



Popular and Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research



Under the High Patronage of the Wali
The Faculty of Earth Sciences and Architecture
in collaboration with the laboratory of Quality of Use Evaluation in Architecture and Built
Environment (LEQUArEB)

Organizes

The 1st international symposium on

**Small and medium-sized cities in a globalized
world. What future for metropolization?**

**Which will be held on the 2d and the 3d November 2021 in the university
of Oum el Bouaghi**



Honor chairmen

Professor Zohir DIBI, Rector of the University

Chairman of the symposium

Dr Ahmed BOUSMAHA

Argument

In the developed countries, territorial policies tend to focus on metropolises, which are supposed to be the main centre of economic growth and innovation. Because of their demographic, economic and social importance, as well as due to their central function within national and regional urban systems; large cities have been the subject of many studies. However, few studies have been devoted to highlighting the role of small and medium-sized towns, their place in the space system, and the functions they perform in regional economies and constructions. Small and medium-sized cities, the lowest echelon of the pyramid, have a driving role in country growth, while they exhibit heterogeneous profiles and dynamics that deviate from what is observed in metropolises. Small towns in particular have often been places of innovation capable of playing a fundamental role in the organization of the national space and the balance of urban and regional spaces.

The acceleration of urbanization and the uneven geographical distribution of cities are the most striking fact occurring in Algeria currently. The concentration of activities and population on the coastal fringe has reinforced the phenomenon of coastalization resulting in a regional imbalance between the North and the rest of the country. Territorial distortions were then the main concern of the regional planning policy, which promoted priority actions on small and medium-sized cities to restraint the growth of large coastal cities while ensuring a redeployment of the urban structure within the country. As a result, the urbanization movement has significantly strengthened in conjunction with administrative promotions and industrial settlements in disadvantaged and less urbanised areas. Industrialization and administrative promotion represented several centres as the decisive impetus (creation of installations with diversified and attractive public services) and promoted the transition from rural to urban. Small and medium-sized cities have a function of revitalizing margins and peripheries.

The objective of the symposium is to shed light on the elements of change in small and medium-sized cities and the types of relationships they have with each other, as well as with metropolises and the rural world. The different problems that confront local actors to set up effective development policies will also be discussed. The objective of the symposium is to provide food for thought on the theme of medium-sized cities by involving geographers and other "specialists" in debates on the future of these cities in the context of metropolitanization and globalization.

Symposium axes

1. Identification of "Small Cities" and "Medium-sized Cities"

Defining the urban is hampered by the absence of an «objective scientific» criterion and challenges both geographers and other specialists. Between "small towns" and "medium-sized towns", the threshold establishes a cut-off point within the urban itself. However, the lower threshold of small towns separates the rural from the urban. R. Escallier (1986), in a comparative study of the Maghreb countries, pointed out that "any demographic threshold is arbitrary" and remains relative. Yet, this problem also arises in the definition of the urban, which, in turn, is hampered by the absence of objective scientific criteria. According to Paul Claval, geographical concentration is essential to the formation of the city but it is not sufficient; social interaction and exchanges are also necessary. What about the "small town" in the context of metropolization? Behind the generic question about the city lies the question of specific types of cities.

So, where does the city begin in Algeria? And how do we define the small city?

The term "small city" refers to a class of particular dimensions, limited by thresholds that change in time and space. The definition of thresholds raises the problem of criteria; should we rely solely on quantitative criteria (size, non-agricultural employment, number of facilities, number of shops, etc.) or we also need to find qualitative justifications (social structure, behaviors and lifestyles, urbanity, spatial influence, etc.) However in the case of multiple combination, the question raised how many criteria must be met in order to identify small and medium-sized cities?

2. "Medium-sized Cities" and "Intermediate Cities": What is the Link?

The medium-sized city is primarily defined by its size, while urban analysis is based on function and role. A category that is more operational (planners, elected officials...etc.) than theoretical (Belhedi, 2018). "Medium-sized cities are at the center of any territorial development policy (regional and national) despite the ambiguity of their status at the theoretical level. The destiny of medium-sized cities is inseparable from regions and the rebalancing of urban systems" (Belhedi, 2018).

For Carrière "the intermediate city polarizes its territory by offering diverse and varied services including: administrative, cultural, health, teaching and dissemination of knowledge, and research, ...etc. At the economic level, it must be competitive and dynamic and also represent a significant relative weight in its regional environment, and be the centre of decision-making" (Carrière, 2008).

Intermediate cities constitute a pivot and an important intermediation link between national and regional spaces; between metropolises, on the one hand, and small and medium-sized cities on the other hand; and s even cities of the same size which do not have the same levels of advanced functions (Bock and Carrière, 2007). In the Maghreb countries, planning policies aimed at rebalancing the urban framework, through the promotion of intermediate (or medium-sized) cities, have considerably shaped urban systems and marked the economy of this stratum , in particular their role and their dynamics (Kasdallah, 2013, p. 215). The intermediary city refers to the concept of a relay of power and supervision between the center of decision and command in the capital and metropolises, on the one hand, and the other cities and rural areas over which the hold is exercised. It is the intermediary link in the urban system. The concordance with the medium-sized city and the intermediate city is neither automatic nor linear (Belhedi A, 2007).

