International Journal of Innovative Studies in Sociology and Humanities
ISSN 2456-4931 | Open Access | Volume 7, Issue 12, 2022
DOI: https://doi.org/10.20431/2456-4931.071219

The Economic Territories of Constantine's Metropolis: Issues and Prospects

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Received: December 10, 2022 **Accepted**: December 26, 2022 **Published**: December 28, 2022

Abstract

Constantine is a historic regional metropolis, as evidenced by its center, which is the fundamental element, both immaterial and physical. However, its outskirts are characterized by substantial economic dynamism. Thus, the goal of this essay is to investigate the economic regions of the Constantinian metropolis through an examination of the tertiary sector, the concentration of services, and the dynamics of businesses both in its historical center and in its periphery. To achieve that goal, an explanatory, qualitative method and field-guided analysis were applied to two unique territories: Constantin's medina and its outskirt (Ain El Bey). Then, the center of Constantine follows qualitative market logic with a wonderful fiscal potential, and its periphery (Ain El Bey) has witnessed substantial dynamic companies in residential neighborhoods with the introduction of the image of capitalism by private actors.

Keywords. territory, historical centre, Constantine metropolis, periphery, economic territory.

INTRODUCTION

A territory has the ability to mobilize both monetary and human resources. Despite this, liberalism has given birth to new social groups while weakening the distributive state's role. Because inhabitants strive to impose their own construction norms and engage in informal activities, the presence of an articulation between consent and rule abuse by the user is essential (Decoutere, 1996). Nonetheless, in a competitive environment, Constantine, a historic regional metropolis in eastern Algeria with over 500,000 inhabitants, has witnessed a dynamic in the form of a persistent, rapid urbanism that defies the essential rules. This is owing to disparities and vast gaps between its regions, particularly the economic infrastructure in the center and the periphery. Thus, the stakes of the Constantine metropolis are linked to its history as well as its need to expand in order to keep its position as the capital of the country's northeastern region (Seguia and Cherrad, 2021).

The historical center and the basic intangible and physical (see economic) aspects forming the city, which have been declared as national heritage and are defined by their history, architectural style, and urban character, can be reached from here. It covers 45ha and has quickly lost a chunk of its residents, equipment, and command headquarters role. It boasts a thriving economy, a diverse population, and a formal, but deteriorating, built environment. Despite several restoration initiatives, public authorities are still struggling to retake control of this area. Furthermore, Constantine's outlying districts have had a large individual housing program (subdivisions) since the 1990s, coinciding with the opening of the market economy, paving the way for further transformations in economic dynamics. Thus, the plateau of Ain El Bey, which includes the ZHUN (new urban dwelling zone) and the majority of its subdivisions, represents Constantinople's southern fringes and has undergone similar lifestyle shift. On the other hand, a segment of society is able to develop a market in habitat regions using criteria that are antithetical to institutional procedures and by circumventing the law.

As expansions are converted into storage and warehouse space, and subdivisions are created within them, the economy flourishes. As a result, our research focuses on the study of Constantinople's economic areas, namely the quality of delivery services, the concentration of higher tertiary education, and the dynamics of enterprises in the center and on the periphery. What is the future of the Constantinople metropolis's economic domains in these circumstances, between the core and the periphery? In what ways could Constantine's economic dynamics be influenced by the historical center? How and by what means did Ain El Bey's residents and private actors alter its periphery?

The Centre and the Periphery of Constantine's Metropolis: Study Area Presentation

Constantine's center (the medina) is a complex, dense zone that encompasses both colonial and traditional urban characteristics. Despite its population and equipment de-densification, as well as its decreasing constructed space, it remains the center of the regional metropolis, characterized by the stability inherent in strong socioeconomic dynamism. The colonial space concentrates major commercial activities related to the ancient metropolis's economic attraction (figure 1). This condition is far from uniform, as the plateau of Ain El Bey, located on the city's southern outskirts, has gone through various phases of expansion. The fall of the state and the encouragement of independent development has been the beginning point for the proliferation of self-built housing estates since 1988. As a result of public pressure, 2 428 lots on 125 hectares were created. With the liberalization of land, private land developers (urban landowners) played a significant part in the expansion of various subdivisions: Bab Djedid, El Islah, Les Amandiers, Les Palmiers, Belhadj, and so on. According to the RGPH, the Ain El Bey plateau rose from 9 299 inhabitants and 150 houses in 1998 to 19 200 inhabitants and 5100 houses in 2008. In the same vein, another urban type seen on this plateau, the ZHUN 1100 house, merits consideration on the image of capitalism that was brought in this location. These considerations are related to land management and the recycling of empty land pockets by private real estate players (spatial renewal).

