Villes en développement

Bulletin de la coopération française pour le développement urbain, l'habitat et l'aménagement spatial



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The Al Yarmouk -Jusur Ashra intersection, a stratgic site for the development of the Eastern corridor of Amman APUR - R.I

The cities of the Mediterranean and the Middle East: the space for a new type of cooperation

he scale and strength of urbanization are placing cities at the heart of the development process. The countries of the Mashriq, for example Jordan, Syria and Bahrein, which are described in this issue, are experiencing dynamics of urbanization that affect cities in all their social, economic and cultural dimensions.

In this context, cooperative action in particular provides a means of strengthening the insititutional mechanisms that govern cities. Urban governance is one of the essential strands of local governance which will be one of the priorities for the French presidency of the European Union in the area of development. In this context, French cooperative action and the European Commission are engaged in setting up networking between the different local governance partners, namely administrations, local authorities, NGOs, and the private or parapublic sectors. A cooperation Charter for local governance support will be drawn up. I hope it will make a useful contribution for all the key urban stakeholders, both in the North and in the South.

Of course, it is not possible to talk about local governance without mentioning local authorities. I am particularly committed to this level of public action. The processes of decentralization which are under way in the South are essential for regional development. The sharing of know-how and expertise, but also the provision of tangible financial support, are challenges facing our development aid policies.

More broadly, cities are the primary beneficiaries of the strengthened social, economic and cultural exchanges that result from the development of the Euro-Mediterranean. Gradually, what is taking shape is a shared space of peace and stability, an economic space resulting from the emergence of a zone of mutual prosperity, and a social, cultural and human space resulting from the rapprochement between peoples.

By giving its support to the idea of a "Mediterranean Union", France is going further than this and suggesting that her European and Mediterranean partners should construct a joint political space together. Based on concrete projects that are of mutual interest, this strong partnership will provide a historical opportunity to boost development processes.

Alain Joyandet,

State Secretary with responsibility for Cooperation and the French-speaking world

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The cities of the South are faced by many challenges. The first is their exceptional growth, which in a decade will lead to a rate of urbanization in these countries of 80%, which is equivalent of that of Eastern European countries. Another major challenge that must be faced is that cities have both to upgrade their urban services, integrating amongst other things the concept of sustainable development, and as of now participate in the "world economy" and therefore be competitive, at a time of limited local governance capacities and resources.

n this context, three essential issues face public decision-makers:

- How and on what scale should they implement an effective strategic process based on a long-term vision and project ownership that brings together the public and private sectors ?

This is particularly true in the case of medium-sized metropolises (with populations of 2 to 3 million) and so-called secondary cities (populations of 500 to 1 million).

- How can they support this strategic process by mobilizing and creating local expertise that is able to develop and implement it, in an institutional context which is marked by extremely rigid centralization?

- Finally, there is the issue of the financial resources that local stakeholders can call on in order to make the public investments which are necessary in order to carry through this strategy, in a context of low autonomous governance capacity.

The first step is to formulate a strategic vision which is sufficiently ambitious and pragmatic¹.

Cities are where modernity is deployed, and where its

problems and opportunities are experienced. The related urban policies, which are multisectoral in nature, disturb the sectoral policies implemented by central governments which are far from being decentralized and for whom devolution is still a distant prospect. Developing urban policies involves considering the integration of the local dimension, in order to meet the needs of local stakeholders better. Establishing a strategic vision of urban development consequently requires the direct involvement of the authorities which form local governance.

Examples exist (Sfax, Alexandria, Casablanca, etc.). The organization of local governance becomes an indispensable condition for the formulation of an urban strategy through procedures (urban planning agencies) and cooperation programmes run by international donors (Agenda 21s, Cities Alliance, Territorial reviews, OECD...). It frequently occurs that putting forward structural projects (transport, informal housing, property ownership, land ownership, etc.) confirms the need for a strategic vision. A strategy of this type should be developed in the context of open dialogue with the political authorities and this process should be rapid, in order to ensure a continuity of interest, failing which everything "gets buried among the host of administrative reports".

