

Section 10 - Studi regionali e politiche locali (Regional studies and local policies)

Chairs: Mattia Casula, Patrizia Messina

Elenco e descrizione di tutti i panels

Panel 10.6 Regionalism is dead. Long live to regionalism!

In a political debate increasingly dominated by sovereigntist arguments, and by a renewed emphasis on the nation-state, regionalism and territorial claims are likely to appear as rather marginal phenomena in political science. Indeed, events like the Brexit, hailed by its supporters as a way to “take back the control” of the national borders, or the transformation of the Italian party Lega Nord – officially known just as Lega since 2018 – from a regionalist party appealing to Northern Italy, into a nation-based party, waving the motto ‘Italians first!’ are all cues that the attention has been shifted to the central-state level.

Beneath the surface, however, there are cues that ethno-territorial cleavages are (re-) emerging across Europe, either in continuity with the past or with renewed strength, by pointing to the contradictions of the current sovereigntist trends. The Scottish referendum in 2014 and the unrest following the contested referendum in Catalonia in October 2017 confirm that territorial politics is still relevant in Europe, while the Brexit turmoil has boosted case for Scotland independence. In Italy, the debate on the “additional special forms and conditions of autonomy”, after the two referenda held on 22nd October 2017 in Lombardy and Veneto, is seizing attention, and raising divisions, on the issue across the country.

All these events remind us that regionalism is alive and well, and that the territorial dimension of politics still drives the choices of political and institutional actors.

Indeed, it is not the first time in history that regionalism reemerges after periods of decline. Scholars usually refer to at least three waves of regionalist mobilisation (early 1900s-1945; 1960-1980; 1990s and early 2000s), that have alternated with intervals in which ethnic and regional groups, and their territorial demands, “were thought to have lost in the historical game” (Urwin 1983).

Within this framework, this panel intends to address the following research questions:

Is a “new” wave of regionalism and regionalist mobilisation emerging? And if so, what are the differences from the past, if any?

What is the relationship between the current regionalist mobilisation and the sovereigntist discourse spreading across Europe?

In line with this underlying research goal, the panel invites papers dealing with the territorial dimension and regionalist mobilisation, taking up a national, European or comparative perspective, by looking at:

- The actors of territorial politics: how parties, peripheral mobilisation, and the national debate deal with the issue of territorial redistribution, and which is their actual influence on decision-making and public policy;
- The policies and the territorial reforms: what are the main reforms at stake, the decisional processes and the degree of conflict surrounding them, as well as the cases of success or failure in the (re)definition of competencies between centre and periphery.
- The consequences of territorial reforms: what are the effects of territorial reforms across different and what are the main implications for territorial cohesion and inequalities at the country level.

Chairs: Linda Basile