

Summaries

Pierre SIGNOLES

North African 'Medina' centrality : what stakes for urban planning policies ?

Medina centrality is seen here as a pretext for questioning the relationship between research, practice, planning and urban management in some countries of the Arab World. The question which is asked is indeed done with as much acuity as two concomitant processes which have combined their effects for some decades and lead us to believe the problematic question of medina centrality is no longer a question of the moment. On the one hand the so called safeguarding policies tend to some exceptions isolate the whole medina from the ensemble of built up areas of which they are however no more today than a fragment and aim at protecting or reconstituting a mythic or legendary city, whose centrality, when it is thought of, refers mainly to a past which it can't reproduce. On the other hand, recent urban dynamics are distinguished by an extremely rapid growth of urban space – the metropolitical process – at the same time cause and consequence of intensified urban mobility (residential mobility, residence work commuting, weekend and leisure migrations) and a lengthening of distances and at the same time as profound changes (progress in household motorization expressing new social need, new consumption modes etc... which go with an evolution of modern contemporary city society especially in greater urban centres, with new polarities emerging, and even new urban centralities, which can at time equally proceed to public policies having to reveal modernity and to confirm town efficacy that the states (where they are located) want, if only then through architectural forms and monumental symbols catching on to world wide system.

Keywords: Centrality - Medinas - urban development - urban policies - spatial practices.

Ammara BEKKOUCHE

Colonial stakes and urban planning in Algeria : The example Sidi-Bel-Abbès

Colonization in the world brought urbanization programs into operation, among which some applications have been subject to observation and analysis in order to understand historical processes. The present article suggests examining the example of Sidi-Bel-Abbès in Algeria occupied by France for 130 years. By looking for and deciphering certain colonial stakes which prevailed in urban planning Alexis de Toqueville's reports on this subject are very enlightening to grasp the mechanisms in creating the town. Several factors at different levels are at the origin of its foundation that enter in a logic of territorial web. The town forms an astonishing ensemble in its arrangement and geometry which are interesting to look at for cultural and technical models. So a colonial town, what were the grounds for its creation and evolution and the decisive urban planning principles for its spatial organization.

Keywords: Colonial challenges - Sidi Bel Abbes – New towns - colonization - site selection.

Vanessa ROUSSEAU

Present day spatial distribution in Northern Moroccan, Algerian and Tunisian urban phenom (Maghreb)

These last forty years, North African states (northern Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia have undergone consequential changes produced by urbanization. To study the current situation in the urbanization phenomenon, we have used statistics and cartography for tools. An analysis of distribution reveals a certain homogeneity of urban phenomenon in Morocco, while urban concentration on the Algerian and Tunisian coasts is well marked, in contrast to scattered inland towns. Distribution of urban density is explicit, intensity lessens following the territorial coastal / inland gradient. On fining down our study, numerous irregularities within this general tendency are noted. By comparing the density of the population map with that of urban density, strong correlations appear in their distribution, but that of global population is more regular since it follows more marked gradients.

The state of north african territorial urbanization makes differences not only clear at a quantitative level but equally at a qualitative level, in spite of these disparities, they have numerous explicit factors in common.

Keywords: Spatial distribution - the urban - Maghreb - urban infrastructure - urban density.

Abed BENDJELID

The town and Oran geographers. A critical analysis of honours geography theses (1992 – 2001)

The aim of this critical analysis of 269 B.Sc. thesis in urban and regional geography, defended at the Oran university between 1992-2001, is at the same time a way of evaluating dormant potentiel of work considered as secondary, and of restoring a part of local scientific out put to society.

Following up a first work touching the same type of essays attempted between 1975 to 1991, this synthesis for the author, is structured in the form of four dominant topics , which have invested the field of the town. Presentation, commentary and critic of these themes covering all physical homogenous zones, and all urban states in the west of Algeria, organize themselves around spatial expansion and urban structure functioning, from land to real estate production, from peripheral urbanization and integration within the town, from urban environment and treating geographical data. Certain topics are subdivided in specific sub topics answering precise research needs (illegal habitat, residential mobility, transport, water management...) more or less linked to a definite conjuncture. This synthesis is an act which has certainly a symbolic value, but which goes concretely in the sense of economic and social territorial development.

Keywords: City - Geographers - academic production - University of Oran - urban research - urban geography - urbanization.

Saddek BENKADA

Fifty years of peripheral enlargement in Oran, some urban experiences (1948-1998)

In this article we try to put forward the main periods of peri-urban space extension in Oran, through some experiences in urban policy from 1948 – 1998.

The choice of period is not by chance, in fact, it represents a turning point between the after war and after independence periods. In fact, after war municipalities take up all planning and extension projects adjourned due to the war. But, in view of an economic revival particularly the Constantine Plan from 1958 on, the Fouques Duparc's municipality (1947–1967), will be the one that commits most of its action to modernizing collective blocks of flats and basic infrastructure of the town.

However, the achievement of mayor Fouques – Duparc's urban program wouldn't have been possible if it wasn't for the availability of

grounds situated in peri-urban zones, and left uncultivated, more over, this period will be distinguished by a visible delimitation in urban tissue, of "radio-concentric" zones due to the opening up of wide ring roads. With independence in 1967 the town finds it self like a building site. The municipality was neither technically nor financially able to follow the urban programs of before 1962. Suddenly, the outskirts knew a stop to their extension. It was therefore necessary to wait until 1975 to see building starting again with the creation of some ZHUN (new urban habitation areas) which take up the implantation plans of residential blocks of flats programmed in the frame of the Constantine Plan. At this period dormitory suburbs appear.

