are used to express different forms of analysis and spatial representations. The word "crisis" reflects anxiety and connotes the idea of a hiccup in a general evolution which would remain unchanged. On the contrary, the word "change" is eminently more positive, although implying the beginning of a new era with uncertainty and major reconfigurations.

How should we analyse the economic "switch" of the world in favour of Asia and the Pacific area and the shift of the productive sector towards these parts of the World? What about the rising of a "new economy" based on the new information and communication technologies? Why do some territories sink into crisis whereas others engage in changes, increasing the fragmentation of territories?

Beyond all those symptoms, the debate on the words "crisis" and "change" raises an important issue: is the world order only in temporary trouble while remaining broadly stable or are we entering a new era which implies a full review of our analytical paradigms and usual means of interpretation?

Last, thanks to geopolitical and economic approaches, the conference aims at understanding the "new world order", more competitive, multipolar, and contentious than ever expected by the neo-liberal American politicians and economists of the 1990s.

## 2. CLOSURE

Though the opening processes – deeply linked to mobility – are a keyword to decipher globalisation, the conference puts the emphasis on the paradoxical closing processes that result from globalisation and reveal the numerous conflicts that occur on economic, spatial and cultural levels. A reassessment of these iconic concepts (openness, mobility ...) seems necessary.

From an economic point of view, the closing processes are various: decrease of economic integration since the Doha round failure in 2001, creation of competitive and regional intergovernmental organizations, rise of protectionism (through the modest title of "slippage" according to the WTO), enforcement of forms of economic warfare...

From a geopolitical point of view, far from "the end of history" and the perpetual peace, the contemporary world is marked by wars (Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, etc.), territorial claims (Russia, China, Iraq and Syria with Daesh), political crisis (Arab Spring), terrorist bases (Sahara and Sahel, Middle-East, Sinai, Yemen). Peoples contest the political frames of their states and claim for their emancipation (Scottish, Catalans, New Caledonian, or the Sunnites in Iraq or Syria by other means). Is the post-territorial ideology that has been the geographical *doxa* for twenty-five years still relevant?

The growing separation between cultures also needs to be dealt with. The supporters of the so called "clash of civilizations" are numerous; moreover what can be called "new segregations" are strengthening. Land claims or interethnic tensions and migration disrupt the integration of the world. How to analyse the many "walls" that are being erected in cities as well as at international borders? In what ways does the contemporary situation confirm or not, the neoliberal paradigm according to which peace goes along with trade?

## 3. WHAT LOGICS ARE AT STAKE?

Which links can be outlined between (geo)economics and (geo)politics? This interaction is little studied but seems essential. The economic and/or financial crisis can become a geopolitical one and *vice versa*. In Ukraine, in 2014, the secession of Crimea and of the self-proclaimed Republics of Donetsk and Lougansk has turned out to become a monetary crisis for the inhabitants, and, as far as Russia is concerned, to a financial crisis as the territorial annexations have led the EU responding by financial sanctions. Are these measures effective? What are the connections between those dimensions? Is the old annexionist temptation back in nowadays World? Germany, the herald of austerity, devoid of military and territorial claims, is now concerned about the decline of its military forces. Does the current difficult economic situation explain such behaviour and the resurgence of fears one could believe had disappeared?

These world changes must therefore be examined on the basis of their dynamics and their key stakeholders for the world.

Submissions should take into account these main topics throughout debates about concepts (crisis, change, closure, globalisation...), analysis of local situations or critical examinations of localized representations of the crisis. The propositions may refer to different disciplines such as geography, economics, political science, political sociology, etc.

# PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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## TERMS SUBMISSION

Paper proposals must be submitted in either English or French (one-page format, such as Microsoft Word or WordPad, Times new roman 12, about 550 words) and must fit into one of the three topics of the conference (1. Another world?; 2. Closure; 3. Logics at work). The summaries must clearly present the objectives of the papers (originality, methods or results).

Five keywords at most should support the title of the proposal.

A precise and specific bibliography may be indicated (10 references maximum).

**Submission deadline: 1st of December 2015.**

**Proposals have to be sent to the following email address [colloque\\_crisis\\_mutations@univ-reims.fr](mailto:colloque_crisis_mutations@univ-reims.fr)**

Subject lines should be explicit (« Proposition de communication » / « Paper proposal »)

Notifications of acceptance or rejection will be sent by the scientific committee at the end of January 2016.

## PUBLICATIONS

After the conference, papers will be considered for publication in the journal *L'espace politique* or in the conference proceedings.

## REGISTRATIONS PRICES

	Option 1*	Option 2*	Option 3*
Full price	240 €	170 €	120 €
Reduced price (students, PhD students)	135 €	85 €	50 €

\* Description of options:

- Option 1: Participation includes lunches, cellar tour and the gala dinner,
- Option 2: Participation includes lunches and cellar tour (without gala dinner)
- Option 3: Participation includes lunches (without cellar tour and gala dinner).

## MORE INFORMATIONS

Website: <http://www.univ-reims.fr/habiter>

Email: [infos\\_colloque\\_crisis\\_mutations@univ-reims.fr](mailto:infos_colloque_crisis_mutations@univ-reims.fr)