

## **Translocal urbanism: How Ouagadougou strategically uses decentralised cooperation<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Introduction**

The recent rise of city networks is related to economic deregulation and the rescaling of politics (Brenner 2004, Brenner et al. 2010). Its consequence on the development and management of cities is manifold. Urban development is for instance increasingly produced through translocal ties, as urban models, strategies, forms, and experts tend to “travel” from city to city (Guggenheim and Söderström 2010; McCann and Ward 2011). The intensity and nature of these phenomena vary of course from region to region depending on the economic situation and on the political choices of local governments.

In this paper we focus on one dimension of such phenomena in Ouagadougou, the capital city of Burkina Faso, as we look at the role of decentralised cooperation in the recent strategies of the municipal administration. This strategy has been developed by the present mayor of the city, Simon Compaoré, first elected in 1995. Since that date, the municipality has developed an intense collaboration with a series of other cities in other continents and in the region.

The aim of this paper is to investigate what appears to be a quite sophisticated and rather successful strategy in western Africa. We will, more precisely, try to understand the history, logics and contribution of such translocal urbanism to the reshaping of the city in the past twenty years. We will show that Ouagadougou’s urban politics is an interesting example of how African cities can, as Simone claims, be innovative and go beyond colonial and postcolonial relationships in their engagements with the world (Simone 2004: 18-19).

To do so, we will first define translocal urbanism and decentralised interurban cooperation. We will after move on to describe the regime change and initiatives that have contributed to their development. We explain how collaborations with cities in the North have been targeted to respond to a series of local needs: the reorganisation of public administration, waste-management, the creation of cultural infrastructures, public space rehabilitation, etc. Then we show how the city has also recently become an exporter of best practices to other cities in the region. In the second part of the paper, we focus on interventions within the city and analyse three recent projects: the “green squad” women’s association, the musical garden Reemdoogo and the restructuration of the market of Gounghin. Our analysis of these three projects shows how translocal connections shape, respectively, important aspects of the functioning, the programme and the planning procedures of the municipality. In each case, we analyse to what extent these realisations are the consequence of a municipal strategy or of looser kinds of

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translocal urbanism. This will lead us to a conclusion where we question the sustainability of this strategy in the long run.

### **City networks and decentralised cooperation**

Translocal connections and translocal urbanism are expressions that have become more frequent in urban research in recent years. The use of these expressions reflects, on the one hand, a change in ways of approaching urban processes and, on the other, institutional and discursive shifts. One of the main proponents of these terms in the context of a second wave of research on globalisation<sup>2</sup>, Michael Peter Smith, uses them to define the results of the transnational practices of social actors and thus an attention to agency (Smith 2001, 2005). The expression also captures the institutional relations of collaboration between cities. The development of such municipal networks is often portrayed as a recent phenomenon starting somewhere in the 1980's. Urban historians have shown however that such networks have a much longer history and originate in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. with the identification of and the exchange on common problems, from unemployment to transportation (Saunier and Ewen 2008). Saunier distinguishes three phases in the historical development of municipal relations: a first period (end of 19<sup>th</sup>, beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.) of selective borrowings and imperial impositions, a second (1913-1980) of exchanges within structured transnational networks and a third one (1980 onwards) characterised by global and regional competition (Saunier 2008). The present phase is related to the rise of cities as more important actors on the political and economic scenes. Spurred by neo-liberal logics and discourse, inter-municipal exchanges often consist today in a search for successful recipes in terms of entrepreneurial urban policies. However, other forms of thematic city networks, based on ethical consumption for instance (Malpass et al. 2007), have been proliferating in recent years.

