

Creating the circumstances of emergence of urbanity in urban «fringes» Case of Boukhadra (Annaba, Algeria)¹

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Abstract

The concern of Algerian experience in terms of re qualifying, depend on the choice of a vision that is evolving towards the renewal of tools and methods of intervention (la Documentation Française, 2001). This vision wishes to be a response to failing previous strategies because it wants, first, to impulse a harmonious urban and economical development and secondly, to establish social cohesiveness. The vision aims to promote the valuation of urban fringes (LEMONIER and REMY J. 2005) for their insertion and contribution in urban continuity, especially in terms of quality of place (LÉVY A and SPIGAI V.92) and quality of life. Beside, current urban instruments as PDAU and POS, until now, have not been able to provide urban landscape quality, because of lack of institutional relay. Also, they have not been able to articulate architectural multiple scales and all fields (social, environmental and economical) that concern the act of building. Consequences of this situation are: incoherence of urban landscape, decay of built places and, of course, living places.

Starting with a declaration of failure, visible in the breaking of space production, we are proposing a new territorial strategy while searching urban and environmental quality. The main issue is based on the important knots between all dimensions of urban system while acting in transversal actions in order to start a credible compromise in the re insertion of urban design prerogatives (RIBOULET.P. 1998). Actually, its position, between urban planning and architecture (J.P. LACAZE, 1996), allows it to: set relevant perimeters, articulate the territorial and architectural scales and establish relays between different procedures. For example, sustainable development strategy is an alternative to the lack of social factor, wasting of territories, natural resources and urban environment damages.

Our research action, rather multi-disciplinary, multi-scale and multi-dimensional, helped us elaborate a frame of quality evaluation that enlightens indicators (IFEN 97) and enables to find a target for levels of failure in order to intervene with relevance and efficiency.

Key words

Urbaneness- urban re-qualification- urban design- identity- periphery- urban fringes- urban mutation- transversality- sustainable development- re-qualification- valuation- re-composition- breaking into fragments.

Introduction

Territorial and economical mutations of our territory necessitate an accompaniment with procedures and methods. New ways of intervention have to start and new tools have to be privileged, in order to induce mechanisms for land property that would lead to emerging qualitative spaces. They would lead also to commitment in re-qualification process based on appropriate instruments because the urbanisation has always been registered in a social perception, in Algeria. It has appeared as an irrational and non coherent occupation of the territory and tended to «peri-urbanisation» (out of perimeters).

In this context, urbanisation tendencies are much diversified, in terms of urban forms and social circumstances. The fragmented territory of the city of Annaba (East Algeria) seems to increase sprawling, comparing with other cities in Algeria. Its structure undergoes this fragmentation, so it needs better management actions aiming quality and urbanity of urban fringes.

Urbanity concept, dominant from xvii century (cities embellishment), until now, disappeared with functionalism but is coming back strongly in urban speeches. This option comes from the inability of urban rules to generate a qualitative form and urban landscape. Moreover, we have to improve existing fabrics quality through efficient tools more appropriate in order to create a more subtle management of space.

The periphery has reversed the scale of urban values. We need a more pragmatic look on characteristics and content of urbanity and awareness of environmental issues. All this led to the search of sustainable ways of urban development, more respectful of natural heritage and territories saving. Fringes regions seem to respond efficiently to these new expectations, not only to decrease many tensions that act on large urban poles, but also they are going to contribute to enhancement of quality of life.

Therefore, we raise a hypothesis: New urbanities are emerging around cities and their definition criterias are evolving according to new needs and new urban characteristics. Fringes

are hard to mobilize in short term, so great efforts have to be made in order to engage re qualifying operations, especially policies for valorisation of urban potential. Actually, the process of re qualifying that urges in surrounding territories pushes to reconsider urban spaces and necessitate using urban composition to test appropriateness of tools.

Research Methodology

What kind of qualifying mechanisms should we engage in order to recuperate the fringe of Boukhadra?

Today, the public policies have to choose a valuing vision of local realities through engaging a re qualifying process that promises diversified perceptions and reveals identity end specificities contained in place. This process asks for an apparatus that has appropriate tools in order to federate components, create convergence in actor's logic and establish adequate imbrications between the diverse dimensions of urban system.

Actually, the thematic of qualifying process requires relays for spatial scales, tools and methods that procedure of urban composition is capable to propose (see hereafter scheme) because of its place between urban planning and architecture which allow it to establish relays between different procedures. Therefore, we can propose an objective for our research: conferring to urban fringes territories the appropriate urban quality and urbanity.

