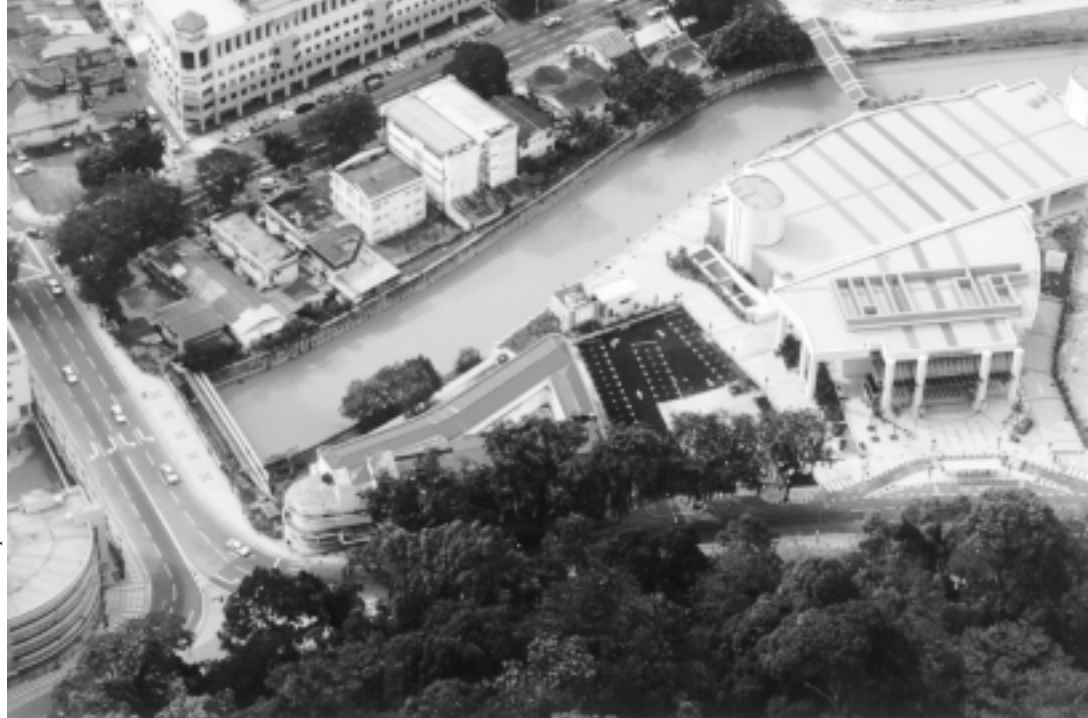


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ISTED - Xavier Crépin



Kuala Lumpur

Cities of the North, Cities of the South: What training, what research?

Research on cities of the South is undergoing radical change. Whereas it was traditionally the realm of specialists on countries of the South, it is now becoming a concern shared by many urban researchers, whether or not they are specialists on development issues. This should not be interpreted as a kind of homogenizing effect of globalization leading to the same solutions the world over, which would be absurd. It is rather an awareness of the planetary dimension of urban development, resulting mainly from the emergence of new megacities in countries of the South.

The build-up of a planetary dimension of changing relationships between people and their territories cannot be dissociated from a shift in scientific problems and political concerns. When urban issues are addressed at an international level, they become one component of the "Environment and Sustainable Development" activity. This trend can have various implications, from the risk of reducing urban issues to purely technical concerns such as waste treatment, to the need for more broad-based thinking that encompasses economic efficiency requirements, social equity, environmental preservation and

democracy. Therefore how does sustainable development tie in with the urban problems? What types and methods of production of public goods does it concern? Urban research cannot leave these questions aside.

The organization of research according to subjects related to geographic and cultural areas is being restructured according to research areas. Urban research is opening up new intercontinental comparative fields. These trends then pose the problem of clarity and visibility of French urban research work. Foreign researchers (teachers, research workers or doctoral students) who come to France need quick access to all French works and knowledge bases on their countries. Hence the oft-repeated need, well argued in the report "Research and developing countries" directed by Jean Nemo, for exhaustive, reliable research guidelines and a light structure, that will make known France's scientific knowledge potential and offers of scientific cooperation concerning countries of the South. ■

Francis Godard
Direction of Urban Incentive Action

Socio-economic challenges in cooperative research projects

Felix Damette, geographer

In France, North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, expectations for urban research are moving in new directions, particularly on the social front.