What is the difference between "intermediate cities" and "medium-sized cities"? Do medium-sized cities express an intermediate level between large cities, small cities, and rural centers? What is their assigned role in spatial strategies? What is their relationship with metropolization?

3. The Role of Small and Medium-sized Cities in the Urbanization Movement

Small and medium-sized cities play a major role in the urbanization process and represent the backbone of the urban framework (Bousmaha, 1994). The latter is increasingly dense but far from being harmoniously distributed. They have undergone functional and spatial changes and have developed new powers and new means.

What is the place occupied by small and medium-sized cities in the urbanization movement? Are the economic, historical and geographical processes determining the organization of regional and national space? Can they be used as a tool for regional planning? Is the emergence of small towns (by moving from rural to urban) an important component of urban growth? Can they be a key element in achieving an urban framework

that is harmoniously distributed over a territory? What role do these cities play in the organization of space? Are they simple relays or articulation pivots in urban systems? What is their role in the functioning and organization of the regional space? What are the relationships they maintain with their surrounding areas? How are these relationships woven?

4. Innovation and attractiveness of small and medium-sized cities

Today, small and medium-sized cities are called upon to play a key role in socio-economic and spatial recomposition and consequently they contribute to the process of building local proximity and to the dynamics of territorial development. They are based in an area, often rural, of which they constitute poles of attraction. Their structuring role in their space refers to the notions of polarization, of armature, and of urban hierarchy. Veltz (2000) writes: "In the globalized space, territories and cities are more and more explicitly placed in competition with each other, and their competitiveness in the location market ultimately expresses the competitiveness of firms in the goods and services market. Given this observation, we wonder what place small and medium-sized cities have in territorial attractiveness? Are they really places of innovation and creativity? What about the mobilization and valorization of their natural and territorial resources?"

5. Small and medium-sized cities facing metropolization: state of play and future?

The metropolis is indeed the pivot of the organization of the territory that it exclusively dominates, in most cases. Being Polyfunctional, it is monocentric and operates through hierarchical relays that represent it at all levels of the spatial scale (Escallier, 2004). For Nadou (2010), metropolises are often presented as the "spearheads" of today's economy and those that respond to the challenges imposed by globalization. What about small and medium-sized cities? What are their strengths in facing of metropolisation? Do metropolises exacerbate social and spatial inequalities? Does the metropolitan fact offer development opportunities? What are the consequences of metropolisation on peri-urban areas, small and medium-sized cities and the farthest countrysides? What roles can rural areas and small and medium-sized cities play in metropolitan dynamics, depending on their economic bases, their socio-demographic dynamics, and their economic activity development models? What is the impact of urban public policies on small and medium-sized cities? Are they losing their role to the growth of large cities and metropolises? Are they being weakened by intense processes of metropolization? Are they managing to maintain certain vital functions for the animation of living ensuring the development of their surrounding spaces? In other words, after taking stock of the situation, we ask ourselves: what is the future for small and medium-sized cities in the era of metropolization? Are they growing or declining?

Jean Paul Carrière is interested in the role of the "small metropolises" of France that benefit from the institutional status of metropolis without having all the attributes, the interactions and relationships between these "incomplete" metropolises and the other territories, in particular the small and medium-sized cities and the rural areas in their area of influence. It also examines the possibility of establishing "reciprocity contracts" between metropolises and other territories.

In this context, what are the possible forms of enhanced cooperation between metropolises and small and medium-sized cities, and how to envisage the reciprocities between them, which could go up to contractualized formalizations? What is the nature, what is the pace, what are the stages of the metropolization process on both shores of the Mediterranean?

How is the governance of relations between metropolises and small and medium-sized cities characterized and configured? What models and what tools?

These are the most recurring questions, among others, that will lead to the formulation of a certain number of key ideas and proposals, which we must discuss during this international symposium.

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Requisites of submission

Abstracts should be written in Word (times new roman, font 12, title in bold) and should contain:

- the title of the paper (centred, in 14 bold capitals),
- the summary and the keywords
- the surname(s) and first name(s) of the author(s) (centred in 12 bold),
- author affiliations (centred in 10 italics)
- e-mail address and telephone number.

Each abstract should be no longer than one page in length and should provide guidance on the study and the methods of analysis used, it will be followed by keywords. The final paper will be limited to a maximum of 15 pages (including tables and illustrations). Only abstracts that meet the above criteria will be considered.

The accepted languages: Arabic, French or English.

Abstracts must be sent by e-mail to: colloque.vpm2021oeb@gmail.com;
colloque.pmv2021@univ-oeb.dz

Important dates

- **Deadline for receipt of abstracts: July 10, 2021**
- Notification of acceptance of abstracts: July 31, 2021
- **Deadline for receipt of final papers: September 01, 2021**
- Notification of acceptance of final papers: 01 October 2021
- **Date of the symposium: November, 2-3 2021**

Location of the symposium: the auditorium of the University of Oum El Bouaghi.

Registration fee / without accommodation (to be paid on site):

- Lecturers-researchers: 6.000,00 DA.
- Professionals: 6.000,00 DA.
- Students: 4.000,00 DA.

Accommodation and transport are at the expense of the participants.

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