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Summary

Gradual consolidation of the road system in the outskirts of Delhi

ROADS AND THEIR VARIOUS USES

Editorial

The street : a spatial, social and public entity

Streets occupy on average 25% of the world's urbanised surface areas, and they are, according to UN-Habitat, are a source of urban, economic, social and environmental prosperity. But in cities which are growing rapidly and informally, they are often seen as empty spaces that are encroached upon by dwellings, markets and other public facilities. Without intervention on the part of the public authorities, the road network ceases to function in the public interest and is taken over by people and business activities.
Nevertheless, the road system, as in the type of urban development carried out by Haussmann in Paris, site and service schemes in Ouagadougou's poorer districts, or organised urban expansion in Ecuador, provides the basis for urban operation, form, sustainability and liveability. Its potential lies both in its physical integration and the wide range of uses, and hence users, present - or in conflict – in it…

The expression "roads and service networks" only covers part of the functions performed by streets. They are communication links, carrying flows of persons, goods, services, or spaces in their own right, as public spaces or sites for trading. While spontaneously what springs to mind are traffic-related issues, in other words transportation and mobility concerns, roads play a much greater role than this in the operation of urban areas. This issue of Villes en développement deals with the role of the road system in urban development, the various uses to which roads are put and the synergies and conflicts around it. It attempts to identify the potential of roads that can be harnessed to foster sustainable urban growth and development, while not ignoring the underlying issues of governance and the interplay of stakeholders.

The concept of road system provides us with a single spatial entity that enables us to combine, in a cross-cutting manner, a number of present-day urban themes. We can identify several types of use – and hence users – which mean streets play a key urban, physical, social and political role.
However, as the road system is part of public space, it differs in nature from the private property that makes up the built environment. Whether what is involved is pre-emptive purchases to implement a road plan, or consolidating unplanned plots, managing and coordinating the performance of public works in order to install networks, or monitoring and organising the social and economic activities which arise from them, responsibility lies with local authorities. In this context, it is public coordination to achieve space sharing between physical and social practices, which can prove decisive. This is a form of urban engineering, which is yet to be developed, updated and promoted as a mode of public action in order to achieve sustainable urban planning.

Laure Criqui

Analysing the uses of African urban roads

Marie Dols is an urban planner with an educational background that includes geography and sociology. For 20 years she has been assisting local authorities in France and Africa on urban planning and transportation issues.

African cities are experiencing a population explosion, and the number of vehicles on the roads is increasing even more rapidly. The day-to-day life of residents is blighted by conflicts over use, accidents, congestion and pollution. In the coming decades, the requirement for new roads will be colossal. The scale of the issue requires anticipatory measures in order to ensure effectiveness and equity, and the safety and comfort of residents.

In Africa, spontaneity, resourcefulness and informal solutions take over when public transport services are inadequate. African streets are also a place where people live, and concern for the most vulnerable groups (children, the elderly and the disabled) should be a priority. Tomorrow's streets must be able to provide a satisfactory setting for street trading and people without motor vehicles – who form the majority.

Taking account of individuals' experience, the commonplace, the nearby environment and daily living conditions, enables us to design facilities which are appropriate and often less costly. At a time when are an increasing number of projects for large high-speed roads, road markings, the positioning of bricks or gutters, the phasing of traffic signals also provide low-cost solutions which are frequently more environmentally friendly.

Three West African approaches – that require few resources but which aim to achieve a considerable change in practices – set out to tackle these issues.

Traffic at an intersection in Ouagadougou

Training young African professionals

The African School for the Architectural and Urban Planning Professions (EAMAU) in Lomé (Togo) teaches a second year Master's degree course entitled *"Transport and sustainable mobility in African cities"* with Senghor University, CODATU (Cooperation for the Development and Improvement of Urban and Suburban Transport) and the CNAM. This degree should provide African authorities in charge of transport with support from professionals who are trained to face local urban challenges and needs.

Each year, the students are asked to conduct straightforward monitoring of behaviour in an intersection in Lomé [1]. What flows are present? What are the different types of vehicle? How are they positioned within the intersection? What behaviours are observed around the intersection? What are the locations of conflicts, discomfort or accident risk?

The questions set out to increase awareness among these future decision-makers of the diversity of practices in the street. Observation and awareness of these aspects will mean that future policies and design will better take them into account.

