

CALL FOR PAPERS

University of French Polynesia (UPF)

("Governance and Island Development" research center, alias "GDI")

Asia Pacific network of the CNRS

Collective research project (2014-2016)

Coveted Oceania

On September 14th and 15th, 2015, a first conference was held at the CNRS. Please find below its program. As expected, a second conference will be held in Papeete, in Tahiti, French Polynesia (on the UPF campus) on **Thursday, November 24 in the afternoon, as well as on Friday 25, and Saturday 26, 2016.**

You are invited to send proposals for papers to both :

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and Jean-Marc Regnault: regnaultjm@yahoo.fr

To guide your proposals, we remind you the goals of the research with a slightly modified version compared to the call of the 2015 conference.

Reminder of the objectives of the conference :

An article in the June 2005 edition of *Le Monde Diplomatique* ("An unknown unstable area: the Pacific Islands") concluded:

Will the Pacific islands find peace and prosperity without their way of life being disrupted by the intrusion of major powers? This is the main issue of this "other Pacific" that has too little to hold the attention of the media, but that counts too much to be allowed to live its own life.

Ten years later, this analysis not only remains valid, but is amplified by new economic, political and security stakes (such as the threat of terrorism). The global crisis also comes in Oceania and the major powers are aware of their interest for certain resources. Oceania is not empty. It is not - or no longer - the "*invisible continent*" of Le Clézio.

The major powers are positioning themselves in the global competition, but they also extend their regional rivalries in Oceania (e.g. China / Taiwan, China / United States). Hillary Clinton's travels when she was Secretary of State confirmed that the Americans were attentive to the problems of Oceania (included in the great Pacific). Thus, in the Cook Islands, in late August 2012, during the summit of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) in which the United States was present for the first time, she said that the Pacific Ocean "*is big enough for all of us*" while citing China, Japan and the European Union. "*We all have a role and greatly contribute to the success of the region's security and*

prosperity", she added. This was a very diplomatic way to lay the groundwork to counteract other states.

In the logical follow-up of the collective work already done (April 2008 Symposium of the Senate on New Caledonia, March 2011 Noumea symposium on "*Destinies of the overseas territories of Oceania*"), we intend to contribute to the multidisciplinary research program around the theme of **coveted Oceania**.

Economists, lawyers, political scientists, historians and anthropologists, geopolitical and geostrategic specialists are welcome.

Their research will be of particular interest to policymakers of the Pacific region and of the major powers that still have control, or not, over Pacific overseas territories, since its goal will be to develop a geopolitical and geostrategic appraisal (with all possible facets) that has not been done since the work in 2001 of H. Knife-Bégarie, who died recently.

Thus, the project addresses an intellectual need and a practical necessity (i.e., to make sense of current events in our Pacific area).

At first glance, many researchers could think that the research focuses on Chinese aims. Those will of course have an important place in this 2016 conference, but the research will not neglect all other countries that - in one way or another - are also interested in the resources that Oceania has to offer.

This call for papers offers interested researchers the possibility:

- to enroll in one of the research components as described below (while taking into account the contributions of the previous conference);
- to provide feedback on the content and suggestions to improve this research;
- to propose a presentation or/and an article (the two formulas can be combined)

Following these two conferences, proceedings will be published. They will follow more or less the plan proposed below.

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Collective research project (2014-2016)

Coveted Oceania

"Fiji no longer considers Australia and New Zealand as natural allies and protectors. Now we look to the world (...) To the north and we are forging closer ties with China, India, Indonesia and Russia."

Foreign Minister of Fiji, late July 2013

Suggestions for research topics:

1 / The weight of history and geography:

A / Contacts: attraction, seduction and the *Pacific Way*

- The strength of customs
- New residents and ethnic mixing
- Colonial presences
- Such powerful churches and syncretism
- Social organizations and the Pacific vision of things

B / The historical impact of the twentieth century:

- Asian and other Diasporas
- World War II: the Pacific engagement, the war against Japan, and the new momentum of nationalism
- The nuclear tests
- New forms of colonialism

C / Is the sea an extension of the land or the opposite? (study of the Pacific perception of land and sea)

2 / Australia, New Zealand and Oceania's micro States and island territories

A / Are Australians and New Zealanders Pacific Islanders ?

- Are these two countries able to dominate their "backyard"? See the case of Fiji
- Collaboration and rivalry between the two countries
- Collaboration and rivalry between these countries and the exogenous powers to Oceania

B / Strengths and weaknesses of micro States and island territories

- Huge EEZ
- A weight at the UN
- The use of prerogatives of sovereignty
- Climate, geology and disasters of all kinds
- Instability, corruption and lack of "good governance"
- Rivalries and civil wars

C / The lack of organisation of regional organizations

- History of organizations
- Critical analysis of organizations
- A *Pacific Plan* or the art to see his impotence

3 / Expected and feared exogenous powers

- International and bilateral aid
- Expected tourists, traders, investors
- Coveted resources
- The assault of American and Asian churches
- The UN and the Oceania and sought-after votes of micro States
- Forms of presence of exogenous powers

A breathless French presence ?

Europe that does not give up power.

America and the two Pacific regions.

Asian rivalries in Oceania (China, Taiwan, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam ...)

Russia and Oceania

Conclusions:

Is Asia the future of Oceania?

What will be the new economic, political and cultural shocks?

How will Pacific Islanders (excluding Asian diasporas) absorb Asian lifestyles? What will remain of the European and American influence (or will those influences continue to prevail)?

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