I would first like to say a word about France. The case of France is a good illustration of the European situation in general. No longer are we faced with the urban growth problems of the sixties and early seventies. Today's problems concern development and change - in populations, spatial use and social problems - which are all in turn affected by technological change.

A major urban issue, which has even become pervasive, is that of the social crisis that has been affecting urban affairs in much confusion for at least ten years. This confusion in France results from a tendency to call any problem in the city an urban problem, whereas 80 to 90% of society is urban. The social crisis has been all the more crucial in France because it has assumed a political dimension, with the development of a protest vote of considerable proportions in some regions and some cities. In this respect, I must mention an article by a colleague, Michel Grésillon, which aims to show that the suburbs that pose the most serious problems are no doubt what he calls the "cold" suburbs, those not in the news - the extremities, the depths of the outer suburbs, where problems of marginalization build up or threaten to build up in varying and complicated forms.

The social problem of cities emerged clearly during the

preparation of the State-Region plan contracts. Local partners are usually very much aware of a problem that plagues them every day - the employment problem. They therefore support projects likely to promote job creation. This takes them in two directions. Firstly towards infrastructure, roads, industrial equipment, and major facilities particularly university facilities. And secondly all projects connected with training, the image of the city and urban dynamism.

The government is much more concerned with social management - with the software aspect, the "how tos", the ways and means, the energies to be mobilized, the conciliators who enable all opposing forces to be maintained at acceptable, manageable levels. These approaches are certainly very different but they are not contradictory.

This gives researchers food for thought - particularly in the field of urban sociology. Not much is known about cities as local societies. The problem of hot districts is but one aspect of the problem. What causes cities to form or not to form a local society? What is its system of operation, regulation and development? How is a local society managed, not in terms of its administration or governance, but in its societal functioning? What causes a local society to become destabilized?

There are a number of highly spectacular known cases of destabilization of societies, such as when a city's livelihood is a factory that closes down. But experience has shown that in a context of an inflow of public funds, these local societies hold up quite well. The most sensitive societies are not those dealt a sudden economic blow but those that have experienced very strong growth, particularly in sudden powerful bursts.

Sociology occupies a privileged position in the research field providing it is not just a lot of words or local monographs. The sociology I am talking about includes demography, geography, job analysis, training analysis, etc. When they are all linked together, they make up a study of local society. What causes a local society to exist or not to exist? What causes it to work well or badly, to disintegrate or even to decay?

The second subject on which I would like to share a few thoughts is the Maghreb, particularly through the examples of Tunisia and Morocco. First and foremost, these are countries confronted with objective problems of urban growth. Their growth exceeds 3% per year, with migratory movements that are greater from city to city than from country to city. These countries must base their control of this urban growth

on economic fundamentals that may exist but are inadequate, and in the context of the critical political deadline of the customs union treaty with the European Union. Against this background, they have to overcome basic problems of planning and urban development and the establishment of an urban policy. They are finding themselves caught between a sometimes acute contradiction - between traditional doctrine on Mediterranean equilibrium since independence or even before, propounded by geographers who denounced the rural-urban exodus, the decline of the countryside and city-mania on the one hand - and today's deadlines and constraints on the other hand. In Morocco, for instance, the growth of Casablanca in the period between 1982 and 1994 was about 2% per year. This was much lower than the national urban growth. People attributed it to a rebalancing in favour of the hinterland. But at the same time, they deplored the fact that economic growth was around 3%, which was just more than the population growth, whereas it would have needed to be at least 5%. They did not establish the link between where development took place and the overall result for the economy.

The interesting fact is that a number of people in Morocco today are determined to do some thorough work on the subject. They are eager for fundamental research work, on the urban framework, for instance. This is an extremely interesting concept. For 30 or 40 years, such concepts were

used and abused to little avail and did not move with the times. Now North Africa is showing interest and is particularly looking to French researchers to advance in these fields.