The Ouagadougou roads register

One million people and 600,000 vehicles travel into and out of the city of Ouagadougou every day. The figures in 2014 were 10% higher than in 2011, and excessive demands are being placed on the road network.

The Burkino Faso government has launched an ambitious programme to modernize the national roads that pass through the city. But motorways have too often continued into the heart of the centre, harming the urban landscape and interfering with the functioning of neighbouring districts. A municipal project for mobility has nevertheless been formulated around straightforward goals: creating a network hierarchy, creating deviations for through traffic, traffic calming and improving the quality of life in the city centre.

The profile of the roads also takes little account of the nature of flows. While two-wheelers account for 82% of the traffic almost two-thirds of the road space is reserved for four-wheeled vehicles. Measures for pedestrians are severely lacking - there are no footpaths or safe crossings. Too little allowance is made for the presence of commercial infrastructure (stations or markets). Users, traders and small-scale transport undertakings take possession of the new carriageways and interfere with the free traffic flow that was an initially aim.

In the framework of decentralised cooperation between Lyon and Ouagadougou and with assistance from the AFD, an investigation is underway in order to take better account of

the real nature of road use. A register presents a road hierarchy map which is combined with fact sheets, the goal being to provide tools to identify more appropriate standard road templates [2]. This large-scale document, which exists at the municipal area level (covering 500 ha) is intended to evolve, provide a basis for discussion, and give municipalities a tool that enables them to negotiate each project with stakeholders (industry, consultants and donors).

Sharing good practice

Senghor University, the Metropolis of Lyon and WAEMU (West African Economic and Monetary Union) are setting up discussion modules for municipal executives on the topic of urban management. In September 2017, a session was held on day-to-day practical road and traffic issues: street lighting, road asset maintenance, sanitation, drainage, embellishment and planting ... Discussions related to experience in the management of the occupation of public land (Abidjan), traffic signal control (Dakar), and the setting up of the urban transport monitoring programme (Ouagadougou).

The aim is to extend the operation by assisting the formation of this budding network of professionals with regard to issues that are central to their task: how to channel investment decisions both for the choice of road sections (where?) and the selected road profiles (how?). Should transport modes be separated or not? If so, how? How can we draw up a mobility policy which combines a strategic vision, management tools, concrete measures (traffic signal phasing, road markings, signage, profile design …)?

These various operations express a desire to help alter practices. In terms of investment "doing better with less", and in terms of enhancing expertise by fostering "South-South dialogue. Rather than "turnkey" solutions or methods, what we need is a better balance between areas and infrastructure, between the living environment and the management of flows, both comprehensively and specifically for each project.

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1 – Second-year Master's degree course *Transport et mobilité durable dans les villes africaines (2017) Pourquoi observer les rues africaines ? Le cas de Lomé.* Student field work.
2 - Commune de Ouagadougou & agence d'urbanisme de l'aire métropolitaine lyonnaise (2017) Référentiel : Hiérarchie des voiries ouagalaises (version provisoire).

Roads and urban form

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In 1924, Le Corbusier's modernistic city, with its super-block with 500m sides, its 100m-wide roads and its "towers in a park" broke with conventional urban form. It led to efficient and fragmented forms of urbanisation which are today visible in Stalinist or Chinese cities.

Ten principles, derived from quantified observations of hundreds of historical cities [1] make it possible to identify a more sustainable [2] approach to roads and the spatial form of cities.

- Dense with a fine-grained network: at least 18 km of streets per square kilometre
- Connected : at least 80 to 100 intersections per square kilometre.
- Continuous : small streets well connected to boulevards, without traffic control measures or obstacles.
- Diverse : with a hierarchy of road widths and types dominated by the narrowest.
- Creating urban islands with varied functions, at a maximum length of 120m, aligned along the street with roadside activities (business frontages) which form the network which divides the area into lots of varying sizes and multiple uses.
- Converging and complex, connecting squares which are a focus for civic and business functions and urban movement.
- Connected by a regular grid pattern (New York or Kyoto) or aligned with the topography (Havana).
- Designed at the human scale to facilitate pedestrian transport and public transport as opposed to car use.
- Creating an urban identity and landscape that is coherent and clear; with a sequence of views and vertical reference points, which do not break the visual closure provided by the squares and the geometry of the parks.
- Appropriate for the climate, orientation and compliance with height and width ratios determined by the winds and which protect frontages from direct sunlight while varying luminosity during the day.