Governance must be adapted to the strategy of a conurbation. The involvement of the institutions that are partners in international development aid in adapting governance arrangements to the situation in the city is central for a strategy of this type to be credible. In this connection, the issue of project ownership is a major one. The legal form involved is of little importance (government agency, public body, semi-public company, etc.). The principle which should be asserted is that the responsible body should be located as close as possible to the project, in the area concerned itself. Ideally, this principle should mean that project ownership is conducted by decentralized or devolved local or regional authorities. Last, those exercising responsibility should have the level of professional skills required to manage a major urban project. In a highly centralized institutional context, as exists in the region in question, strengthening the skills of local stakeholders is key to the success of urban strategies. These stakeholders must use their influence to bring together the dynamic forces in the conurbation and the local sources of expertise and impetus when carrying through winning strategies which require high investment from decision-makers in central government. Central administrations and ministries do not always realize the importance of this, so there are benefits in working as part of a network in the framework of decentralized development aid, aiming to increase the awareness of national authorities on this topic. Decentralized development aid is not always appropriate. However, this mode of "trans-subnational" aid can effectively play a positive role in the context of co-development and partnership, even between two participants in the South, on condition that urban policies are refocused on operational themes (transport, land ownership, etc.). Having established that the

Having established that the issue of local and regional management is strategic, the autonomous financial capacity of governance becomes an essential issue. This is a way of optimizing resources and innovating as regards the management of urban facilities. The resources belonging to local authorities in the South are currently inadequate, in particular because of a lack of local fiscal revenue (small local tax base, incomplete collection). The use of loans is also limited by the rigidity of guarantee systems and the small financial size of investment projects (which limits their attractiveness to international donors for example).

Several avenues are being explored, in particular municipal development funds co-financed by international donors. Currently, little use is made of these funds for the cities in the region (problem of financial classification, the sizing of investments and own resources, etc.).

Other approaches could be examined in greater depth,

particularly the strengthening of financial markets. If cities could access these markets it would avoid the withdrawal of national financial operators, as long as the system of guarantees is improved and innovative systems "solidarity guarantees" between cities of the North and the South are developed, or if syndication between cities becomes a possibility.

These measures would also improve financial governance by encouraging the development of a financial classification of cities.

Of course, increasing the cities' own resources is a priority. Programmes to improve collection rates for in-

come tax and local taxation that have been developed by international donors, which require a strong policy with regard to land ownership and registration, are strategic.

The attempt to find new resources that are related to general economic activities and the mobilization of property revenue are both innovative examples that provide some cities with useful margins of financial manoeuvre, outside legal frameworks. An exchange of good practice in this area would certainly be of great interest.

These issues that relate to the strategic vision, governance and the strengthening of capacities do not cover the subject entirely. They are, however, central, as they constitute a prerequisite for dealing adequately with the urban challenges of the present and the future.

 These issues were discussed at a closed workshop that brought together donors, international development aid stakeholders, cities and regions during the Mediterranean economic week that was held in Marseille on 21 November 2007.

Urban development challenges in the Middle East and North Africa

Gilles Pipien, expert in sustainable urban development at the World Bank

The region of the Middle East and North Africa is already highly urbanized (almost 65% of the population lives in urban areas), and the urbanization process is accelerating (the rate is expected to reach 75% by 2030) in spite of a falling birth rate. The rural exodus is continuing, and immigrants mainly move into cities (for economic reasons in the Gulf States, because of conflicts in the Middle East). The density of large metropolises is increasing.

Governments, which are highly centralized, are gradually becoming aware of the challenges, urgency and necessity of urban development, which has now become the key to their countries' development, even if only to combat the extremism which thrives on poverty. The needs of urban populations cannot be met by traditional centralized and sectoral approaches which are unable to respond to global issues. The shortcomings of current public policies can be mentioned, with the rarity of major urban transport systems (two metro networks in Cairo and Teheran and only one really effective tram network in Tunis), and the prominence of informal housing (up to 70% of all housing in some countries).

With this background, how is it possible to carry through comprehensive urban policies? How is it possible to provide high-quality urban services? What form should local economic development take? How can energy expenditure be limited, when a number of countries (for example Syria) are becoming importers? What guarantees of water resources are possible in a context of climate change? These questions all concern national and local governments.

Development aid should take account of these challenges and give priority to supporting the formulation of national urban development policies, to accompany, by various means, local urban development strategies, not only in metropolises (where Cities Alliance can play a role), but above all in the tissue of medium-sized cities and by improving the skills of national and local decisionmakers.

This requires coordinated programmes that bring donors together, an emphasis on direct exchanges of experience and knowledge between decision-makers, networking activities and the mobilization of decentralized development aid.

