

**Fifth Annual Conference on Social Sciences
Regionalization, Governance and Development
Al Akhawayn University, 26-27 May 2018**

Conference rationale

The fifth annual conference on social sciences in Morocco organized by Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane is scheduled for 26-27 May 2018. The conference aims to expand on concerns in Morocco and elsewhere regarding development and governance by querying the role of political and administrative regionalization in this social equation.

With the increasing complexity of the challenges facing Morocco and the rest of the developing world, regional arrangements have come to the forefront of policy-makers' attention. Sub-national regions can be understood as political-administrative units, or else as historic provinces, or as physiographic features, or as the “functional” regions of classical academic geography. Such regions may or may not be reflected in institutional structures.

While many of the challenges Morocco currently faces, challenges created by globalization and climate change for instance, are global in scope, there is the realization among policy-makers that responses to them need to be multi-scalar, involving international, national, regional and local initiatives. What might work well in one part of the country, may not in another. In particular, policies governing resource use, agriculture, and building codes should vary according to local conditions.

Morocco has recently restructured its regional administrative system in order to better address issues of infrastructure, investment and development, with the aim of fostering economic, human, and social development broadly. The question remains, however, of the extent to which any regionalization policy can succeed in delivering such development without the underpinning of democratic processes and institutions. In other words, how does regionalization impact the way governments govern?

The rationale for adopting regionalist approaches are both ethical and practical. The people directly affected by a problem need to have a say on how best to respond to it. In practical terms, fifty years of experience with development projects shows us that local populations need to participate in strategies and projects in order for these to be effective or successful. The regionalization of government, administration and planning is expected to improve governance, in keeping with a principle in politics which holds that lower levels of government often understand the problems of the population better than the national level, which often views the country based mostly on macroeconomic indicators and aggregate data.

Conference themes

The conference organizers invite papers that address the topics of regionalization, governance and development, as well as their inter-relationships, either theoretically or empirically. Suggested topics for the conference include but are not limited to:

- How can regional political-administrative structures foster development?
- How do national and regional governments coordinate policy?
- How effective are regional development plans and what role does regional and urban planning play in development?
- How can regionalization help foster democratization?
- How do regionalization policies intersect with neoliberal modes of governance?

- Do regionalist arrangements improve governance in peripheral or marginalized areas?
- How can regionalization help address the problems posed by climate change?
- How can regionalization help address the problems posed by globalization?
- How do regionalization policies impact gender disparities?

We encourage scholars to submit either panels or papers. Panels should tackle a given issue from different disciplinary perspectives, whereas papers will be placed in multi-disciplinary panels. Doctoral and other graduate students are strongly encouraged to submit proposals and conference presentations can be delivered in Arabic, French or English.

On Friday May 25, one day before the conference proper, Al Akhawayn University's School of Humanities and Social Sciences will offer a workshop on research methods and publication strategies aimed at graduate students. The registration fee for the one-day workshop is 300 MAD.

Submission and acceptance dates

To submit an abstract or register for the graduate workshops, please access this website <http://conferences.aui.mndsn.com> and fill out the on-line form. Please note that your abstract should be in pdf format for upload.

Abstracts should indicate the topic, the research question, the hypothesis and the methodology the paper plans to engage in, and should not be more than 350 words long. As conference space and time are limited, papers can have only a single author; co-authored papers will not be accepted.

- **15 Feb. 2018:** Deadline for submitting abstracts to the Scientific Committee.
- **15 March 2018:** The Scientific Committee will send notification of whether or not the proposed paper has been accepted.

Conference fees

The all-inclusive (meals and shared room for two nights) registration fee for the conference is: 500 MAD per person, 300 MAD for students.

Conference Scientific Committee

Jack Kalpakian, Driss Maghraoui, Abdelkrim Marzouk, Kenza Oumlil, Eric Ross, John Shoup

Conference Organizing Committee

Driss Maghraoui, Abdelkrim Marzouk, Eric Ross, John Shoup