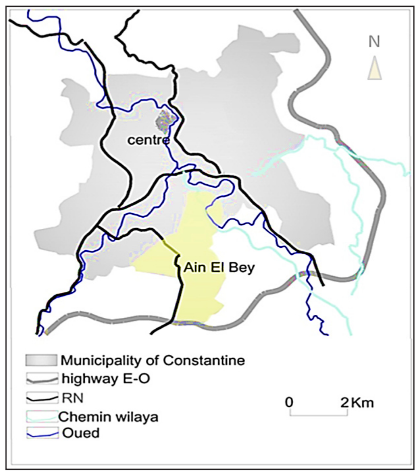

Figure 1. Municipality of Constantine the historical centre and the periphery of Ain El Bey (Source: authors based on PDAU Constantine 1998)

METHODS AND MATERIALS

We conducted this research in an explanatory, qualitative manner, guided by personal observation techniques and interviews. Realized in collaboration with the inhabitants of the Constantine metropolis's economic space in two distinct territories in terms of urban form, density, and location, namely the center (medina) and the periphery Ain El Bey (subdivisions and ZHUN 1100 housing) of the Constantine metropolis. We undertook a field assessment of the historic core in 2022 to learn more about its characteristics and the concentration of delivery services after the ONS estimated that there were 30,688 inhabitants and 2,737 dwellings there in 2008.

Our selection was based on two liberal activities that are part of the higher service sector: legal officers (lawyers, bailiffs, notaries) and medical offices. In addition, that same year, a second survey of 10 subdivisions with 3 233 lots was conducted. Thus, subdivisions were examined through observation and census of enterprises and craft workshops, allowing the dynamics of companies to be noted (relating to economic actors). The observation of the ground during this survey guided us to carry out an inventory of the private actors, namely the real estate developers, who have significantly marked the ZHUNAin El Bey housing and its surroundings through the implementation of various buildings and equipment. They take over from public actors who voluntarily "abandon" the created neighbourhoods and launch a new housing program in another ex-nihilo territory.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Centre of the Constantine Metropolis: Tertiary Sector, a Qualitative Logic Of Supply and Demand

The results of the field survey are listed in table 1 below, and they also helped us create the map that follows (figure2).

Table 1. Distribution of legal and medical staff on the streets of the medina

Street	Framework of Justice	Médical Office	Total	%
Boulevard Zighoud Youcef	/	1	1	/
SouidaniBoudjema	15	1	16	5%
Meriem Bouatoura	54	25	79	26%
Sidi abdelahBouhroum	/	/	/	/
Staifi Amar	1	/	1	0.1%
Didouchemourad	46	04	50	17%
Lannabisaid	/	/	/	/
CheikhAbd El Hamid IbnBadis	/	/	/	/
Larbi ben mhidi	25	24	49	16%
Sidi lakhdar	6	/	6	2%
Benaamara mouloud	1	/	1	0.1%
12 mai 1956	10	/	10	3%
Hamlaoui	35	3	38	13%
Benchaalal	1	/	1	0.1%
Benfrih	9	/	9	3%
Betchine	4	/	4	1%
Massinissa	7	/	7	2%
Bel khoudja	10	2	12	4%
Manaamakhlouf	/	1	1	0.1%
Bouali said	1	/	1	0.1%
Palestine	4		4	1%
Kharab	0	0	/	/
Boulaklab	9	0	9	3%
Kedidsallah	/	/	/	/
Rahbetsouf	/	/	/	/
Cousins kerouaz	/	1	1	100%
Total	238	61		