There are a number of opportunities for France to assist in this vital area, such as the World Urban Research Symposium the World Bank is to hold in 2009, making use of the institutions and expertise present on its soil, such as the Blue Plan, the World Bank, but also the MEEDDAT scientific and technical network, the networks that already exist in the Mediterranean region (such as the RMEI – the Mediterranean Network of Engineering Schools, the RMEM – the Mediterranean Network of Management Schools), networks of cities, etc.

A strategic transport plan for Bahrain

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With the fastest growing GDP in the Arabo-Persian Gulf (an average annual rate of 15% since 2000), Bahrain has to cope with rapid urban expansion which its urban infrastructure and facilities must constantly keep up with. SYSTRA has been chosen to create a strategic transport plan for the entire country following a call for tenders launched by the Kingdom's Ministry of Works and Housing.

ike every emerging country whose demographic transition has not completely ended, Bahrain's population¹ is increasing rapidly and is expected to double between now and 2030 to reach 1,500,000. Today's number of approximately 300,000 jobs is forecast to more than double by 2030 to reach 750,000. Development has primarily taken place in the North of Bahrain which contains its principal cities, including Manama, and the international airport which is on the nearby island of Muharraq which is connected to the rest of the country by three bridges. The country's economic growth is marked by a process of constant development, and many construction projects are under way: the rehabilitation of residential districts, the creation of a business district. the construction of new islands in the North of the country, impressive tourist projects, particularly in the South, such as the Durrat Al Bahrain Development, a major project in the Gulf States tradition.

In 2007, Bahrain acquired a National Plan, the National Planning Development Strategy, which lays down the broad lines for the Kingdom's urban and economic development until 2030.

The virtual monopoly of the private car

One of the main problems facing the Kingdom is congestion, and more generally the management of road traffic and infrastructure. Currently, almost all trips are made by car, for many reasons, such as poor public transport supply or the fact that roads are unsuitable for non-motorized modes. The number of cars is currently increasing by 10% per year, while natural increase would not exceed 3% and on average each person makes 1.4 motorized trips per day. Public transport accounts for only 5% of all trips.

Although its coverage of the national territory is quite public transport, good. whether publicly or privately owned, appeals little to the general public. One of the major problems of existing public transport supply is the attractiveness of the network: as buses are not in exclusive lanes, they are blocked in the almost permanent traffic iams that affect the island's major roads. In addition, the headways between two buses are relatively long (between 15 and 90 minutes depending on the route) and waiting is unpleasant in Bahrain's climate due to the lack of airconditioned bus stops.

What does the future hold if no action is taken by the public authorities?

If the public authorities take no action, it seems inevitable that the situation will deteriorate following the traditional pattern: an increase in car ownership \rightarrow more use of low capacity vehicles \rightarrow increase in pollution and journey times → increase in congestion \rightarrow decrease in the speed and attractiveness of public transport \rightarrow increase in operating costs \rightarrow reduction in the modal share and revenue of public transport.

In addition, the existing roads, which are already inadequate (lack of parking space for example) will not be able to meet future demand without a reduction in the car's modal share. This medium and long term projection process has made the government of the Kingdom of Bahrain aware of the importance of setting up a reliable public transport network, with a view to improving the dayto-day life of its fellow citizens but also the image the entire Kingdom presents to neighbouring countries and the international community. It was therefore essential to draw up an effective and sustainable transport plan for the long term.

A multimodal transport plan

In view of the urban context, a multimodal strategy should be adopted that includes an efficient public transport network, good freight management, better use of public space and a return to the use of non-motorized transport, with the goal of achieving social integration and a reduction in sociospatial segregation.

The Systra study proposed a transport network centred around three Light Rail Transit - LRT lines (of the automatic metro type), three tram or BRT² and a large number of feeder bus routes serving traffic to these lines and routes which will provide the backbone of the future network. The proposed network will provide high quality services to all present-day and future urban centres, reducing travel times for the inhabitants of Bahrain. The use of a variety of public transport systems aims to be effective, reliable and modern, thereby improving the Kingdom's image, in the context of a process of sustainable development. Its relatively small size means that Bahrain must have urban centres in which pedestrians can once again find their place at the expense of the motorist: it is therefore important to restrict vehicle access to the centres (particularly that of Manama) and limit the number of parking places.