Other questions also deserve to be studied in North Africa. I am thinking more particularly of land-related issues. This is a recurrent subject that has produced tons of reports. In my view, the time has now come to raise the problem again, but perhaps somewhat differently.

My third remark concerns Sub-Saharan Africa. In a number of African countries, a trend is becoming apparent, arising out of the political context, which I find most alarming. Political mechanisms are being implemented, which are difficult to label but which I will call “neotribalism”. This is a modern way of linking up traditional structures, in all their complexity, with the machinery of government and the political bodies. A way of managing society to the advantage of traditional structures and traditional chieftains. This political system automatically prioritizes the rural world. Tribalism exists



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in cities but it does not work in the same way or with the same structure. It is in the countryside that such systems work best. At the same time, donor organizations have a major concern, which is poverty. And in many cases, studies on poverty are intellectually very poor. They are unable to measure urban poverty and they relate poverty in general to the countryside. They conclude from this that money must be pumped into country areas. The behaviour of donors is thus perfectly in line with

local policy trends, with appalling results. And this can produce grotesque situations. One that comes to mind is the case of Douala. We must not let ideas on urban-rural relations slip through when they are totally mistaken as regards poverty. Major study work is required in the area of urban economics. This is not new but this discipline has much leeway to make up.

As regards research, are there any points in common between the requirements of the countries of the North and the

South? I would say that there are. In my view, we need social and societal analyses within a strong historical context and giving a vision into the future. A long-term perspective is essential. The discipline I would like to use would be “sociogeohistory”. Lastly, I wish to draw your attention to the problem of researchers in countries of the South. Some of the most eminent among them are finding themselves in terrible personal situations in the community. ■

The lessons learned from thirty years of urban research in cooperative research projects

Annik Osmont, Laboratory on urban change theory

After a particularly successful period from 1977 to 1993 in France, followed by a sharp decline, there has been a revival of interest in cooperative urban research projects.

If research is considered as being scientific, it can be said that taken in its broad meaning, urban research on foreign climes has been developing in France since the early fifties. It was pioneered by Georges Balandier with his study on the “Black

Brazzavilles”. The aim of this type of research is to observe, analyse and understand the key mechanisms of the transformation of societies from an economic, social and political standpoint, in situations of often-accelerated movement from country to town. This

urban research field has constantly met with difficulties:

- The compartmentalization of academic disciplines has long frustrated the researcher's desire to do pluridisciplinary research and it still does so today. For countries of the South, geographers used to dominate the field until economists began to undermine this position by advancing theories on development. Anthropologists, who could have contributed their in-depth knowledge of social structures in countries of the South, only took an interest in the rural world. They largely helped to spread the idea that in Africa, urbanization was a particularly unstable phenomenon, the cause of social disintegration, and was not necessarily irreversible.
- In the prevailing atmosphere of late colonization and then neocolonialism, it was not advisable to show an interest in events in places like contemporary Africa. Those who did were considered as a dissident fringe. And in this atmosphere, there were no consistent efforts to form a local research environment.
- The compartmentalization of the academic research world into broad cultural areas was fostered by discoverers of exotic cultures, who tended to make them their private preserve, which was obviously not conducive to a comparative approach.
- The difficulty of shaping the city into a research subject also had a constraining effect on urban research.

But despite the timid, disorganized, compart-

alized nature of urban research in countries then called underdeveloped, this research field was well and truly beginning to take shape.

Demand, after the fashion of supply, also proved to be timid, disorganized, highly fragmented and mainly on individual initiatives that were sometimes of foreign origin. This timid demand was hardly passed on at all to the institutional level, whether to the relevant ministries or to large research institutions. Throughout this period, the strongest demand was for the training of foreign graduates in basic and applied research. This enabled specific sections to be formed in university establishments specializing in urban planning.

