

Description

The [Canada Research Chair of small and mid-sized cities in transformation](#) (at UQAM, Quebec) and [ACE SPACE](#) (adaptive cities and engagement laboratory at Memorial University, Newfoundland and Labrador) wish to bring together 30 or so people - professors, researchers, practitioners, and students - around the question: how can we study and teach about small and mid-sized cities across Canada?

Two other Quebec institutions are associated with the organization of the school: the VRM network and the Cité de l'innovation circulaire / *Chaire de municipale pour les villes durables* (City of Victoriaville, Quebec).

The formula of this summer school combines a variety of activities during three days in Victoriaville:

- Dissemination of research results on small and mid-sized cities in Canada.
- Workshops and networking activities:
 - ✓ Identifying research priorities with respect to small and mid-sized cities.
 - ✓ Refining the way we teach about small and mid-sized cities in urban studies, geography, and development studies.
 - ✓ Collectively writing the introduction to a special issue on small and mid-sized cities in Canada (target journal: [The Canadian Geographer](#)).
- Organizing a roundtable discussion with members of the community of practice.
- Building teamwork between students.
- Proposing thematic field trips focusing on identity, economy, and the built environment.



By creating a space for dialogue and debate at this school, we hope to encourage the exchange and transmission of knowledge between experienced researchers, practitioners, and emerging researchers and to bring together local elected officials and charitable organizations to discuss current issues concerning the development of small and mid-sized cities.

We hope that this event will help you to discover research conducted in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada, in a setting where everyone can enrich their personal and professional experiences.



Program

DAY 0: Monday, May 23

Travel from Montreal to Victoriaville

DAY 1: Tuesday, May 24 (in Victoriaville)

Historical and economic perspective

9:00 a.m. Welcoming remarks

9:15 a.m.¹ Presentation by Mario Carrier (U. Laval):
"Economic development in small cities in Quebec: strategy,
policies, and governance"

10:00 a.m. Coffee break

10:15 a.m. Presentation by Pierre Filion (U. Waterloo): "Mid-sized city centres: successes and failures before, during, and after the pandemic"

11:00 a.m. Presentation by Sandra Breux (INRS-UCS) and Rodolphe Parent: "The specificities of the elective function in Quebec municipalities of fewer than 10,000 inhabitants"

11:45 a.m. Lunch (buffet) and Networking activities 1 – Handing off work to the students: Do a journal entry on three questions: How have you imagined small and mid-sized cities before this school was convened? What are the school's research themes that are the most striking for you? Are there differences between the provinces?

Contemporary issues: Municipal politics

1:00 p.m. Presentation by Renaud Goyer (UQAM): "Urban transformations in mid-sized cities and the spectre of gentrification"

1:45 p.m. Presentation by Daniel Kudla (Memorial U.):
"Examining the Local Policy-Making Process of Canada's National Homelessness Strategy across Atlantic Canada"

2:30 p.m. Roundtable with partners (Vivre en Ville, Les Arts et la Ville, City of Victoria)



¹ Each presentation will last 20 minutes, followed by a 10-minute question and answer period.

DAY 2: Wednesday, May 25

Contemporary issues : Aging, Densification and Housing Access

9:00 a.m. Presentation by Paula Negron-Poblette (U. Montreal): "Aging in place in mid-sized cities: Planning challenges"

9:45 a.m. Presentation by Simon Gauthier and Marc-Urbain Proulx (UQAC): "Location, trajectory and positioning of places in the peripheral areas of Quebec"

10:30 a.m. Coffee break

10:15 a.m. Presentation by Rylan Graham (U. Northern British Columbia) and Pierre Filion (U. Waterloo): "Barriers to intensification in the mid-sized Canadian city: A case study of Regina, Saskatchewan"

11 a.m. Presentation by Julia Christensen (Memorial U.): "It's a Tough Game: Navigating Housing Monopolies in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada"

12 noon Lunch (buffet)

1:00 p.m. Presentation of the field trip

1:30 p.m. Field trip

6:00 p.m. Supper: convivial format in a restaurant



DAY 3: Thursday, May 26

Sustainable development issues and research agenda

9:00 a.m. Presentation by Juste Rajaonson (UQAM): "A comparative analysis of sustainable development strategies in Quebec's largest and smallest municipalities"

9:45 a.m. Presentation by Nicholas Lynch and Bryhanna Greenough (Memorial U.): "Adapting Enterprises on the Edge: The rise of social enterprises and adaptive reuse in small/medium-sized cities in Canada"

10:30 a.m. Coffee break

10:45 a.m. Networking activities 2: Collective work on the articles to be published in the special issue, including the introduction to the issue. Reflection on research agendas (for the introduction of the issue).