These ten principles permit the design of urban structures that meet the imperatives of compactness, integration and connectedness. Combined with complementary principles of density and public transport planning, associated with land use, agglomeration effects and spatial inclusion, they are able to provide both economic efficiency and social equity.

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1 - Serge Salat, with Françoise Labbé and Caroline Nowacki, *Les Villes et les Formes : Sur l'Urbanisme durable.* Hermann, 2011.
2 - UN-Habitat, *A New Strategy of sustainable neighborhood planning : five principles.* Discussion note 3, Urban planning, 2014.

Pedestrian alley in an informal district in Delhi

The road network and public space : tension in Ho Chi Minh City

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Before roaming along its boulevards, visiting its monuments or shops, a tourist or foreigner who is unfamiliar with a city first gets to know it via the intermediary of a map. That of Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) gives the impression of large empty spaces which are not served by the major roads. This immediately reveals the incomplete nature of the road hierarchy: secondary roads are lacking and the major roads are often directly connected to a large network of small alleys, which are not shown at the scale of the city map. Satellite images confirm the unusual nature of this metropolis whose population numbers over 10 million, in which roads take up only 3 % of the surface area and where more than 85% of the network consists of alleys less than 12 metres wide.

These alleys (hèm) form the heart of HCMC's urban structure and are still home to most of the city's population. They are marked by their narrowness, their lack of footpaths and the bendiness due to their informal nature, which sometimes gives the impression of a partitioned environment which is heightened by the density of the adjoining buildings. The districts that are served by the alleys have very high population densities, up to 80,000 inhabitants per square kilometre in the traditional centre.

The origins of these service roads are to be found in the city's chaotic history. HCMC underwent exponential unplanned urban growth during the Vietnam war, which led to an extreme increase in density in the islands built behind the major roads and unplanned urban expansion.

Streets with multiple, reversible, functions

Apart from the specific form which these very dense districts give to the city, the alleys are spaces which are lived in, and with which both residents and visitors have an attachment. A specific spatial culture has developed there, in which a very wide range of activities take place. These multifunctional alleys perform the function of public spaces in the city which has few squares or parks. The latter are moreover largely confined to areas in the colonial historic centre of Districts 1 and 3.

The Vietnamese language categorises the world using classifiers which are affixes of common nouns depending on whether they refer to animate beings (con) or inanimate objects (cái). Interestingly, the noun which designates "a street" is "condurong" which means the street is thought of in Vietnamese as an animate being, and seen as a "trafficked space" which is shaped by its flows and varied uses much more than as an unchanging physical environment.

The day-to-day succession of varied activities means that streets and alleys constitute extremely dynamic interfaces, in which varied types of spatial possession occur during the same day. This may involve trading, time for socialising, district council meetings, parking zones or family get-togethers.

Trading dominates during the morning. This consists of a combination of markets, small shops and the arrival of a large number of food stands. The Vietnamese expression quán b+(literally "dust-restaurant") well describes the ephemeral nature of these stalls which are set up every day, and which temporarily transform the visual and sound landscape of the alleys. Compartment houses, which open directly onto the street, permit continuity between domestic and trading activities – traditionally housed on the ground floor and frequently encroaching on public space during the day.

From streets to roads

The diversity and reversibility of the public spaces in HCMC is however directly threatened by the growing hegemony exerted by one use: road traffic. While until now the HCMC's footpaths and alleys could be regarded as urban "territories", by which we mean spaces which are to a large extent taken over by citizens for their day-to-day

The street, an animate being

activities, their function is more and more tending to be reduced to that of a mere network, for use by traffic. In HCMC, less than 10% of daily trips are made by public transport and the exponential growth in the vehicle fleet is saturating the streets which were already congested by motorcycle traffic.

Once dedicated to providing local access, the alleys are now performing new roles for through traffic, linking the different districts of an increasingly large metropolis. The response of the authorities has been to schedule street widening schemes, coupled with new regulations that aim to control and restrict street trading.