This deep and wide-sweeping wave has developed translocal ties: experts, urban development models and policies “travel” increasingly from city to city in a race for economic growth and attractiveness (McCann 2010; Robinson 2010). This process is combined in cities of the South with decentralised cooperation for development where aid is provided by development agencies or other cities directly to a municipality (and not to the State). This form of cooperation has been facilitated by the promotion of political decentralisation in countries of the South. International programmes, such as the *Global Campaign on Urban Governance* launched by the UN in 1999, have indeed given cities more leverage to develop collaboration with other cities in particular. In this context, translocal urbanism, in contrast with city networks in Europe for instance, is characterized by asymmetrical relations of power where local governments in the South try to finance their functioning and development, or try to build new capacities, through connections and collaborations with cities in the North.

Historically speaking decentralised cooperation is part of the more general process of city networks development. It finds its roots in the aftermath of World War II, when city twinning was aimed at building bridges, mostly symbolic, between nations which had been at war. The idea of twinings between cities of the industrialised world and of the developing world was launched in the early 1960's after the Independence of several African countries<sup>3</sup>. It became

<sup>2</sup> First wave studies tending, according to Smith, “to define globalisation as an inexorable structural-economic transformation, operating outside of human thought and practice” (Smith 2005: 236).

<sup>3</sup> In Ouagadougou, the first twinning was established in 1967 with the French city of Loudun. Amongst others projects, it has led to the building of a stadium and of a “friendship garden”. Since the decentralisation policy in

more technically oriented and project-based in the 1970s (Hafteck 2003: 339). In Africa, decentralised cooperation gained momentum in relation with the structural adjustment programmes. At the fourth Lomé Convention in 1989 decentralised cooperation was formalised as a new approach aimed at putting actors (rather than projects and money) at the centre of development strategies (Materu et al. 2001: 8). During the past two decades, development through decentralised cooperation has been promoted by bilateral and multilateral agencies, local authorities and NGO's as a means for strengthening decentralisation, promoting national and local development as well as sustaining international cooperation (UNDESA 2008). In 1996 the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II, initiated interurban cooperation in the perspective of sustainability (Le Bris, 2005). Finally, the creation in 2004 of the United Cities and Local Governments organisation (UCLG)<sup>4</sup>, which gathers on a large geographical scale already existing city networks, has opened up new routes for decentralised cooperation across the world.

There is, however, no universally accepted definition of what decentralised cooperation really consists in. The French conception stresses the importance of “conventions” between local authorities (*collectivités territoriales*)<sup>5</sup>: a written agreement between a given French local (or regional) government and its foreign counterpart is needed for decentralised cooperation to take place (Hafteck 2003: 334). The territorial administration of Burkina Faso is to a large extent inspired by the institutions of the former colonial metropole and thus the local definition of decentralised cooperation also stresses the role of conventions: “a form of north-south and/or south-south partnership formalised by legal tools which determine its content” (Hien-Zerbo 2006: 245). These partnerships aim at developing knowledge, exchanging experience, and creating ties between partners.

Given the fact that Burkina Faso is one of the world's poorest countries<sup>6</sup>, one would anticipate that Ouagadougou, in terms of translocal ties, is limited to be on the receiving end of decentralised cooperation. We will see however that the situation is more complex. First, the city is not a passive receiver of aid given by cities of the North but has, since 1995, been actively searching for partnerships in the North and in the South in order to meet central goals such as the restructuration of its administration, the development of basic infrastructures and the creation of new urban spaces. Second, it has become not only an importer but also an exporter of best practices in terms of urban policies. And third, more informal translocal connections have also played an important role in recent urban developments.

To explain how these different forms of translocal urbanism have been elaborated and how they have shaped the urban landscape of the city we first need to describe recent urban regime change in Ouagadougou.

Burkina Faso, three other twinnings have been established: between Ouagadougou and San Miniato (Italy, since 1997), Koweit City (Koweit, since 1998) and Leuze-en-Hainaut (Belgium, since 2002).

<sup>4</sup> The UCLG defends the interests of local governments on the world stage. Its mission is to be the world advocate of democratic local self-government, promoting its values, objectives and interests, through cooperation between local governments, and within the wider international community. Over 1000 cities across 95 countries are direct members of UCLG.