However towards the end of the seventies, auspicious events took place, which enabled the city to become a subject of research and consequently facilitated the recognition of urban research. This was doubtless partly because the problem of knowing cities better, both locally and globally, became critical for better action on their development. But above all, an institutional demand for research on little-known or unknown urbanization mechanisms overcame misunderstandings and futile discussions.

In fact, the first move came from the Urban Research Mission of the Ministry of Public Works. In 1977, a call for incentive research tenders was issued, with the aim of mobilizing universities towards urban research in order to train young researchers. The Scientific Committee disregarded the North-South division and selected three tenders on developing countries out of seventy. This decision had a triggering effect. The best period for cooperative urban research projects was

unquestionably from 1979 to 1993.

During this period, the institutional demand for research on and in cities in the developing countries was fairly clearly identified and was expressed actively by launching incentive research programmes. The initial idea was to stimulate French research, not with any immediate development aid objective or in response to any specific request. These programmes aimed to help researchers form teams, or even networks, by encouraging them to address subjects considered as priorities, and thereby help to disseminate research findings, which was already the rule in developing countries for urban problems.

In this context, there were two financing phases:

1. Between 1979 and 1981, six programmes were financed and entrusted to six teams or six networks of teams, on previously chosen subjects;
2. From 1982 onwards, as the budget had been increased, a call for tenders enabled 22 projects to be financed on more broad-based subjects: urban growth and its consequences, urban techniques, the socio-economic workings of the city, methods of urban management and planning.

It was also during this period, that the Ministry of Research's initiative was reinforced through two of the main research institutions in this field: CNRS and ORSTOM.

This set up dynamics which produced significant results, qualitatively and quantitatively. They took on various forms: conventional promotion of research and the involvement of many researchers in research activities and in experimental research. A reservoir of young French researchers was formed and trained in doctoral studies. They have had various different callings. Some have

joined universities, ORSTOM or even CNRS. A few others have been admitted into study and decision-making structures. And some have made their careers in international organizations.

This has been highly instructive. And I would like to draw your attention to the most important aspects of this brief review:

- The initial structural difficulties specific to the research environment have not all disappeared but things improved when there was an institutional request for research.
- Nobody need be ashamed of the findings of this research. Many foreign researchers, not only in countries of the South, refer to these findings.
- In my view, collaboration between researchers and practitioners is the best solution, providing the interchange is not immediately channelled into "off-the-peg" theories.

But the big question is still how to make a clear, strong statement of a policy and a commitment to cooperation for urban development.

Yet right at the start, the cooperation instruments and resources were based on two sacrosanct priorities: rural development and somewhat later, health. Cities were only indirectly concerned by development aid, through the introduction of major infrastructure systems.

Research for its part warned that the growth of the urban population was too strong, that cities were suffering from precarity or underequipment, from which it was concluded that the means must be found of slowing down the migration from the countryside.

What changed in the 1977 – 1993 period, was the fact that a cooperative urban research policy was prepared and

formulated using specific instruments. Despite some shortcomings, particularly as regards geographic priorities which were constantly centred on Africa, this policy enabled knowledge on and in the city to be built up substantially, with a view to interaction between research and operations in the field.

But this public policy was destabilized in 1993. In a crisis atmosphere, incentive research disappeared. This situation resulted in a destructuring of the research community, marked particularly by the disappearance of INTER-URBA, the suspension of cooperative research by ORSTOM and the closure of the sections on developing countries in the training establishments. There is now a noticeable tendency to revive

urban research in cooperative research projects, but difficulties still remain:

- The ACIV programme (Incentive action on cities) of the Ministry of National Education has greatly restored hope for urban research but will it adopt proposals favourable to a transcontinental approach?
- An incentive programme has been decided by the General Directorate for Cooperation, but with a targeted scope as it will focus on Africa.
- Lastly, what I have seen of urban research in the cooperative projects of the European Commission has literally appalled me. Of course, there is no taboo subject, but the only possible solution is to modulate



Madagascar, 1998

ISTED - Jean-Philippe Lanet

the Commission's single line of thought.