The muliform crisis which Algerian towns know today, and in particular Oran is to a large extent due to the non mastery of urban peripheries, made much more serious by numerous spontaneous agglomerations appearing on the fringe of towns, which have become more and more often illegal zones.

Keywords: Urban Extension - Oran - urban periphery - Housing policy - urban planning - planning policy - the twentieth century.

Abed BENDJELID – Driss BENCHEHIDA

Elements of urban dysfunctioning within an Algerian metropolis : Oran

A reading of urban geography-honours theses defended in Oran university between 1975 and 1991, concerning Oran and its outskirts, made up of ten municipalities, puts a different light on their content, while clarifying some dysfunctioning, perceived as the most important at the beginning of the 90's. The authors try to explain this dysfunctioning by referring to recent town history and new urban tendencies.

Empirical ,this work is first of all founded on a study of urban milieu, and on an urban analysis based on practical application and improved methodological approaches. The fields of priority research cover two subjects : problematic questions of analysis of 'old' urban tissue in Oran (a study of old fringe districts , analysis of old suburbs, a functional approach for central districts) and problematic questions for new outskirts (political , land and real estate, reconquest of town centres, reorganization of urban space faced with retail trade explosion, (the start of a geographical residential segregation in the Oran periphery). The delicate and disorganised situation of the early 90's has given rise to some work of quality and has especially enabled an on the field awareness, of some paths to be explored for the next decade.

Keywords: Urban Dysfunction - Oran - metropolis - analysis of urban fabric - poor housing - downtown.

Améziane FERGUENE

Artisanal know-how and local dynamics in old Maghreb towns. The example of Sfax

The slackening of growth recorded in the « Third World » in the 70's, raises the question of development. One of the main characteristics of socio-economical activities is that they are deeply rooted in the history of those territories where they develop and find a source of vitality and efficacy in local socio-cultural values. Concerning the Maghreb zone, Sfax the economic capital of southern Tunisia, forms an interesting case study to analyse.

How to present local economic dynamics and on what kind of activities are they founded ? What place do they occupy in more or less ancient crafts processes and corresponding savoir faire ? Finally how does this know-how which is a historical patrimony become integrated in today's productive systems and how does it adapt ? Such are the questions considered in this line of thought, to conclude in what, certain inbred dynamisms can be in total rupture with the standard development model.

Keywords: Crafts - medina - Maghreb - Sfax - connections - urban economy.

Mohamed DAOUD

The town in an Algerian novel : The Constantine space

This article aims at examining the relationship between character and urban space through a thematical analysis and socio-critic of Tahar Ouettar's novel "Ez-Zilzel" (Earth quake). The town being a field of research for a plurality of subjects, this article is based on several theoretical contributions of a socio-psychological and semiological nature to draw out the meaning of Boularouah's journey across the town of Constantine, which is characterized by an equivocal feeling (attraction/ repulsion) becoming a feeling of reject, and rupture, because the town has met with several socio-political changes upsetting the political – sociological hierarchy due to rural exodus and agrarian reforms, which have opened up the Constantine space formerly closed to lower social class unaccepted by the town as it threatened its interests. This journey to Constantine is to preserve his land, but the trip veers abruptly.

Keywords: Roman - city - imaginary - Constantine - Tahar Ouettar.

Abdelkader CHARCHAR

Urban space and the detective novel

The town or « urban district » as it was represented by Greek geographers in their cartography formed a significant space. 19th and 20th century writers were inspired by the city to produce hundreds of detective novels.

With this literature we go beyond a make belief without a spatial reference to a closed space which is the town. And the town in the detective novel is a meaningful entity which sends out significations, some of which symbolize occidental modernity revealed by social, economic and technological change. The policeman is the archetype of this change. Nevertheless this type of literature hasn't been adopted by arab modernity admist transfers in other fields.

The question asked is, what are the reasons for the absence of detective novels in Arabic language novels. And this in spite of the development of urban space in the Arab World.

Keywords: Urban Space - imaginary romantic - thriller - literary production.

Abdelkrim BENAMMAR

Peripheral crowding and « a durable urban development » in Algeria

Peripheral extension has reached real estate limit, it has become indispensable to « return to the city ». From this moment on, urban development must adapt to a logic of « durable development ». Crowding in dispersed peripheral tissue has there fore become an impossible act in accomplishing this new urbanism. Because this putting into practice in Algeria, of voluntary peripheral urban policies since independence, has led to a very worrying situation, in so much at a structural level as a social one. It is thus necessary and urgent « to correct the range » as our outskirts have become an amalgam of projects, which originally precise, are on unsound urban space. In this context, enabling users of this space to take part in its development becomes a key parameter related to a participative approach, which has more over been put to test else where. Because one has realised that the relationship Man- space is unavoidable. It is this particular aspect, which interests us in our present research, because we believe this type of approach must be incrusted more and more in our « urban mores ».

Keywords: Densification - periphery - urban development - sustainable - Algeria.