The widened alleys operate under new organisational principles: the openness and maximisation of interchange between the ground floor and the street are increasingly giving way to a principle of closure, embodied by the installation of gratings in the front of houses. The desire to include the alleys within a system of streets and the primacy of traffic is thus gaining ascendance over their function as a public space. But this change from "street" to "road" entails the disappearance of the status of ordinary public space, and with it a rich urban culture with precious capacities for the social integration of citizens.

Ordinary public spaces under tension

This tension is sharply illustrated by recent events: in March 2017, the authorities in HCMC launched an operation under the name "45 days to "recover" the footpaths of district 1", the city's historical centre. This large-scale operation, which involves poster campaigns, official announcements demonstrating firm commitment, and a large number of strong measures with media coverage – the eviction of hawkers, the destruction of frontages and terraces that encroach on the footpaths and the impounding of vehicles parked on footpaths – was far from being the first of its kind. But its vehemence is new, providing proof of today's questioning of the historical connection between the road network and public spaces in Vietnamese metropolises.

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Dans les quartiers populaires de Lima, la rue est l'espace public premier

When a district acquires a pavement

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In Peru, unlike in other countries, street layout follows regular patterns in working-class districts and districts in which urbanisation has been informal and gradual. Groups and blocks of houses, lots and streets comply with the urban planning regulations. Everything is still to be done as the road plan is only chalked on the ground and nothing else has been built.
When there is no pavement, the most important roads to be built are those which provide access to districts as they allow water tankers to enter. The surfacing of other streets will only be laid once the water and drainage networks have been installed, which may take several years
But just because the road is not sealed does not mean there is no vehicle traffic: water tankers, small private or public vehicles and motorcycle taxis use the road to travel to the market or take children to school. These districts are nevertheless primarily pedestrian zones, in which it takes less than 10 minutes to walk to the shops or a bus stop

In these districts, the street, whether sealed or not, is the primary public space. Children set up volleyball nets there, neighbours get together for celebrations, marriages, funeral wakes and birthdays. These activities stop for a moment when a vehicle needs to pass, but the drivers are careful and only come when they have no alternative. No-one would dare ask the children to take down their volleyball net when they are playing a match after school!

Asphalt changes everything. From one day to the next, people who were neighbours become "pedestrians", vehicles no longer feel they have to stop. Day-to-day social life is restricted to the footpaths. Thus, when asphalt arrived in Villa El Salvador, a woman resident had to abandon her garden as it was "taking over" the road. Her only consolation was that she had less dust in her house: "that's progress" she remarked bitterly.

Consequently, working class districts are protecting themselves from traffic by building speed humps and controlling the access of incoming vehicles with chains or barriers. This means neighbours can continue to wander freely about in the streets.

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An urban fabric created by and for essential services

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But why is there so little dialogue between engineers and urban planners? The meeting point between them is nevertheless obvious! Roads and service networks allow residents to access essential services and, more generally, permit the provision of mains services in the cities of the South. Far from being trivial, this link highlights the primary function, and interdependence, of urban networks of roads and services (electricity, solid waste, water and drainage). While the road system is necessary in order to install these networks, creating them in turn determines the pattern of roads. However, developing cities suffer from an urban planning deficit. The road system is frequently absent, abandoned and subjected to land pressure. Service networks are installed in these unplanned road spaces. They are built gradually, by trial and error, with ineffective coordination at the temporal, spatial and institutional levels.

Let us examine the usual progression of main service installation works in a medium-sized Indian city. First, a temporary road with primitive gutters is constructed. This is damaged when the electric poles and transformers are installed. The road is reinstated and then dug up again to install the water network. New trenches are then made and filled in for the drainage network, which will weaken the existing pipes and foundations. The definitive road will be consolidated layer by layer by each actor.

At the end of this muddled process, very frequently each service which occupies the road is unaware of the placement of the others, or may even be in conflict with them, leading to deterioration in services at a number of levels.

©Criqui, Delhi, 2013

Under the road system : a space occupied by networks.

Conflict between different types of infrastructure

Water and drainage networks take up underground space. The cost of the investments and the feeling that it is less urgent means that drainage is often installed later, with the risk that the drinking water network will be contaminated.

The surface is used for draining storm water away, collecting and removing solid waste and for electrical transformers, each of which impacts on traffic flow, for example. Last, the space above ground is used to carry electricity and for street lighting. It is threatened by encroachment from buildings.