12 noon Lunch (buffet)

1:00 p.m. Networking activities 3: Reflection on teaching for each area of specialization and also each city/province.

3 p.m. Closing words and return to Montreal*
For those who are based in Montreal or who come from other provinces



After holding the school ...

We will stay in touch with the participants through three activities:

- Sending of summaries of the presentations and exchanges
- Sending of the collective work completed by the students
- Publication of our work in the special issue of the Canadian Geographer

@Photographs: <https://www.tourismeregionvictoriaville.com/>; <https://www.lanouvelle.net/>

Economic development in small cities in Quebec: Strategies, policies, governance

Author: Mario Carrier (Université Laval)

Presentation summary: The objective of this paper is to examine the economic evolution of small Quebec cities, those with populations between 10,000 and 75,000 located outside the two metropolitan regions of Montreal and Quebec City, over the past few decades. More specifically, the aim is to find out whether these cities have experienced an economic revival and, if so, how they managed it. Relatively little research has been conducted in Quebec on this topic over the decades in question, with attention more often focused on cities in metropolitan areas, upper-middle-sized cities, or rural areas. After presenting a statistical overview of the economic performance of these cities, the analysis will turn to the factors that explain the differences in results observed, beyond the classical and neo-classical theories of development. The analysis will focus on the effect of public policies on these cities, in that they may have sparked development and economic governance strategies, whether from the point of view of a bottom-up or top-down strategy or that of multi-level governance.

Biography: A sociologist and urban planner by training, Mario Carrier has been a full professor at *École supérieure d'aménagement du territoire et de développement régional* (ÉSAD) at Université Laval since 2002. His teaching and research activities focus on economic development and territorial governance.

Mid-sized city centres: successes and failures before, during and after the pandemic

Author: Pierre Fillion (University of Waterloo)

Presentation summary: Planners participating in a survey of mid-sized city centres in Canada highlighted the success of downtown Kingston and the relative failure of downtown Sudbury, two similarly sized urban areas. The paper first discusses the predicament that most mid-sized city centres have encountered over the past few decades. It pays particular attention to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on these areas. The paper then examines the recent evolution of the downtowns of Kingston and Sudbury, describing the state of these areas prior to the pandemic, the effects of COVID-19, and the efforts to revive the activity of these two downtowns. The success of downtown Kingston stems from its historic urban setting, the presence of a 1.25-kilometre commercial street with continuous retail frontages, the proximity of a university, and the presence of tourists. In contrast, Sudbury's downtown commercial street is very short (0.35 kilometres), and the urban fabric of this area is fragmented by abundant surface parking. In addition, Sudbury's arena will soon be relocated from the downtown to the suburbs.

Biography: Pierre Fillion is Professor Emeritus in the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo. His research has focused on the political economy of the city, the revitalization of mid-sized cities, neighbourhood planning, the planning of metropolitan regions, and the relationship between transportation, land use, and suburban infrastructure.

The specificities of the elective function in Quebec municipalities of fewer than 10,000 inhabitants

Author: Sandra Breux (Institut national de la recherche scientifique)

Presentation summary: In Quebec, when we talk about elected officials in municipalities with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants, two elements are often put forward. On the one hand, we talk about the fact that these elected officials are often elected by acclamation. This phenomenon is sometimes explained by a supposed satisfaction of the electorate, suggesting that the elected official in these contexts would have the possibility of responding to voters' needs. On the other hand, it is also put forward that when the election is competitive, voter turnout is higher than in municipalities of greater size. Proximity of the elected official and the electorate is then mentioned as an explanation. Although these explanations must be nuanced from a scientific standpoint, they suggest that the elective function in a small municipality has different characteristics than in larger municipalities. In the literature, while works in both Quebec and Canada have focused on elected municipal officials, few, to our knowledge, document the elective function in municipalities with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants. Based on thirty or so semi-structured interviews with elected officials, as well as the results of an online survey of 126 elected officials in municipalities with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants, we will underline the issues faced by these elected officials and the reality of their day-to-day duties.