The procedure of urban composition that we have privileged will be based on sustainable development because quality is the issue of this method of research: it is the only way to reach wholeness in all dimensions. Major issue of the re qualifying of fringes aims to promote a new urbanity and guarantee a valued image of urban landscape.

For this sake, it will depend on indicators coming from important parameters of site: landscape potential, availability of land and roads infrastructures. Some criterias are consequences: quality of air, noise discomfort, landscape quality, energy resources and land saving.

Priority axes are to be privileged in this procedure. For example, re composition is very important. It has, as a conceptual basis, the re insertion, «disenclosing» and urban continuity as a response to 2001 law¹ about sustainable development. It proposes:

- In the first period, economy of territories, preservation of urban built and natural environment, valuing of sites through their local specificities and enlightening of their local identity.

-In the second period, necessity to elaborate new tools and a juridical, more appropriate frame to urban reality.

Also, we have to elaborate a set of efficient references that would facilitate the transcription in space of universal intentions about sustainable development and use of changing experiences. Rome has planned a new urbanity inside this vision and through a process of economical and cultural renewal. The used strategy has leaned on history, as identity base of the city, and on environment. It aimed to succeed in a project that follows sustainable development logic and chose a regulating plan that defines a few principles and strategic axes orienting the action:

-Saving territories.

-Giving priority to rehabilitation and re qualification of existing buildings.

-Creating surrounding centralities reinforcing common transportation means.

Since specific characteristics are lacking : aesthetical, historical and of identity (they would have given a heritage value), Boukhadra fringe would suggest to lean on landscaping frame that looks determinant to create spatial conditions for emerging urbanity. But site values have to be respected: geography, greeneries, traces and networks. On the other hand, the fringe has a natural landscape potential. We have to use the landscaping frame as urban composition tool that would have the ability to guarantee the cohesion of the fragmented territory of Boukhadra.

Here is, now, the urban composition method. Concerned with site geography, it proposes a new perception of sites through instruments (cuttings, cross-checks...). It helps design intelligible forms and to give again appropriate dimensions to the land, in order to hold new functions.

The issue is to elaborate a territorial diagnosis that leads to methods and actions choices to be defined. Then, a particular interest will be given to the work about land frame. It confirms the coherence of the piece of land which reveals history and geography, as Hanning says: «The process of land re composition is capable of recovering pieces of land that connects land use and realisation, and guarantees cohesion of urban fabric».

Board 1. Matrix Urbanity evaluation

| Evaluacion criteria | Structural | Functional | Built Composante | Enviromental Composante | Socio-economic Composante |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| Space scale | | | | | |
| Urban Unite <i>PDAU, GPU, PU 1/10 000- 1/5000</i> | <i>Compliances patways matrices</i> <i>Degree of cross linking between urban centers</i> <i>Networks Integration</i> <i>Cross linking Index B</i> | <i>Distribution of the strong functional composition</i> <i>Effectiveness of functional links</i> <i>Correlation with the transport system in common typological</i> <i>Accessibility Index E</i> | <i>Variety</i> <i>Integrating geomorphological</i> <i>Equilibrate built not built</i> <i>Variety Index E</i> | <i>Quality climate</i> <i>Degree of preservation against the major risks</i> <i>Degree of preservation against pollution</i> <i>Protection Index K</i> | <i>Degree of polari-zation and urban services</i> <i>Accessibility to equipment and services land valuation and classification</i> <i>Attractivity Index N</i> |
| Neighbourhood <i>POS, PPS M V SS, PPR, management and sustainable devolpment project 1/2000 1/500</i> | <i>Quality percep-tion</i> <i>Spatial cohe-rence of local</i> <i>Readability spaces</i> <i>Readability Index C</i> | <i>Space Continuity of use</i> <i>Control bounda-ries</i> <i>Functional diversification</i> <i>Mix Index F</i> | <i>Harmony deve-lopment</i> <i>Permeability urban</i> <i>Identity anb continuity of building</i> <i>Consistency Index I</i> | <i>Environmental quality manage-ment</i> <i>Integration of nature in urban aereas</i> <i>Comfort urban enviroments</i> <i>Comfort Index L</i> | <i>Economy of energy resources and water</i> <i>Efficiency of the management urban land</i> <i>Relevance of the management stra-tegy</i> <i>Efficiency Index O</i> |