Source: author'sfield survey, 2022

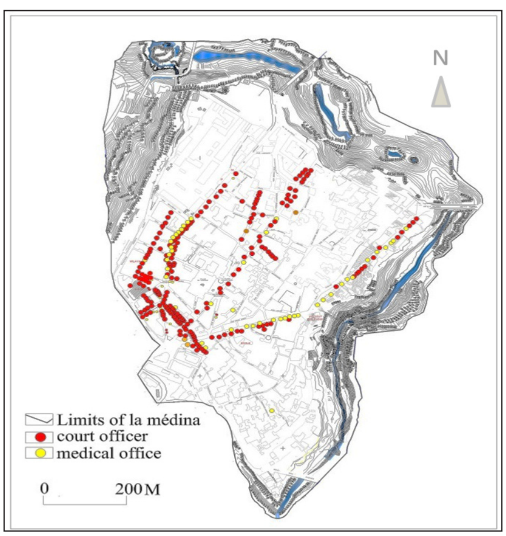

Figure 2. Distribution of court and medical officers (Source: author's field survey, 2022)

There were 238 court officers in the sample:

-The streets with the most court officers are Meriem Bouatoura and Didouche Mourad, which are in top and second place respectively. Meriem Bouatoura has 54 court officers, or 23% of the total, while Didouche Mourad has 46 legal officers, or 19% of the total.

- Two streets with less people are located in second place. These are Larbi Ben Mhidi Street with 25 court officers and 15% of the total, and Hamlaoui Street with 35 court officials.

-In third place and at a lower level, there are five streets: Souidani Boudjemaa with 15 court officers, 6% of the total; Belkhoudja Street and Street 12 May 1956 with 10 court officers for each of them, 4% of the total; and lastly, Benfrih Street and Boulaklab Street with 9 court officials, 4% of the total;

- In fourth position five streets that have a much lower value namely, the Massinissa street with 7 court officers , 3% of the total, SidiLakhdar Street with 6 court officers, 3% of the total, and Betchine and Palestine Streets with 4 court officers each, 2% of the total. As for the streets Bouali Said, BenaamaraMouloud, Staifi Amar and Benchaalal they have 1 auxiliary of justice each.

Figure 3. Justice officials Hamlaoui street
(Source: Author 2022)

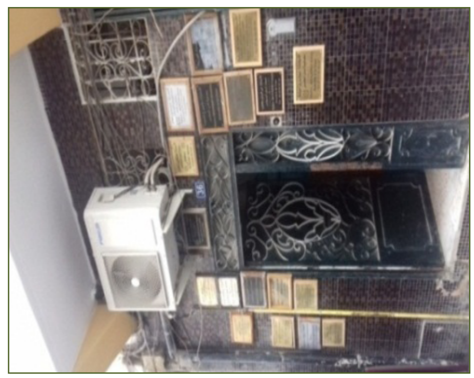

Figure 4. Justice officials Didouche Mourad street
(Source: Author 2022)

There are 61 medical practices:

- In first place, two streets—Meriem Bouatoura Street with 25 offices, or 41% of the totaland Larbi Ben Mhidi Street with 24 offices, or 39% of the total—have the highest concentration of medical practises.

- In second place and at a lower level, there are five streets: DidoucheMourad with four medical offices (7% of the total), Hamlaoui with three medical offices (5% of the total), Belkhoudja with two medical offices (3% of the total), and SouidaniBoudjemaa, ManaaMakhlouf, and Cousins Kerouaz with one medical office (2% of the total).

The concentration of medical offices, particularly those in Meriem Bouatoura and Larbi Benmhidi, confirms the high quality of services by this criteria. The ancient streets, on the other hand, are characterised by a dearth of these amenities, as is the case with Abdelhamid Benbadis and Souika Street, where there is only one dentist. The qualitative logic of supply and demand exists in the historical centre. It represents a financial opportunity that significantly boosts Constantine's revenue potential.

The Periphery of Constantine: a Market Liberalization, Very Dynamic Firms, and a Capitalist Image

The Economic Actor in the Subdivisions of the Plateau of Ain El Bey

The time of land liberalization and subdivision corresponded with the period of market liberalization. The residential developments of this period, particularly those on the plateau of Ain El Bey, have sheltered legitimate households for an extended period of time (habitable space). On the other hand, in connection to the setting in which they were created; the subdivisions have captured economic actors who are typically family businesses.