Can the private sector take over from the public sector? It is possible to a certain degree. Big companies are increasingly keen for their expertise to be noted more for its knowledge of realities than for its use of stereotyped language. But if

the research community is to restructure along these lines, the action framework and objectives of everyone involved must be guided by the public authorities. ■

Editor's note: In 1999, ORSTOM became IRD (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement – Research Institute for Development).

Relationships between researchers and professionals —

Alain Durand-Lasserve (CNRS)

Collaboration between researchers and professional is increasingly necessary. But in France it is limited.

I have my doubts whether it is possible to engage in an exclusively research-centred line of work. From the 1980s onwards, I therefore worked fairly regularly with French and foreign consultant firms, with various national cooperation systems and with international institutions concerned with cities (UNCHS, UNDP and the World Bank), on projects at the interface of research and study.

This experience confirmed my belief that it is particularly difficult in the urban research field to pay no attention to the demand of professionals and simply ignore their concerns. And I feel it is just as negative

to generate urban doctrine that fails to integrate social demand, requests from municipal representatives and practices of professionals involved in the city.

And yet teamwork between researchers and professionals is uncommon in France.

We have no records of researchers working regularly with professionals. This subject has only recently begun to interest policy-makers in institutions - just a few in the CNRS and ORSTOM, a few more in institutions such as LCPC or in some of the university laboratories. To use an expression of Michel Rio ("Alizés"), it is particularly difficult to

collaborate when the "humanity coefficient" of the discipline is high. In other words, it is easier and more usual to collaborate in engineering sciences than in social sciences. However, because researchers on urban issues work on social problems within a pluridisciplinary framework, because there is a social need and public demand, because urban research can have economic benefits, their services are quite often solicited for consultancy projects with operational goals.

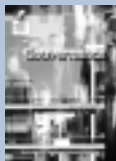
It is difficult to estimate the number of researchers working with professionals as experts or consultants. This is mainly because it is an activity not

recognized or taken into account in career assessments of researchers and research teachers. Until recently, it could even have a really adverse effect on researchers' careers, particularly in the CNRS.

But if this assessment is difficult, it is also because many researchers and teachers are rather discreet (for fiscal reasons) in the conduct of their consultancy or expertise activities.

Various attempts have been made in recent years to build up relationships between researchers and professionals. This is a new concern:

- at the initiative of ministries or central administrations (Interministerial Delegation for the City, Ministry of Public Works, etc.),



Gouvernance. Information package drawn up by the Documentation and Urban Planning Centre.- Paris: Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing. 1999. - 68 p.

This outline paper reviews the governance concept, its origin and ultimate purpose and problems of world governance and of urban governance primarily in the industrialized countries. The accompanying bibliography lists the main works available in French on the subject, published in the last ten years.

Price: FRF 50

→ Contact: METL-DGUHC, Arche de La Défense. Sales Office/Edipro. 92055 La Défense Cedex, France.



Villes et campagnes dans les pays du Sud.

Geography of relations, edited by J.-L. Chaléard and A. Dubresson.- Paris: Kar-thala, 1999.- 258 p. (Coll. Hommes et Sociétés). Geographers working in

Africa, Asia and Latin America highlight the diversity of relations that unite or disunite urban and rural areas of the South, and identify problems and common approaches that surpass the usual cleavage between cultural areas. The relations between urbanization and agriculture are not the product of an oversimplified separation between "urban-dwellers" and "rural-dwellers", where one category would be the losers and the other category the winners. An examination of current situations cannot be made without placing them in a real historical context of territories and long-term civilization patterns.

Price: FRF 150

→ Contact: Editions Karthala, 23-24 bd Arago, 75013 Paris, France.



Environnement urbain: recherche et action dans les pays en développement, edited by J.-C. Bolay, P. Odermatt, Y. Pedrazzini and M. Tanner.- Berlin: Birkhäuser,

1999. - 263 p. (Priority Environment Programme of the Swiss Fund for Scientific Research)

This book compiles a series of contributions based on three key words "research", "action" and "participation", as instruments for planning and organizing space and society. It aims to introduce new thinking on urban development by clarifying the terms of a "methodological contract" designed to unite researchers from the North and the South, institutional players and inhabitants, policy-makers and citizens

→ Contact: Prof. J.-C. Bolay, E-mail: bolay@dasun1.epfl.ch

- or for major interdisciplinary research projects,
- or in university or research institutions (ORSTOM in the 1980s, Interurba Tiers-Monde from the mid 1980s to 1998,
- or for special events or activities, or in thematic or geographic think tanks, such as for the preparation of the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul or a think tank set up in 1997-1998 on urbanization in West Africa,
- or for contractual research and incentive action. The first generation of research and study on incentive credit triggered useful debate on the relations between research and practice.