Biography: Sandra Breux is a professor-researcher at INRS. Her research interests focus on municipal elections in Quebec and Canada.

Gentrification and the transformation of Quebec's medium-sized cities: the case of Trois-Rivières

Author: Renaud Goyer (Université du Québec à Montréal)

Presentation summary: Research on gentrification in Quebec has focused on transformations of the inner-city neighbourhoods of Montreal and, to a lesser extent, on Quebec City and certain rural municipalities. The issue of revitalization with gentrifying potential in medium-sized cities is much less present in the literature. In the last few years, following the completion of various residential and tourism projects in Trois-Rivières, the challenges associated with the impacts of these initiatives on the residents of surrounding neighbourhoods have been the subject of debate. To revitalize central neighbourhoods, after a number of years during which residential development in Trois-Rivières occurred mainly on the outskirts of the city, municipal authorities have fostered the revitalization of the downtown area through the development of a former industrial wasteland (linked to pulp and paper). Through a description of the Sainte-Cécile neighbourhood and an analysis of the normative references of the stakeholders involved in this revitalization process, we evaluate the importance of gentrification in the debates surrounding urban transformation in Trois-Rivières.

Biography: Renaud Goyer is a lecturer in the Department of Urban and Tourism Studies of the Université du Québec à Montréal. His works focus on the sociology of housing, urban sociology and inequalities. Adopting an interactionist perspective, his research focuses on the tenants' experiences and collective actions.

Examining the Local Policy-Making Process of Canada's National Homelessness Strategy across Atlantic Canada

Author: Daniel Kudla (Memorial University of Newfoundland)

Presentation summary: The implementation of the federal government's homelessness strategy (called "Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy") is executed by a governance network comprised of a diverse group of government, quasi-government, and nongovernment actors. While there is an abundance of government reports and scholarly work that evaluates the effectiveness of homeless reduction programs enacted by these governance networks, little work examines the decision-making and policy-planning process that creates the conditions for homeless reduction programs. Given that innovative and coordinated systems of programs are most effective in reducing homelessness (see Doberstein, 2016; Gaetz et al., 2014), it is crucial to evaluate homeless governance networks' level of autonomy, flexibility, and collaboration throughout the homelessness policymaking process. To fill this research gap, we provide an Atlantic Canada context by focusing on the homeless policymaking process in four mid-sized Canadian cities (St. John's, Halifax, Saint John, and Charlottetown). This includes 30 interviews with the federal governments' professional staff and a content analysis of homeless policy documents. We draw from policy mobilities literature to understand how an assemblage of diverse social actors adopt and legitimize homeless policies in their particular locales. This project conceptualizes policymaking as horizontally distributed among an assemblage of state and civil actors rather than the central state unilaterally directing governmental programs through an all-encompassing neoliberal ideology. Seeing through "assemblages" helps us see the possibility that governance practices can have multiple and contradictory outcomes, foregrounds agency in governance processes, orients us to how situated actors negotiate tensions that emerge in these heterogeneous formations, and appreciates the contingency of particular governmental formations and how these arrangements fluctuate and change. This project is the first phase of a larger project that will include the perspectives of a larger sample of local community stakeholders across our four research sites.

Biography: Dr. Daniel Kudla is an Assistant Professor in Sociology at Memorial University. He is an urban sociologist, criminologist, and social theorist who studies social control, policing, urban marginality, and poverty governance.

Aging in place in mid-sized cities: Planning challenges

Author: Paula Negron-Poblete (Université de Montréal)

Presentation summary:

As the main cities of many regional county municipalities (RCMs), mid-sized cities often concentrate health services, facilities, and businesses of regional scope. This offer attracts older people from smaller communities and surrounding rural areas, who are looking for greater proximity to services, particularly health care. Mid-sized cities are thus characterized by a marked aging of their population, which takes place in two types of environments: in private residences for the elderly, which accommodate these new residents; and in low-density environments, which are more associated with aging in place.

Using the cases of Granby and Victoriaville, we will elaborate on the challenges faced by mid-sized cities that wish to facilitate a positive experience of aging within the community. The low mix of uses and connectivity levels mean that accessibility remains limited. While active mobility is seen as a winning strategy to promote independent aging, this form of mobility is not always easy in these cities, where there is a strong dependence on the automobile. Despite this, efforts have been made in recent years by various public actors to enable people to age in their communities.