Tableau 2. Evaluation de la prise en charge par les instruments d'urbanisme PDAU et POS**Interprétation de l'échelle des valeurs**

| | |
|-----|--------------------------|
| 0-1 | non pris en charge |
| 1-2 | prise en charge médiocre |
| 2-3 | moyt pris en charge |
| 3-4 | bien pris en charge |
| 4-6 | TB pris en charge |

From this point of view, an efficient work has to be done on scale changes coming from urban mutations undergone by urban fringes territories. The work on traces and networks guarantees the articulation of fragmented fabric and helps facing the whole land structure that will have to play an essential role in re composition and re valuing process.

Empirical verification: Case of Boukhadra fringe

In order to verify empirically the procedure of our research, we chose to work on the fringe of Boukhadra that disposes of huge land potency, extends on a 69 ha territory and is occupied by 8234 inhabitants. Then it becomes the privileged place for the unfolding of the population of Annaba. It is the appropriate territory for implementing local projects. This means an integrated approach of development with the use of different thematic strategies.

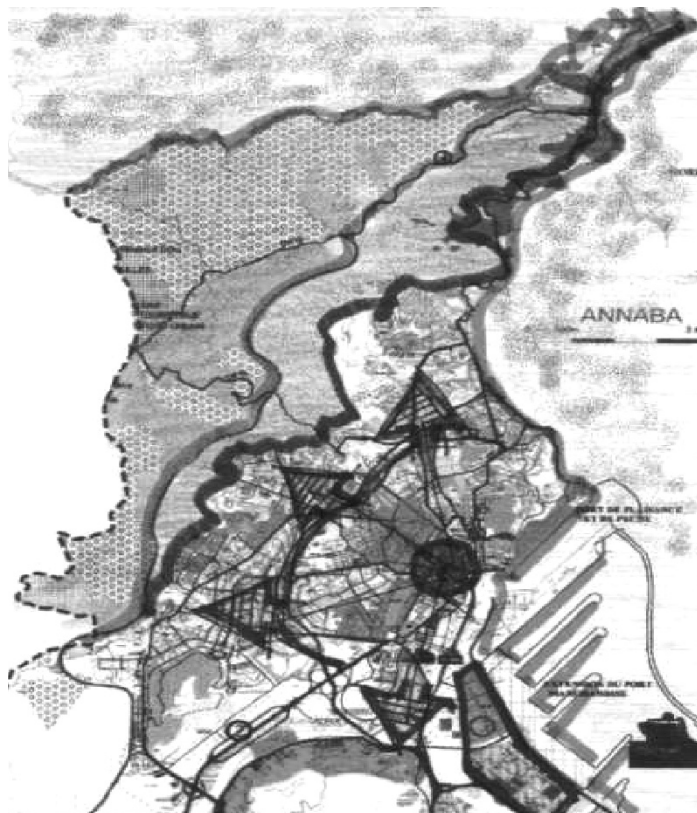


Figure 1. *Dinamical tendencies of développement of the city of Annaba. URBA-CO-EDF.*

-  Ville d'Annaba
-  Frange de Boukhadra
-  Mont Eddough



Figure 2. Urban fringe of Boukhadra.URBACO-EDR. The city of Annaba.URBACO-EDF.

 Frange de Boukhadra

 Limites El Bouni

Conditions for promoting urbanity in urban fringes

« Urbanity » is a word that refers surely to symbolic values, so: Urbanity means «recreating a system of values where all find their place²». It is perceived also through traditional urban forms although scattered territorial urbanisation in surroundings led to new urban form emergence. It would be interesting to recognize their specificities. But facing these sprawling territories, doctrinal tools of urban design appear less operatory and the concepts look decrepit. Actually, we can state that social cohesion, particularly in a world of perpetual mutations, we have to refer to stable values.

Urban space, known through its inertia over time and its «polysémie³», appear as a privileged support of this stability. We must regain abilities of expression through creation of hospitable and continue spaces as Marcel Roncavolo said: «There is a combination of individual strokes, collective memory and reference points which make the heart itself of humanity⁴.» However, today, spaces that show urbanity have evolved with the evolution of phenomenon of urbanisation. Places of polarity, public spaces and the concept of centrality do not respond anymore to conventional criteria. Also, criteria that help valuing the level of urbanity are numerous and diversified. They begin necessarily with quality quest.