Note also a series of initiatives seeking inter alia to bring researchers and professionals closer together in thematic networks or foundations. For instance, an international association of technicians, experts and researchers (AITEC), the Cities Foundation, the Socio-Economic Housing Studies Network, the European "Network-association of European Researchers on Urbanization in the South" (N-Aerus).

Lastly, some public institutions working in the urban sector have set up research structures. For instance the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, which has set up an Urban Development Department. Despite these initiatives, the results in terms of cooperation between researchers and professionals are limited, particularly if the situation in France is compared with that in most Anglo-Saxon and North European countries.

Why are relationships between researchers and professionals so difficult?

Several explanations are possible.

- **Institutional reasons**
The French research system is characterized by the existence of large establishments employing many full-time researchers who are civil servants. This situation, which is an exception in the developed countries, has definite advantages - career stability, independent research, sustainability of programmes, scope for theoretical or basic research. But it also has a number of drawbacks as it tends to encourage corporatism and the defence of acquired rights, to block some disciplines by inhibiting new ideas, to deter innovation and discourage collaboration between researchers and professionals. This is because it is not essential for French researchers to work on a contract basis in research projects in collaboration with professionals. And yet such collaboration is proving increasingly necessary. A rather paradoxical situation, not only in urban research but in all the social sciences of the CNRS, is that the importance of contractual research, which often has an operational goal, has been increasing regularly for more than a decade. It is in this context that relationships are often forged between researchers and professionals. Yet it is only in recent months that private and public-authority practices have given rise to consultancy on a transparent basis and to the regulation of relations between researchers and professionals, despite an old regulatory and legislative system intended to define the framework and the conditions.
- **Cultural reasons**
These are doubtless more difficult to overcome.

Firstly, there are working habits and rates - these are not the same for professionals and researchers, who have different perceptions of deadlines and time frames.

There are also a number of reasons inherent in the status of intellectuals in France. Although we must be careful not to generalize, admittedly the image French intellectuals have of themselves does not always facilitate dialogue with professionals.

In this context, researchers have not always learned to address a public other than their students, and above all, their colleagues, which is why their writings are often cluttered with scholarly or learned but useless references and why they tend to confuse theorizing and abstract thinking.

The task of translating an urban research paper from French into English throws light on this difference. A translation of a French text, which if not literal is at least faithful, tends not to be very accessible to English-speaking reader, who may regard it as pedantic. Academic wanderings and learned digressions are much less common in English scientific literature on urban issues.

Most French research cannot be used "as is" by professionals, because of its length or form, even if its content is of great interest. What can be done? The only answer is to summarize it. But who can do that? The importance of this task is not recognized by the scientific community and by assessment bodies. A large amount of work by French researchers and academics on developing cities is consequently lost each year because there is no way to transfer knowledge to the potential users of the research findings.

- **The difficult collaboration between researchers**

and professional also has other reasons

On a number of issues, researchers and academics are in a position to compete with consultants. This competition, which is

sometimes termed “unethical”, is detrimental to small consulting firms and independent consultants.

In practice, researchers have a considerable amount of freedom, even more so when

they do the minimum amount of work required by the institution they are attached to, and can lay claim to scientific results attested by publications. ■

Delegated management, research and its application to China

Dominique Lorrain

The relevance of China for models, institutional environments and business strategies has caused works to be targeted towards this country

For my works on urban services, I have studied the institutional aspects of utility providers. During my trips abroad, I have become conscious of France's specific character.