Table 2 depicts the economic attractiveness of the subdivisions and validates the supply-demand logic of economic entities. These subdivisions have adapted to a market based on elements related to the numerous family businesses that have used these spaces for residence as well as serving their investments (Figure 5).

Table 2. Companies in the Ain El Bey Plateau subdivisions

Subdivision	Number of Lots	Company	Sewing Workshop	Manufacturing Workshop	Total	%
Belhadj	1325	20	5	11	36	38%
G.E.R.I.C	271	/	/	/	/	/
Boudjeriou Mostefa	242	6	/	3	9	9%
Ain El Bey 2ème tranche	242	2	3	3	5	5%
Les chalets	186	4	/	1	5	5%
Frères Ben Guedjali	717	21	5	8	34	35%
BabDjedid	250	3	/	1	4	4%
El Islah		/	/	/	/	
Les Cyprès		3	/	/	3	3%
Les Amandiers		/	/	/	/	/
Total	3 233	59	13	23	96	100%

Source: field survey 2022-authors

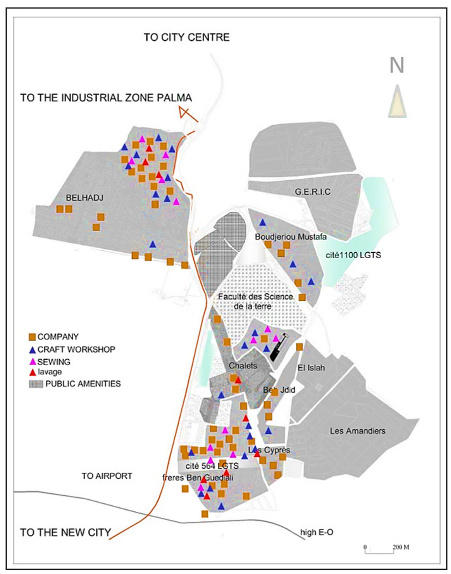

Figure 5. Distribution of companies and craft workshops in Ain El Bey (source; field survey 2022-authors)

The total number of current enterprises is 59, and two positions have been deducted:

- In first place, we have the subdivisions of the Belhadj area with 20 companies, or 34% of the total, and the brothers Ben Guedjali with 21 companies, or 36% of the total.
- The subdivisions of five districts, which have a lower number, come in second place. Boudjeriou Mostefa has six firms, accounting for 10% of the total; Cottages has four companies, accounting for 7% of the total; Bab Jedid has three companies, accounting for 5% of the total; and Ain El Bey 2nd tranche has two companies, accounting for 3% of the total.

These Ain El Bey companies are owned by family businesses, including some that moved from other wilayas (Mila, Tébessa, and Jijel) in the late 1990s and invested in these subdivisions.They occupy the space by bringing back a bourgeois population that divides up the space by buying houses and apartments, renting a huge number of premises, and creating an appealing zone unique to them. The company's real estate has become a family subdivision because the territory, as a market space, has responded to economic supply and demand.The owners of the houses in these subdivisions earned an income by renting their properties as a deposit to the medina's family entrepreneurs and merchants. They are prominent in the Boujeriou Mostefa, Benguedjali brothers, and Bab Jedid communities. Deposits, on the other hand, are limited in the Belhadj, Amandiers, and El Islah neighborhoods since they are mainly residential areas with a very easy social consistency.These deposits have become a source of income for the people who live in these communities. Despite the fact that urban topology does not permit it, container trucks circulate in these neighborhoods, causing unwanted nuisances. These owners take advantage of the dynamics of this space of contact and economic consent by renting their home while suggesting that it be used for another activity such as a school, nursery, clinic, etc.

F**igure 6.** Company next to a craft workshop in the Belhadj city (Authors 2022)

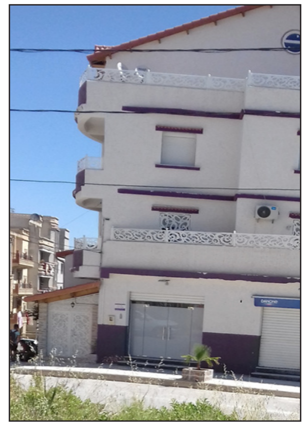

Figure 7. Company in theBoudjeriou Mostefa subdivision (Authors 2022)

Figure 8. Deposits in the Boudjeriou Mostefa subdivision (Authors, 2022)