The road system is an infrastructure corridor around which streets are created. Its form is therefore decisive for the good functioning of services. For example, the surfacing, width and bendiness of streets will either allow or prevent the passage of a dustcart or the installation of pipes with sufficient capacity.

These examples show that it is very often the operators of services who, by installing their own infrastructure, help to physically create a permanent spontaneous fabric, much more than a road plan drawn up ex post.

The lack of coordination may be explained by tension between on the one hand the management of emergencies and the optimum phasing of works, and on the other institutional compartmentalisation.

Constrained interventions

In India, as elsewhere, the sequencing of operations is determined by the emergence of social demands to which the individual service operators respond according to their capacities[1]. The fact that governance is problematic, or even non-existent, for the conduct of works is linked to the overlapping of administrative divisions, the prerogatives of the difference authorities which are involved (there are more than 10 in the case of the Delhi road system) and electoral agendas.

In view of the fact that the planning mechanism is ineffective, the question of a coordination mechanism arises. One possibility is to envisage a kind of governance that will coordinate the stakeholders involved in the road system and its associated service networks based, as a minimum, on the concept of urban engineering.

This “art of designing, building and managing urban service networks”[2] is too rarely implemented both in the South and the North. It nevertheless has the potential to assist both the extension of essential services and the organisation of urban expansion with sustainable mains services.

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1- Rémi de Bercegol. 2015. *Petites villes et décentralisation en Inde*. Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
2 - Claude Martinand 1986. *Le Génie urbain*. Paris, La Documentation Française.

Street trading: the Street as a resource

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In 2011, UN-Habitat launched a programme that deals with public spaces as major issues for urban planning and management. This confirms that it is essential to take account of the needs of all those using public spaces. In particular, it raises questions about the role which is allocated to street trading activities, which are frequently held in low regard.

These activities may be itinerant or sedentary, temporary or permanent, craft oriented, and may involve sales of objects or services. Consequently they constitute a vital element in the urban economy, providing responses, admittedly imperfect and incomplete, to demand which is barely satisfied elsewhere (in terms of types of products and services, the nature of sales, such as micro-retailing, jobs…). They are an important presence, both functionally and spatially, in the public spaces of many of the world's cities. They are at the origin of a whole set of representations, discourses, discussions, and normative and legal measures which relate simultaneously to many aspects - economic, social, land use, the organisation and management of space, urban planning, and even urban landscapes.
The last point is, incidentally, essential, as in many cases it is this aspect which explains why street trading is usually seen as an urban problem. First of all, it adds to the congestion of streets. Then it is perceived as a threat to health and safety. Last, it is considered to be a symptom of poverty.

Dispelling or integrating street trading
These representations, with the discourses which go with and support them, frequently have a direct impact on the implementation of eviction policies which indicate a recurring failure to take into account and integrate all the uses to which streets are put. Some of these evictions have nevertheless been the starting point for genuine thought about the role of street trading within cities.
In Colombia, the issue of access to public space, for everyone including street traders, has given rise to fierce legal debates over the interpretation of Article 82 of the 1991 Constitution which recognises a right to have access to public space.

In India, the federal government passed the Street Vendors Act in 2014 which laid down the legal terms for including the needs of street trading in schemes for planning and managing public spaces.

In South Africa, a number of traders associations regularly take part in the joint elaboration of planning schemes. One example is an association known as WIEGO (Women in informal employment: globalizing and organizing) in Durban.

These examples all share the fact that they see the street as being not just a space for movement, but also as a complex space which is also productive and which must be recognised and planned as such. However, making the transition from recognising the principle to its concrete implementation involves a major step.

Recognising the stakeholders in the street
Firstly, the conventional representations of street trading persist. This is particularly the case in the business districts where inter-metropolitan competition takes place and where the only street traders who have a chance of being tolerated are those who match the image and assumed needs of these districts (generally newsagents and shoeshiners).

Next, they are responsible for very real urban planning and traffic problems. These cannot be resolved without redesigning streets and footpaths. Last, some activities will always produce disamenities and, as in the case of street food, pose hygiene problems which are difficult to resolve by planning measures on their own.

This emerging recognition, which nevertheless varies considerably from one country or one city to another, does not resolve the issue of prosperity. In most cases, the citizens who do these jobs belong to the most vulnerable socio-economics groups. Their partial recognition as stakeholders in the street is also a form of recognition of the informal sector as a provider of self-employment opportunities and may be seen, by some, as a component of development, albeit one that is very much debated.