In-depth thinking on the French model has led me to the following conclusions. A model is a stable structure linking three aspects: political and legal institutions, policy principles and a certain culture. This idea of a model leads to the question of building the model over time, to the historical concept. To reform things, it is not enough to change institutions through basic laws. There is “the Law” on the one hand and legal practice on the other hand. Legal practice is based on a certain conception of order and disorder, of trust and mistrust, on a series of elements cutting across culture.

I have developed elsewhere the idea of the importance of institutional environments. In my view, environmental issues are at least as important as technological issues.

The third subject of my research in France concerns business strategies. I came to realize that little is known of Western firms involved in producing urban amenities. I therefore set up a research programme to document and develop a monitoring process aimed at identifying the major producers of urban amenities and their strategies. This led me to examine construction companies, electricity and gas producers and engineering specialists.

The combination of these three ideas, their relevance to these models, to institutional environments and to business strategies led me to China. And in 1994, I conducted my first survey in this great labyrinth. A team was formed, which went there to see the construction committees, municipal policy-makers, etc., to try and understand how water management worked in ten cities. Then in 1996, we did similar work in the urban region of Shanghai. In 1997 and 1998, an opportunity arose via Sogreah to work in

Chongqing for the Three Gorges project. I was required to make a report on the reform of water institutions. Through this experience, my situation changed. I was no longer just an official sent by the French authorities to identify phenomena and problems. I worked in a team, in partnership with the Chinese authorities. By penetrating inside the system, I was able to understand where some of the blockages lay and determine all that needed to be reformed in the core of practices. The decision-making process works within a huge duplication of institutions. It is impossible to understand this sector without some sort of system to map out the observable facts. Their accounting methods are very different from our own for the moment. This led me to conclude that a reform could not be accomplished all at once but it must be phased-in within a gradual learning framework. ■

Conferences



AFRICITES 2000

The Organizing Committee of Africités 2000, which brings together the Municipal Development Programme of West and Central Africa and that of East and Southern Africa and the city of Windhoek, is holding a meeting in Windhoek, Namibia, from 15 to 20 May 2000. It aims to make this meeting the summit for unification of the African municipal movement and a positive statement of the strategic role of cities and local authorities as the necessary participants in sustainable development in Africa.

The subject of financing African local authorities to aid sustainable development and strengthen democracy, will be central to four scientific meetings held at the same time on the first days (18 and 19 May). Special sessions scheduled for 17 May will address sensitive and topical issues to be dealt with by local and central authorities so that Africa can enter the third millennium under good conditions.

Throughout this event, a trade fair will provide some 200 exhibitors with the opportunity to present their products and services to between 800 and 1000 local elected representatives in Windhoek.

→ Contact: PDM Afrique de l'Ouest et Centrale, BP 01 3445, Cotonou, Benin, E-mail: pdm@intnet.bj

Cities of the South - sustainable for whom?

N-Aerus, the Network-Association of European researchers on urbanization in the South, will hold its annual workshop, organized with the support of the European Science Foundation (ESF) and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), from 3 to 6 May 2000, in Geneva at the Palais des Nations, on the theme of sustainable urban development. Approaches have so far focused almost exclusively on the technical aspects of environmental protection. Solutions must be tailored to specific local situations and combine new technologies for the protection of natural resources, with innovative forms of urban management and governance.

→ Contact: N-AERUS, <http://obelix.polito.it/forum/n-aerus/geneva/>; E-mail: naerus@aecr.polito.it

French Aid Project

The last Steering Committee meeting of 1999 held on 14 December approved the FAC general interest project "Sustainable management of waste and urban sanitation".

On the basis of requests from partners of the priority solidarity zone of French Cooperation and the recent success of a similar project for drinking water, this is an action research project on the urban environment, which seeks to prepare new, sustainable operational methodologies on socio-cultural, technical, economic and environmental aspects of the management of solid waste and wastewater treatment in cities in developing countries. This project has two thematic components: "Waste" and "Sanitation" programmes. A third component, the "Scientific control" of the two programmes, will provide assessment and capitalization.

Research activities and pilot operations will be selected from replies to a "Call for research and pilot operation proposals", which will be made in the early months of the project.