Figure 9. Deposit in the Boudjeriou Mostefa subdivision (Authors, 2022)

Other than residential housing, the housing unit has altered with increasing activities: clinic, school, and laboratory of analysis, nursery, high school, and numerous services. This resulted in a shift in territory. Not all of these activities were originally planned. Indeed, the company's economic behavior is directly related to spatial decomposition and inhabitant practices. In the same way, think about a situation that is similar to the idea of an enterprise in terms of the craft workshops' zones of activity. However, everyday space influences interactions that articulate a neighborhood's economic and socio-spatial dimensions. Thus, artisans fall under the purview of the enterprise (the craft enterprise). They also occupy subdivision areas, causing noise and auditory and olfactory discomfort, all of which have a severe impact on the quality of life. This installation in this area in place of industrial or activity zones can be explained by social interactions, neighborhood, and everyday living spaces imposed by a violation of residential space urban planning standards. Typically, artists come from the same neighborhoods and form ties known as "local artisans."

The total number of workshops is 36, and we have determined two positions:

- in first place, the subdivisions of two districts of Belhadj with 16 workshops, or 44% of the total (11 manufacturing workshops and 5 sewing workshops), and that of the Ben Guedjali brothers with 13 workshops, or 36% of the total (8 manufacturing workshops and 5 sewing workshops);

- in second place, the subdivisions of four districts with a lower number, which are those of Ain El Bey 2n (3 manufacturing workshops and 3 sewing workshops). BoudjeriouMostefa had three workshops, accounting for 8% of the total, and cottages and Bab Jedid each had one workshop, accounting for 3% of the total.

Figure 10. Fabrication workshop in the Frères Benguedjali subdivision (Authors 2022)

Figure 11. craft workshop in the Frères Benguedjali subdivision (Authors 2022)

Figure 12. Automotive electrical workshop in the Boudjeriou Mostefa subdivision (Authors, 2022)

Figure 13. El Islah Subdivision a residential area (authors, 2022)

The public policy of trade and crafts defines taxation and activity regulations without adhering to the criteria of the administrative procedure provided out in the texts (preliminary inquiries) on the premises that house traditional and art crafts or production. Finally, the company has evolved into a player that produces and reshapes the landscape. These subdivisions, as a container, sustain a certain type of residential housing: family homes and prestigious villas, but as a territory, they comprise a collection of enterprises because of economic market liberalization.

ZHUN Ain El Bey Housing and its Surroundings: Image of Capitalism and Private Actors

Lifestyle changes have an impact on the quality of housing and its environment. It has resulted in the proliferation of "residences" in long-standing real estate ads on the Ain El Bey plateau since 2010 (Table 3).

Table 3. Promotional collective dwellings in the ZHUN 1100dwellings and its surroundings created during the last decade

Promotion Programme	Project Date	No. of Housing	Living Area (m2)		Price (da/m2)
			F4	F5	
Résidence gamma	2016	203	147-156	200	150
Résidence Zahra	2016	200	140	/	150
ProBensmira	2017	100	150	/	150
Boustila pro	2015	200	133	175	112
Résidence Hydra	2017	451	185	278	170
ProThazir	2011	450	180	200	78
Cirta	2008	66	120	/	24
OPGI	2013	12	120	/	45
Immeuble (Boulevard des Cliniques)	2015	20	120	/	150
Total	/	1702	/		/

Source: Various real estate promotions + field survey (2022)

Figure 13. Implementation of promotional collective dwellings (Source: authors based on Google earth, 2022)

In the ZHUN expansion, there are a total of 1702 collective dwellings. So there are four categories. The first one consists of two real estate promotions totaling approximately 450 homes, namely Hydra and ProThazir residences; the second category consists of three real estate promotions totaling approximately 200 homes, namely Gamma residence, Zahra residence, and Pro Boustila; the third category consists of the Pro Bensmira property development totaling 100 units. The fourth category is made up of three real estate campaigns with fewer than 100 units, namely Cirta with 66 units, OPGI with 12 units, and the Boulevard of Clinics building with 20 flats.

