



## Seminar Cities are back in town

### Governing through security?

### Institutional discourses, practices and policies in the metropolitan city of Milan

Wednesday 14 March 2018

5 - 7 pm

Sciences Po

LIEPP's Conference Room  
254, boulevard Saint-Germain  
75007 Paris

Since the mid-nineties, many crucial issues in governing Italian cities – traffic, immigration, work, environment, criminality, peripheries, freedom of religious expression, etc. – have been reframed thanks to a new semantic umbrella: urban security. The “urbanization” of public security has generated both new specific problems/risks and new kinds of people/ behaviors that need to be governed. At first, urban security became the main battlefield between left-wing and right-wing political parties/coalitions, but over time it has been transformed into a neutral issue framed in terms of citizens’ needs and rights. A securitization of urban life has been accomplished through a shift from a conception of urban governance centered on social problems to a different one centered on situational prevention and criminalization of urban problems, conflicts, and groups. Besides, it has led to a deep reconfiguration of the institutions and practices meant to address, regulate and govern “new” generalized forms of risk, together with a reorganization of roles and competencies between national and local authorities. Drawing on official documents, research reports, and qualitative interviews, Fabio Quassoli describes the general policy framework concerning urban security that emerged and consolidated along the first decade of the 2000s in Milan. He illustrates how discourses and practices of in/security have contributed to the construction of the city as place exposed to a multiplicity of risks that local authorities and police forces are expected to manage. Furthermore, he highlights how the diffusion and legitimization of an ‘ideology of safety’ has turned the demand to live in safe communities into an attempt to legitimize exclusionary practices insofar as discourses on security were strictly interconnected with discourses on cultural identity and, focusing on both the (imagined) community repertoire and the us/them opposition, ended up legitimizing a racialized urban governance of inclusion and exclusion. Finally, he tries to show that over the last six years the attempt by the center-left government to modify such an approach has generated ambiguous and controversial results and in some cases is paradoxically promoting an even stronger securitization of urban policies, spaces, and life through more democratically oriented governmental practices.



#### Speaker

**Fabio Quassoli is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Milano Bicocca and Visiting Professor at Sciences Po, LIEPP**

Fabio Quassoli’s main research interests are: intercultural communications, multiculturalism, sociology of immigration, social construction of crime and deviance, and security policies and social exclusion.

#### Collective Discussion

*Texts available upon request*

Compulsory registration on the link above - Contact: [francesco.findeisen@sciencespo.fr](mailto:francesco.findeisen@sciencespo.fr)