The need for institutional reorganization

Currently, in the Kingdom of Bahrain, several Ministries are responsible for different aspects of transport, for example roads, public transport and parking management. This excessively dispersed organization leads to a lack of coordination within the government which means that the management of new projects is impeded by administrative red tape. It therefore seems necessary to create a single authority that is responsible for transport, which coordinates studies and project implementation and operation.

The Kingdom of Bahrain, like the other countries in the region, is committed to acting with regard to global warming and sustainable development and has a strong desire to reduce personal trips. A real transport policy is thus coming into being in each country in the Middle East, but also on a larger scale with the project, still in the design phase, for a high speed railway line connecting Kuwait City and Muscat in Oman, passing through all the countries in the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf.

 665 km², 724.645 inhabitants in 2005
BRT : Bus rapid transit



Bahrain in its regional context - Source : google maps

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The renewal of cooperation in 2007 between the cities of Amman and Paris and ADF's support has consolidated exchanges of experience and knowledge in the area of urban development as illustrated by the experiment on the Eastern development corridor.

mman, the capital city of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, is a metropolis which has recently undergone an unprecedented acceleration of growth, under pressure from regional investment – particularly from the Gulf States and because of immigration from neighbouring countries.

The City of Paris and the Municipality of Amman have been linked by a friendship and cooperation accord since 1987. Cooperation between the two cities was renewed in 2007 with the signing of a quadripartite agreement between the City of Paris, the Municipality of Amman, the Parisian Urban Planning Workshop (APUR) and the French Development Agency (AFD). This new accord provides an opportunity for the two cities to consolidate exchanges of urban development experience and knowledge with reference to metropolitan scale urban planning, travel and public transport, protection of the urban heritage in the city centre and, finally, drawing up sector sketch plans and carrying out operational urban planning.

The AFD is helping the Municipality of Amman to draw up its Master Plan and assisting decentralized cooperation between the two capital cities with a two million Euro grant. This grant is primarily intended to finance the Amman transport and travel Master Plan, activities concerned with the protection and enhancement of the urban heritage and sector sketch plans for "urban development corridors".

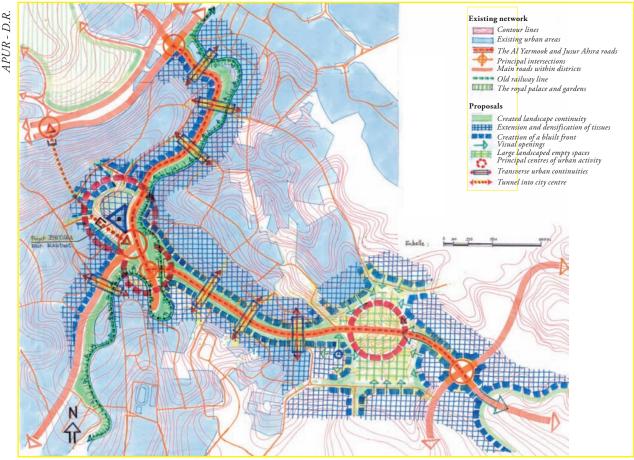
In order to meet growing demands for building permits on vacant or partially developed land in the city, in March 2007, the municipality of Amman launched a systematic study of 10 urban development corridors. These are all located in the Western part of the city along its primary high speed roads.

Later, in order to ensure that the city will remain balanced around its centre, three new development corridors were identified:

- Two are located to the North and constitute the "Northern ring roads", formed by the Al Shaheed and Al Istiqlal roads;

- One is located to the East and constitutes the "Eastern redevelopment corridor", formed by the Al Yarmouk and Jusur Ashra roads.

The City of Paris and the Parisian Urban Planning Workshop have collaborat-



The urban policy scheme. A landscape map For the Amman Eastern Development corridor. The Al Yarmook and Jusur Ahsra roads

ed with the municipality of Amman on the second site by putting in place an urban policy scheme for the entire sector, describing the site, identifying the potential for development and listing the actions to be performed in order to integrate it within a comprehensive urban project.

The Eastern development corridor covers approximately 300 hectares. It consists of two valley bottom roads with a combined length of almost 6 km. These roads both pass through a rugged and varied landscape and are bordered by sprawling low density urbanization, but each has its own distinct characteristics. These are two of the capital's major roads, constituting Amman's Eastern gateway (See illustration)

The creation of this Eastern corridor was intended to serve as a test for the systematic development of a cross-cutting approach to urban projects to be applied in all future development in the city of Amman.