The Municipal Development Programme, whose headquarters are in a city of the South (Cotonou, Benin), will be in charge of the "Waste" programme secretariat. The Water Solidarity programme, whose headquarters are in Paris, will be in charge of the "Sanitation" programme secretariat.

→ *Contact: Programme de Développement Municipal, Félix Adegnikpa, 01 BP 3445, Cotonou, Benin, Tel.: 229 30 05 60, fax: 229 30 19 76, E-mail: pdm@intnet.bj*

→ *Contact: Programme Solidarité Eau, Christophe Le Jallé, 32, rue Le Pelletier, 75009 Paris, France, Tel.: 33 (0) 1 53 34 91 20, fax: 33 (0) 1 53 34 91 21, E-mail: le-jalle@gret.org*

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Local and Urban Development Office (DCT/ILO)

- René Perier has left DCT/ILO to join the Hauts de Seine DDE where he will monitor development of GIS systems.
- Christian Barillet has been seconded to DCT/ILO by the Ministry of Public Works. He will particularly monitor activities to strengthen capacities (human resources), land management (FIS, taxation) and the management of urban amenities.

The urban environment in the South

Enda Third World, the Urban Popular Environmental Economy Programme (Preceup) has produced a CD-Rom on the participative dimension of "the Environment of the South", with the help of a number of partners. This CD-Rom is designed as a reference tool at the service of urban decision-makers and local players and includes a selection of recent documents: case studies, regional summary reports, experience records, reports and issues papers, and an illustrated slide presentation of photos of countries where Preceup projects are being developed (Colombia, Morocco, the Dominican Republic, Senegal and Vietnam) and extracts from films.

→ *Contact: Enda Tiers Monde, BP 3370, Dakar, Senegal, E-mail: enda@enda.sn*

Export Club Afigéo

The Export Club, set up in May 1999, is an Afigéo entity (French association for geographic information).

Its vocation is to develop synergies among its private and public professional partners and to promote all the geographic information activities of its members on the international front.

The Export Club has a current membership of more than a dozen businesses specializing in three key geographic information sectors:

- information providers,
- software publishers and solutions integrators
- companies promoting geographic information

Its main tasks are as follows:

- to facilitate an information network among its members: dissemination of analyses, information and advice for dealing with international contracts,
- to make knowhow promotion activities consistent throughout the sector,
- joint study and debate on perspectives and development requirements,
- to strengthen supply potential through better complementarity.

→ *Contact: Marc Poiraudau, Conseil National de l'Information Géographique, 136 bis rue de Grenelle, 75700 Paris 07 SP, France, tel.: 33 (0) 1 43 98 82 88, Fax: 33 (0) 1 43 98 55 66, E-mail: mpoiraudeau@cnig.fr*

Reaction from a reader of the previous issue on the "Urban Heritage"

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On the subject of the urban heritage, I feel I must react to the last issue of "Villes en Développement". In my view it is vital and urgent to initiate debate on the urban heritage, particularly in Asia. Urgent, because the speed with which cities are being transformed and rebuilt (particularly in China) is erasing all references to the old urban fabric even before it can be documented. And vital because the buildings replacing the old fabric tend to be of little architectural or spatial value. The building of districts "for tourist use" in downtown core areas, which are pastiches and official co-

pies of the architecture of times past, cannot be branded as conservation of cities or the urban heritage. Neither can the building of amusement parks at the fringes of many urban areas, which exhibit monuments and buildings of traditional architecture refashioned by official architects. And the disappearance of urban life, replaced by rows of shops for tourists all with the same items for sale, does not strike me as being heritage-friendly either.

For many countries, Unesco's backing has become the "intellectual and international" justification of a cultural destruction policy.

In the 1970s in Europe, we fought to ensure that conservation of the urban fabric went hand in hand with respect for minor examples of architecture such as housing. We criticized pastiche restoration resulting in gentrification and the exile of the working classes.

We must stop labelling this type of operation as heritage conservation or we must initiate debate on a radical redefinition of the meaning of the heritage as it has been built over the past fifty years.

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