Also, the analysis based on criteria concerning quality, send us back systematically to urbanity as the criteria enlarging concept of quality, talking about built and natural environment. Quality corresponds to citizens expectations and relations of exchange and communication in communitarian life, as B. Bochet said: «Urbanity is connected to concept of centrality⁵, as well as quality of urban places and the problem of urbanity refers to experienced and perceived⁶ urban quality...» We apply for urbanity as finality of quality: we must answer two questions:

-What does relate quality to urbanity?

-What are indicators for an emerging urbanity?

To be able to answer these questions, we would like to specify the functional and environmental spatial characteristics of urban fringes of Boukhadra, in order to determinate the most appropriate criteria and proceed to the valuing of their urbanity level.

These criteria put forward the following indicators of urbanity:

They are going to be a basis for structure in empirical verification in urbanity valuing for urban fringe of Boukhadra. Therefore, they have to establish the strategy of urban composition and lean on the logic of sustainable development in order to help us as key of perception. We will try to limit the criteria related to the context of our urban fringe, which shows the existence or absence of conditions encouraging the emergence of a new urbanity.



Figure 3. *Lack of public places, POS Boukhadra, BEM, Mila, 2003.*

a. The public space as support of urbanity :

The public space is appearing as the master key of social apparatus of the re composition of the city: the failure of «modern movement» is based essentially on the fact that it denied the importance of urban form, including through the tools of urban planning.

Managing of public spaces is a strong factor of landscape unity for a fabric where architectural diversity is prevailing. The landscape quality of public space constitutes an efficient factor for revitalization of riparian fabric: an intervention on this space helps federate and structure built forms often scattered.

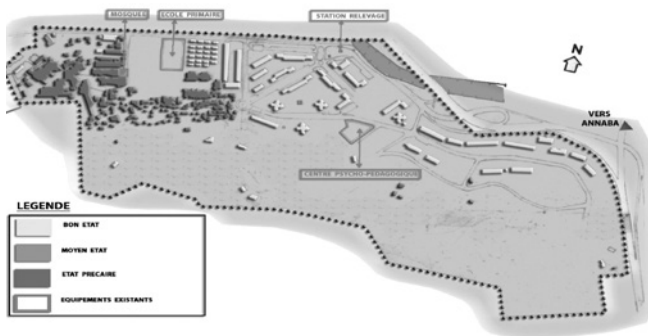


Figure 4. *Arbitrary settlements, urban fragmentation.*

The concept of fragmentation⁷, helped us to master more the concept of urbanity while

reconsidering the role of actors in configuration and understanding of public space. In urban fragmentation, the places of polarity are potential places of public space production. It is more concerned with freedom, security, interrelation, meeting, equity. It should be perceived as a place of realization of these values.

However, the fringe of Boukhadra is characterized by fragmentation, which shows 7.89% of space and 92.11% of built area. This reflects a disparate tissue localization arbitrarily generated by the logic of the large end of the modern movement (Fig. 7), which is why it does not favor polarity, favoring the emergence of public spaces. This finding shows that the objectives assigned to the instrument POS prepared in 1 / 1000 and 1 / 500, merely to set the COS and CES.

This finding reflects a way of structuring which does not meet the parameters that were used to develop our evaluation of the quality, which are based on national and international standards. This is because:

- The system of towers and bars legacy of the modern movement denies the notion of street excludes the notions of public space, urban interior .
- The informal housing does not meet an organizational model including it in the business logic. It does not clear the public and private, formal or continuity.

From an environmental perspective, the interstices (full / empty) delivered to the dormant, are ultimately a threat to the balance of the ecosystem and the sustainable city concept. This balance is even more threatened when one observes the progressive disappearance of green screens in favor of housing programs offered by the POS.

b. *The access to diverse network of communication and information as an indicator of urbanity:*

The process of «metropolisation» and access to diverse networks of communication and information are the beginnings of a new urban culture and, therefore, they constitute appropriate indicators of new urbanity.