Enhancements to the site could involve both a series of actions on its landscape, aimed at integrating buildings and free space within the topography, and by a series of actions relating to uses, involving a consideration of the positioning of major functions within the site, the types of traffic, and in particular the future primary public transport network, etc.

This approach has generated a Landscape Plan and several development scenarios (see illustration). In the second half of 2008, teams from APUR and the City of Paris will continue to collaborate with teams from the Municipality of Amman in monitoring the implementation of the Amman Metropolitan Master Plan. This cooperation aims to coordinate ideas about the different topics covered by site studies, such as the planning of housing, businesses, offices or facilities, the urban form of the zone (design of public and private spaces) and its major architectural outlines (volumes, heights, locations...), the management of travel and transportation (perceived as a foundation for urbanization), the identification and consideration of current and future land ownership, and the integration of heritage and environmental data about the site.

Sites such as the "Baituna project", which is a major building complex currently under construction in the central part of the zone, or the municipal quarries which constitute enormous empty spaces within the mountains, will require specific development plans.

Through this experiment on the Eastern development corridor, the City of Paris's and APUR's technical assistance work with the Municipality of Amman is helping to increase knowledge in Jordan about urban development instruments (regulations, procedures. urban consultations, architectural coordination...), about site analysis processes (topography, the pattern of roads, architectural heritage ...) and about the steps that are necessary for urban development (work on public spaces, parcelling out, travel, density, architectural typologies...).

Greater Amman Municipality official site: www.ammancity.gov.jo/english

The challenges of urban expansion in Syria: The issue of informal housing

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The urban explosion has been accompanied by a double process in Syria: urban sprawl, and the development of pockets of informal housing in the outskirts of cities. This article analyzes five situations which are responsible for the growth of informal housing and which each represent priority areas for Syria.

rban expansion is one of the striking phenomena of the contemporary world, particularly in the Mediterranean area. Syria provides a clear example of this as it is facing an urban explosion. The 1980s saw average urban growth of 5% in its major cities. Although the rate of urban growth has subsequently fallen to 3%, 55% of the total population nevertheless lives in urban areas and this figure is expected to rise to 75% by 2050. The conurbations of Damascus and Aleppo alone account for 45% of the country's population. These growth phenomena are accompanied by urban sprawl and therefore go hand in hand with an acceleration of the process of urbanization in the outskirts. In addition to issues linked with balanced regional planning, the organization of flows and transport infrastructures or environmental protection¹, Syria is faced with the colossal challenge of the expansion of informal housing or, put another way, illegal housing areas.

Informal housing first appeared in the 1960s. Since then its growth has accelerated and today it accounts for 50% of urban growth in the outskirts of conurbations and houses 40% of the population. In a context of strong demographic pressure (40% of the population is under 15 years of age), an uninterrupted rural exodus (with a population attracted by the employment opportunities in the urban centres) and the arrival of refugees (estimates vary between 1.5 and 2 million Iraqi refugees in recent years), the increase in the urban population stimulates property speculation and the uncontrolled development of informal housing. Syrian cities are therefore undergoing a double process; urban sprawl and the development of pockets of informal housing in their outskirts; the desertification and the deterioration of its historical centres where most of its cultural heritage is concentrated.

We have to admit that, although Syria has realized the threat that this increasingly fast uncontrolled urban growth represents for the country's balanced development and has made urban planning one of the priorities of its 10th Five Year Plan², there is currently no comprehensive strategy to respond to the problem. In order to perceive the scale of the problem, we can describe five situations which are responsible for the growth in informal housing, and

which each represent priorities for Syria:

- 1. Urban planning tools have proved to be ineffective. The Master Plans are obsolete; vertical integration (between planning and construction) and horizontal integration (between the stakeholders) various are frequently inexistent; reliable data and modern GIS systems are limited; planning procedures are rigid and too slow³;
- The type of informal 2. housing is correlated with land ownership: two-thirds of the illegal dwellings are built on private land. Although at this time a commercial transaction takes place (which will involve more money if the private owner has performed a minimum of planning or marked out building plots), it is very clear that the purchasers do not own a deed. The remaining third of the dwellings are on public land, often agricultural4, and generally consist of the poorest housing. The relative quality of informal housing should nevertheless be noted: although the situation is varied, its quality is higher than required by

regional and international standards;