Biography: Paula Negrón is a professor at the School of Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture of the Université de Montréal. She has a multidisciplinary background in architecture, urban planning, and development (PhD). She is interested in the links between urban forms, daily mobility, and spatial accessibility, from a person-environment perspective. Her current research focuses on the challenges of aging in suburban environments and mid-sized cities.

Location, trajectory, and positioning of sites in Quebec's peripheral regions

Author: Simon Gauthier et Marc-Urbain Proulx (Université du Québec à Chicoutimi)

Presentation summary:

Packed with varied, uneven, dispersed, remote, and often even enclaved natural resource basins, Canada's peripheral regions do not correspond in any way to the classic model of hierarchical central areas widely taught in Europe, the Middle East, the United States, and Asia. Within the vast periphery of this northern country, the broad plains colonized by agriculture did not precede, or only barely predated, the emergence of localized spaces for exchange, worship, socializing, income security, or specialized services. In regions far from metropolitan areas, resources are as a general rule available for shipment to a vast market. Some places are anchored on basins and reserves while others are emerging to serve the transshipment of goods. Together, they form corridors of penetration from the periphery.

The data presented in this paper seek to detail this model of location and development of peripheral sites, while adding important nuances. Eight categories of local demographic trajectories will be presented and explained in detail. The exercise will shed light on the varied and changing conditions of the development of small and medium-sized cities in peripheral areas of Quebec. In particular, it may illustrate that while there is currently no "basket case," not even Joutel or Schefferville, no urban explosion is on the horizon, as occurred in Sept-Îles during the 1960s and 1970s.

Biography:

- A holder of a master's degree in regional studies from Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC), Simon Gauthier is currently writing his doctoral thesis in regional development on the theme of the economic evolution of peripheral territories in Quebec.
- Marc-Urbain Proulx is a professor of regional economics at Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC). He regularly publishes articles in scholarly journals. He is also the former director of the *Organisations et territoires* journal. Published by PUQ in 2019, his latest work is entitled "*Splendeurs, misères et ressorts des régions*".

Barriers to intensification in the mid-sized Canadian city: A case study of Regina, Saskatchewan

Author: Rylan Graham (University of Northern British Columbia) and Pierre Filion (University of Waterloo)

Presentation summary: Regina, comparable to many mid-sized Canadian cities, has set a policy agenda that aims to attract a greater share of population growth and development within the existing urbanized area – a process referred to as intensification and a core pillar of the Smart Growth agenda. However, despite a major shift in policy nearly a decade ago, Regina has failed to successfully implement its 30% annual intensification target and is lagging well behind on the target to attract 10,000 new residents to the city centre. This research seeks to better understand why both policy objectives are failing to materialize – or what factors are driving further evidence of the ‘say-do-gap.’ This presentation presents the key findings to have emerged through a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with Regina’s planning and development industry. Our findings highlight the most significant barriers impeding the implementation of the City’s intensification objectives. Moreover, we speculate on possible solutions to close the aforementioned ‘say-do-gap’ to achieve more sustainable growth and development. These findings offer an important contribution in understanding growth patterns in small and mid-sized Canadian cities and in understanding the common barriers which limit a shift towards intensification.

Biography:

- Rylan Graham is an Assistant Professor in the School of Planning and Sustainability at the University of Northern British Columbia. Rylan’s research focuses on growth management and intensification, downtown revitalization, with a particular focus on mid-sized Canadian cities. Rylan is a RPP and MCIP with PIBC and CIP.
- Pierre Filion is Professor Emeritus in the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo. His research has focused on the political economy of the city, the revitalization of mid-sized cities, neighbourhood planning, the planning of metropolitan regions, and the relationship between transportation, land use, and suburban infrastructure.