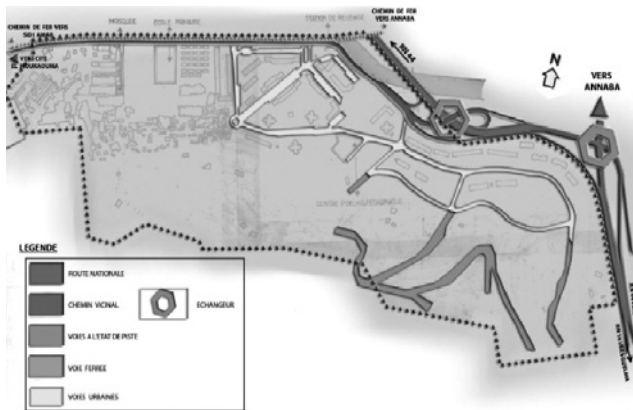


Figure 5. Viare Network. POS Boukhadra BEM Mila 2003.

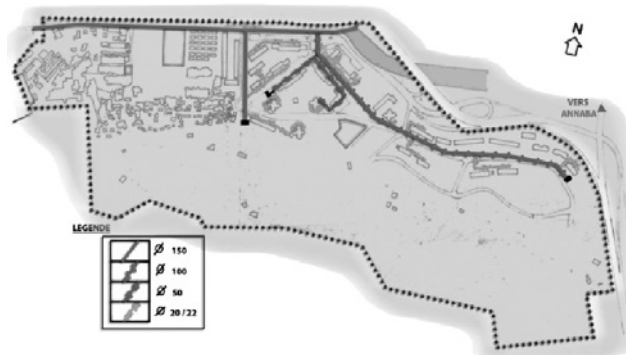


Figure 6. Téléphone network. POS Boukhadra BEM Mila 2003.

Today, the intensity of technical networks constitutes basic revealers of new urbanity. The mobility is considered as an important parameter of urbanity.

The observation of the site reveals that the large ensemble is the only entity that is endowed with a network of piped drinking water, an electricity, and telephone. The network of roads is reduced to an urban axis, branching from the runways and occupies less than 1% of the urban space (standard: 5%). Therefore, we can argue that the virtual absence of networks reflect the lack of conditions conducive to the emergence of a new urbanity in Boukhadra.

c. *The landscape and environmental quality:*

Landscape re composition of broken fabric caused by urban pressure:

The approaches consists on thinking about necessary use of nature, while acting on territory management and on used means for analyzing it and intervene in it. The landscape is always visible or hidden in each scale. Our research aims to give coherence back to a broken territory, because of sector logic that leads its organization and engages land mechanisms that watch over territorial saving while creating means for social cohesion, and to ensure the economy of the territories, while creating the adjustment levers urban landscape as a new strategy to develop a new urbanity.

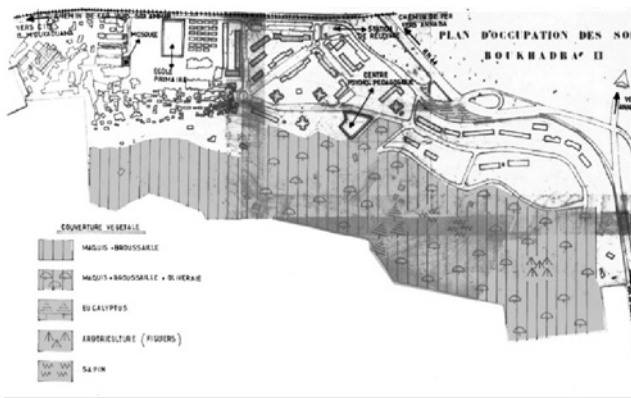


Figure 7. Vegetal cover. POS Boukhadra BEM Mila 2003.

However, the landscape screen to Boukhadra offers considerable potential in terms of vegetation cover. It is characterized by morphological diversity and landscape of great value. (Mont Bouhamra 50% Oued Boudjar), but it is not exploited as an asset. The space is Arranged from 0% (norm 18%⁹). The parcel is illegible or nonexistent and the same green fabric covers 0%⁹ of our study site (norm 18%¹⁰).

In this context, the site suggests Boukhadra based on local conditions, as the basis of identity, where the landscape fabric will be the tool of urban design, that can ensure the cohesion of the territory which is crucial for developing the foundations of the site ; geography, vegetation, tracks and routes. This approach aims to provide a heritage and to create spatial conditions of the emergence of urbanity.

Indeed, the process of seeking membership of the urban geography of the sites, a new key to reading, through its instruments. It allows you to restore the parcel to induce adequate size for receive new functions. From this point of view, relevant work should be done on the changes of scale generated by mutations affecting the urban territory of the urban fringes.