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The street: productive space with commercial activities

Some basics

The road system

In the sixteenth century, roads were viewed as the "place where you throw your waste"[1]. This term, which has kept the same meaning in Garoua (Cameroon)[2] was probably introduced there during French colonial occupation. At the end of the day, this etymological point illustrates urban problems which raise questions about how we deal with roads. The topic of classification or reclassification and the distinction between private and public space which belongs to everybody (and sometimes nobody) are also of constant concern when we consider roads.

The road also leads to conflict between different approaches to urban planning, as societies evolve. One is more focused on the management of flows, aiming to foster good accessibility to the urban space and introducing the dimension of networks of various types. The road system becomes functional, a space for movement or a space in a network that links different places where people go, such as the place where they live, work or engage in leisure activities… The other is more focused on public space, giving importance to urban quality and embellishment. This space, which is maintained and enhanced, provides a transition between places people go and sometimes becomes a place where people perform activities: this is the case for a large number of shopkeepers who choose to sell their wares at the roadsides in order to attract more customers!

In both cases, the issue of the management of the space in question is raised. This issue is that of the role of local authorities in the management of roads, i.e. settling disputes in order to specify the uses and functions of this shared space. For urban planners, what is involved is gaining an understanding in order to classify them: creating a typology and hierarchy (such as Le Corbusier's 7V concept), analysing the complex relationship between the land, buildings and the street, between roads and constructions, assessing the potential quality of the space, dimensioning the various networks present in the space. Creating links, making meaning... the road is a central part of public space and, when all is said and done, public urban action .

Benjamin Michelon

1 - Gilles Ménage, *Dictionnaire étymologique ou Origines de la langue françoise.* 1650.
2 - Émilie Guitard, *«Est-ce que c'est ta voirie ?!» Manipulations des déchets et contrôle des espaces collectifs à Garoua* (Cameroun). Ethnologie française, (3), 455-466, 2015.

Some reading

Organising and upgrading the road network is an important and recurring topic in urban planning. The street performs many functions simultaneously. It determines urban form and provides a location for traffic and social interaction. Historically it has been approached in the literature in a variety of ways.

The forthcoming book by Éric Alonzo[1] on the history and theory of road design as a basic infrastructure clearly shows the variety of ways the road has been perceived at different times.

Considered from a more direct urban planning perspective, the road is also an element of a larger fabric made up of places and links. Streets and Patterns by Stephen Marshall[2] provides valuable help in understanding and analysing this fabric.

When there are buildings on either side of it in an urban area, the road becomes a street, and consequently a public space and a location for social life. The American author Jane Jacobs put forward this view brilliantly in a study[3] which has become a classic in the field since it was first published in the 1960s. Her plea for the street includes, in particular, an astute consideration of the increasing amount of space in towns that is given over to the car. We need to rethink towns at a more human scale, as the Danish urban planner Jan Gehl[4] had already been advocating for a number of years.

In this connection, in view of the fact that the street landscape inherited from the past still conjures up a vision of urban life which is tinged with nostalgia, Éric Charmes[5] raises a highly thought-provoking question: Do local streets in themselves generate specific forms of village sociability, or do they just provide the setting for these, without really playing a role in their development?

The street often appears to be a place of tension and conflictual appropriation between its users. The possibility of "reconquest" by residents, proposed by the architect and urban planner Nicolas Soulier[6] rouses interest and raises questions in equal measure. The approach he adopts provides even clearer encouragement for us to also see the street as a place which fosters the development of a new, better balanced, relationship with the living world.

Benoit Romeyer

Benoit Romeyer

1 - Éric Alonzo, *L'architecture de la voie.* Histoire et théories, Parenthèses. À paraître
2 - Stephen Marshall, *Streets and Patterns.* Spon Press, 2005
3 - Jane Jacobs, *Déclin et survie des grandes villes américaines.* Parenthèses, 2012 (1961)
4 - Jan Gehl, *Pour des villes à échelle humaine.* Ecosociété, 2012
5 - Éric Charmes, *La rue : village ou décor ?* Créaphis, 2006
6 - Nicolas Soulier, *Reconquérir les rues.* Ulmer, 2012

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