The living sections of these promotional buildings are enormous, and we have three spots for a type 4 (F4):

- Hydra residence in first place with 184 m^2.
- In second place, we have three real estate promotions ranging in size from 180m2 to 140m^2. Pro-Thazir has 180m2, Pro-Bensmira has 150m^2, and Zahra Residence has 140m^2.
- In third place, we have four real estate promotions with smaller spaces ranging from 130 to 120 m2. These are Pro-Boustila with a surface area of 133 m2 and OPGI, Cirta, and the Boulevard of Clinics building, all of which have a surface area of 120 m2.

These promotional buildings have an average price per square meter of 115.440 da/m2. Thus, the Hydra promotion ranks top with 170,000 da/m2, followed by four promotions with 150,000 da/m2, notably the Gamma residence, the Zahra residence, and the Boulevard des cliniques building. At a lower level, two real estate campaigns, Pro-Boustila with 112,000 da/m2 and Pro-Thazir with 78,000 da/m2, are in third place. In bottom place are two real estate campaigns, OPGI (45,000 da/m2) and Cirta (24,000 da/m2).The rise in housing quality in Constantine is reflected in private construction. From a formal and aesthetic standpoint, the architectural shape is exceedingly rich. bars and towers shaped like the letters "E" or "L." The building materials used are of the highest grade.

Figure14. "GAMMA"Residence (Source: Authors 2022)

Figure15. Hydra Zouaghi Residence (Source: Authors 2022)

These private structures, on the other hand, firmly mark the space (architectural shapes and details, building materials) and allow for the expansion of the number of residences, equipment, and the improvement of the quality or image of the area. The same can be said about the ZHUN, which has long been chastised for the monotony and urban structure of the crane road and has undergone "spatial rehabilitation" that has given it a new image and identity. On the other hand, the majority of these apartment complexes are still unfinished, and the deadlines have been met. It is the buyers who are battling to pay the price for the extension of the deadline, and they continue to be the captives of these private players. Then we see residential wastelands, nearly finished constructions or carcasses, and terraces that have been in the urban landscape for more than a decade.

As a result, without any strategy by public actors to maximize or minimize the price of land, everything is done through a public-private compromise. Access to this extremely rare property in a territory with a short historical thickness (unlike ex-nihilo communities) and all socioeconomic commodities appears to be favorable for these private real estate developers. They use these areas of land for polarizing equipment, particularly health care, as well as city-level investments. Finally, agreement on a transfer of the revitalized urban fact from the public to the private actor resulted in a significant transformation of the image of these lands. This logic of space constitution is the product of an actor system that causes it to evolve. This increases the socio-spatial differentiation; the social profile of ZHUN has altered as a result of the remodelling by these actors. These areas will easily share their territory because the price per square meter indicates their future social consistency. Prestige spaces and other monotones will share the economic profile.

Figure16. Building of a private property developer adjacent to public buildings (Authors, 2022)

Figure 17. Private sanitary facilities called "boulevard des cliniques" in public buildings (Authors, 2022)

CONCLUSION

Our reflection attempts to illuminate the economic regions of the historic Constantinople metropolis, which were investigated through the upper tertiary of the city center (the medina) and the enterprises (economic actors) in the subdivisions' peripheral areas. According to the results of the investigation, the census of the executives of the justice department and doctors' offices in the medina revealed a significant concentration of upper tertiary education. Constantine's center follows a qualitative logic with significant fiscal potential, giving the regional metropolis significant weight and role. The investigation of the economic actor (the enterprise) in the Ain El Bey plateau suburbs allowed us to discover the economic attractiveness in these spaces produced by market liberalization. The area becomes a repository for wealth. Thus, the Ain El Bey area's appeal, settlement, and development are mostly focused on two primary elements: the enterprise and the entrepreneur. Finally, the ZHUN Ain El Bey has been modified by private real estate developers, who are the only actors with land access, as well as key actors in image renewal and the early foundations of this territory, which established a common space symbolizing capitalism.Under these settings, the area follows a societal supply and demand logic, eluding state authorities. The inhabitants benefit from the Constantine metropolis's economic appeal.

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Citation: **SEGUIA Saoussene, BOUCHERIT Sihem.** *The Economic Territories of Constantine's Metropolis: Issues and Prospects. Int J Innov Stud Sociol Humanities. 2022;7(12): 195-204. DOI: https://doi.org/10.20431/2456-4931.071219.*