Also, interest will be given to work on the land grid, in that it confirms the coherence of the plot reveal the geography and the history. As outlined by Hanning, «The process of recomposition can find land parcels making consistent unit of land use and implementation, on the one hand, and ensure the cohesion of urban fabric on the other.»

Work on the traces and tracks, ensure the fragmented tissue, and can address the extent of the land structure called upon to assume a key role in the process of restructuring and adjustment.

Tableau 3. *Matrix for evaluating the quality of the urban and urbanity*

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| <i>Index</i> <i>structur A</i> 30% | <i>Balance</i> <i>index D</i> 10% | <i>Intégration</i> <i>index G</i> 5% | <i>Potentiel</i> <i>index J</i> 80% | <i>Operation</i> <i>index M</i> 10% |
| <i>Crosslinking</i> <i>index B</i> 10% | <i>accessibility</i> <i>index E</i> 20% | <i>variety</i> <i>index H</i> 10% | <i>protection</i> <i>index K</i> 0% | <i>Attractivness</i> <i>index N</i> 0% |
| <i>Readability</i> <i>index C</i> 0% | <i>mix</i> <i>index F</i> 0% | <i>Consistency</i> <i>index I</i> 5% | <i>confort</i> <i>index L</i> 20% | <i>defficiency</i> <i>index O</i> 0% |

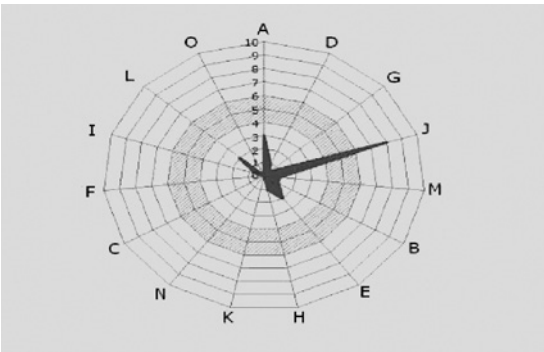


Figure 8. *Radar diagramme of the synthesis of the three space scales.*

The chart above shows that the indices on parameters related to the process of urban design that are poorly supported by the urban instrument: POS. This is:

- on the one hand by the scales which are developed instruments in force, and which do not understand the parameters guarantee the quality of spaces.
- On the other hand, the compartmentalization of disciplines that is not conducive to consistency urban
- Finally, the instrument POS does not take into account the environmental dimension.

In this regard, the parameters related to the urbanity and which should go through the quality of urban spaces require a strengthening of the existing instrument by the tools of the process of urban design and principles of sustainable development.

Thus, they will be more flexible, more scalable and to better adapt to new demands of urban life.

Conclusion

In front of the relativity of the concept of urbanity, the richness of urban actions and the reality of the site are able to constitute a base for reflexion and to generate new hypothesis. Among them there is the one that considers that the process of preparation of urbanity emergence conditions in urban fringes takes in account the reinforcing of the strategy of sustainable development through the method of urban composition. That hypothesis is shown through the coherence of management policies and planning documents that are elaborated including local authorities and citizens.

Actually, the urbanity is one of the basic factors concerning quality of life which appears through quality of built space. Also, the major issue is to conceive an urbanity of the periphery¹¹, by revealing its local specificities, its legibility¹² while reinforcing the feeling of belonging and its coherence. This strategy is composed of actions to be taken within a global and multidimensional approach of the territory.

The process of new dynamic for identity in order to create the conditions of urbanity seems to be appropriate in the valuing of level of urbanity. Moreover, the periphery reversed the scale of values while giving a new content to the concept of urbanity. Therefore we have to give a more pragmatic look to the characteristics. The existing multiplicity of cultural references and the production of a new symbolic govern this new urbanity. Also, the re valuing of urban quality of urban fringes asks for the revelation of their identity.

The urban fringes exist like territories where we have to take new identity in account. It becomes an important element in the content evolution and even its new meaning.

That is why we will attempt to develop a process of identification of the identity of the urban fringe of Boukhadra in order to find its level of urbanity.

Thus, the case of the urban fringe of Boukhadra shows that it is possible to drive beyond the static protection of the environment and natural resources, the dynamic process of creating values respecting the principles of precaution and Promoting a quality approach carries a new urbanity. So the case of the urban fringe u Boukhadra reveals that it is possible to man-

age, beyond the static protection of the environment and the natural resources, dynamic strategies of creation of values that respect the principles of caution and a strategy of quality that is promising a new kind of urbanity.

Notes

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