- 3. The legal and regulatory framework is frequently contradictory and very unsatisfactory; for example, there are no administrative mechanisms for converting agricultural land into building land and there are no ways in which municipalities can become involved in the property market (except by expropriation). Confusion in the chain of responsibility and the absence of coordination between local and national levels as well as the lack of human and financial resources at municipal level for urban management highlights the urgent need for devolution and decentralization reform;
- There is no available 4. low cost housing; the public authorities are not involved in the social housing sector. Moreover, while as a general rule security of title is a necessary condition for investment, Syria has created a system which works the other way round, in which it is investment which leads to the security of title as shown by the law 46/2004 which brought about the large scale legalization of informal housing zones and obliged the public authorities to provide services (water, electricity);
- 5. The structural weaknesses of the Syrian

property market: there is no effective system for valuing land or providing compensation after compulsory purchase. No financial products are available either, which makes it impossible to gain access to credit and impedes the emergence of a rented property market.

At this stage we have to recognize that these areas are the subject of a certain consensus on the part of the national authorities and the local protagonists. It is also generally accepted that it is necessary to comply with three imperatives: improve existing zones of informal housing; improve standards for housing which is under construction; and to anticipate the development of housing zones through strategic urban planning.

To conclude, informal housing has gradually become a coherent system that makes it possible for individuals to own a dwelling in view of the absence of social hous-

ing and access to credit. It has therefore probably been used by the Syrian authorities as an adjustment variable for the system. To move away from this approach and respond to the dynamic of urban change, genuine political determination is required in order to strengthen existing capacities, clarify institutional systems, overcome legal inconsistencies, ensure greater decentralization and promote access to credit and an effective property market. This first step for Syria is no doubt to move beyond the exclusively physical conception of urban planning and adopt a sustainable strategic vision that takes account of governance, regional economic development and social inclusion as well as approaches that promote participation. Only a comprehensive approach can provide a longterm solution to the issue of informal housing.

- 1. The urban expansion of Damascus takes place at the expense of the fertile land of the Ghouta which is expected to be completely urbanized by 2020, putting a de facto end to the official policy of rebalancing the conurbation of Damascus by building towards the Anti-Lebanon mountains.
- 2. The 10th Five Year Plan (2006-2010), which marks the transition from the administered economy to the social market economy, lays down ambitious quantitative objectives in the area of housing and construction.
- 3. After the well-known Ecochard Master Plan (named after the famous French town planner) for Damascus in 1968, the new Damascus Master Plan was completed in 1999 and planned the development of Damascus to 2020. However, it has still yet to be approved, which has resulted in the proliferation of informal housing.
- As well as the dwellings in Douwelaa, Kafer Sousa and Jermana in the Governorate of rural Damascus.

I would like to thank Robert Maurer, Lead Specialist at the World Bank



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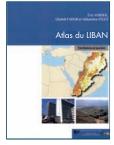
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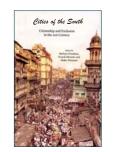


Atlas du Liban.

Territoires et société E. Verdeil, Gh. Faour and S. Velut Beyrouth, IFPO/CNRS-Liban, 2007 XIV+210 pp.30 Euros.

This atlas highlights the transformations that have taken place in this country in the last thirty years. It is based on the large-scale collection of detailed spatial data . Its informative and original maps show the territorial changes that have taken place, in particular as a result of war and the role the country has played in the Middle East region and in the context of globalization. *diffusion@ifporient.org*

Publications



Cities of the South, citizenship and exclusion in the 21st century

Barbara Drieskens, Franck Mermier, Heiko Wimmen ed. - Beyrouth, Saqi, Heinrich Böll Foundation, IFPO, 2007 From the shanty towns of Mumbai to the favelas of Rio de Janeiro including the skyscrapers of Dubai and the urbanization of the Palestinian refugee camps, the authors examine migration, civil society and the new locations for consumption and exclusion.

dissemination: www.saqibooks.com



Emerging cities

Keys to understanding and acting MEDAD, MAEE, AFD, ISTED This publication, which was issued in July 2007 in French and English is now available in Arabic.

The publication can be consulted in its entirety on the website which is still under construction

www.villesendevenir.org