It’s a Tough Game: Navigating Housing Monopolies in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada

Author: Julia Christensen and Lisa Freeman (Memorial University of Newfoundland)

Presentation summary: This presentation emerges from community-based research in collaboration with Alternatives North, a social justice, anti-poverty non-profit in Yellowknife, NWT since 2017. We focus on Housing First in the urbanizing capital city of Yellowknife to demonstrate how the lack of a housing spectrum in the city negatively impacts low-income tenants and complicates the program’s implementation and outcomes. First, we discuss the pragmatic and philosophical underpinnings of the Housing First model. Second, we outline the barriers to housing in the City of Yellowknife. Finally, we introduce stories and perspectives shared by our research participants, drawing on a collaborative infographic poster created as part of this research. We discuss the landscape of private and public housing "monopolies" as well as the benefits and challenges experienced during the inaugural Housing First program in Yellowknife. Overall, we explore how the persistence of private and public housing monopolies create significant limitations for the success of supportive and transitional housing models such as Housing First when they are implemented in northern communities.

In sum, we suggest that such models need to be re-conceptualized and adapted to northern urbanizing contexts to reflect constraints on the northern housing spectrum

Biography: Dr. Julia Christensen is a Canada Research Chair in Northern Governance and Public Policy and Associate Professor in Geography at Memorial University. She has published extensively on housing, home and homelessness, urbanization and social determinants of health in northern and Arctic regions in Canada and Greenland.

A comparative analysis of sustainable development strategies in Quebec's largest and smallest municipalities

Author: Juste Rajaonson (Université du Québec à Montréal)

Presentation summary: In order to contribute to the literature on the differences between municipalities at the upper and lower ends of the national urban hierarchies, this presentation proposes an analysis of the similarities and differences between the 50 largest and 50 smallest municipalities in Quebec in addressing sustainable development issues in their urban planning. A total of 1,425 instruments (e.g. dedicated policies, strategies, action plans) were identified, the majority (83%) of which came from the 50 largest municipalities in Quebec. All of these instruments were subjected to a content analysis. We made various observations. Among other things, we have noted that initiatives from municipalities at the top end of the Quebec urban hierarchy i) share more similarities; ii) include initiatives found elsewhere in small municipalities; iii) use more proactive than reactive management channels; iv) have a greater tolerance for risk; and v) benefit from a network of other similar proactive cities. In conclusion, we discuss the policy implications and limitations of the analysis as well as opportunities for further research.

Biography: Juste Rajaonson is a professor in the Department of Urban and Tourism Studies at ESG-UQAM. A former public servant with the Government of Canada, his research lies at the intersection of the evaluation of public interventions and urban and regional development. His current work focuses on urban sustainability, circular cities, and the financing of innovation.

Adapting Enterprises on the Edge: The rise of social enterprises and adaptive reuse in small/medium sized cities in Canada

Author: Dr. Nicholas Lynch and Bryhanna Greenough (Memorial University of Newfoundland)

Presentation summary: In recent years, numerous mainline Christian denominations throughout Canada have sold their places of worship in the real estate market in response to declines in religious membership and participation. While congregational amalgamation and the sale of churches in local real estate markets is still a popular approach, many stakeholders are turning to alternative methods to retain their historic worship spaces - in whole or in part. Religious organizations are now establishing faith-based organizations and social enterprises, that is, nongovernmental market-based approaches, to secure funding and carry out social and religious initiatives, like providing affordable housing, that either replace or supplement secular service delivery. In addition, an increasing number of religious institutions are pairing these approaches with building

management strategies that include land-use planning, adaptive reuse, and new governance structures. While some literature explores these issues in large cities, little is known about the contexts, challenges, and opportunities in small/medium sized cities. Considering this gap, this work investigates the emerging relationships and practices between religious communities and social enterprises in smaller Canadian communities. Through case study research, we explore a constellation of new ownership structures and experiments in shared and partnered management strategies and their social and spatial implications.

Biography:

- Nicholas Lynch is an Assistant Professor in the Geography Department at Memorial University. Nicholas is an urban cultural geographer who writes about social and cultural issues surrounding the urban built environment. His research involves exploring the contexts and issues of closure and adaptive reuse of historic institutional buildings. In recent projects, Nicholas has investigated the growing phenomena of the closure, abandonment and reuse of religious worship spaces in urban environments and surplus lighthouses in coastal communities. His research also involves exploring the various challenges and impacts of urban development in smaller/peripheral cities throughout Canada, and the implementation of building sustainability practices in cities around the world.
- Bryhanna Greenough is a Geography honours student at Memorial University. Her current research interests include understanding the pathways, partnerships, and various forms of governance and ownership structures that have enabled under-utilized ecclesiastical buildings in urban centers to find new uses.