<sup>5</sup> *Loi relative à l'administration territoriale de la République, 6 février 1992.*

<sup>6</sup> It is ranked 161st out of 169 countries according to UN's 2010 human development index.

## **Connecting Ouagadougou to the world**

As the capital of Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou has undergone radical urban transformations in the past thirty years. During the colonization, the country was in the periphery of West-African economy as the French colonizer mainly focused its policy on the Ivory Coast (Fourchard 2001). The first two decades of Independence until the Revolution in 1983 were then characterized by an important political instability related to a series of strikes and coups d'Etat (Biehler 2010: 63). Today's urban landscape bears clearly the mark of two successive regimes: the socialist regime of Thomas Sankara and the liberal regime of Blaise Compaoré. The second has seen an important intensification of global flows and a growing interconnectedness of Ouagadougou with other cities and regions in the world.

### ***The making of a capital***

Between 1983 and 1987, Thomas Sankara implemented a socialist regime with different characteristics on different administrative scales. A State monopoly was thus applied to all sectors of economy while the revolutionary party developed a specific agenda for Ouagadougou (Le Bris 2000). This agenda was at the same time egalitarian, pro-urban, authoritarian and nationalist. It had different aims: to break the customary notabilities, to become truly independent from foreign influence, to build a new society and to implement an urban planning system worthy of a modern capital. The nationalisation of the lands was proclaimed in order to plot massive areas in the periphery and to rehabilitate the inner city. Without really breaking with the foreign donors already present in the country, the State turned to communist countries such as China to fund its projects of urban development for Ouagadougou (Dupuis, Leu and Söderström 2010: 28).

The socialist regime in the capital was rather short-lived however as Sankara's government fell after a coup d'Etat in 1987 during which the head of state was assassinated. In the following years, the country went through a period of so called 'Rectification', or transition, until the election of Blaise Compaoré in 1991. Under the pressure of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and France, the former colonial power, the government of Burkina Faso adopted a liberal regime and signed a programme of structural adjustment (Osmont 1995). Private property was progressively reintroduced, the economy privatised, and foreign investments began to take off. In order to attract investors, the State has developed since 1990 an ambitious project for the service sector in the inner city called "ZACA". The latter covers an area of 200 ha and has involved the relocation of inhabitants to the periphery.

Since the devaluation of the Francs CFA (the local currency) in 1994, the GDP has increased at an average of 6% per year. Blaise Compaoré was re-elected in 1998, 2005 and 2010 and as played an important role on the regional and international scene. The capital organised in particular the France-Africa summit in 1996 which led to the development of a second ambitious urban project in the southern periphery of the city: "Ouaga 2000"<sup>7</sup>. These state-led projects, supported by new foreign investors such as Lybia or Taiwan, have had an important impact on the capital. They have in particular been the vectors of an increasing social and spatial polarisation (Compaoré 2003; Biehler 2010). The attempt with the ZACA project to create a CBD decreases, on the one hand, the possibility for poor inhabitants to find housing in the centre: it is a form of New-Build gentrification (Rérat, Söderström and Piguet 2010). The growth of Ouaga 2000, which houses most of the city's political and economic elite, on the other, has introduced a very sharp socio-spatial divide in the city which before did not exist.

<sup>7</sup> Since then, the city has hosted several other important international meetings.

If the State continues to play an important role in the development of Ouagadougou, the city has become an important actor of its own transformation since the development of political decentralisation in 1995 and the first municipal elections<sup>8</sup>. Simon Compaoré was at that time elected as the first mayor of Ouagadougou and has been re-elected in 2000 and 2006<sup>9</sup>. Simon Compaoré's action as a mayor has relied heavily, as we will show in the next section, on translocal connections and decentralised cooperation.

### *“Simonville” or the logics of translocal connections*

Since 1995, international relations have been a priority of the municipality's agenda. Ten conventions relate Ouagadougou to other cities in the North or the South. Lyon and Grenoble were the first partners, followed by Quebec (Canada), Kumasi (Ghana), Turin (Italia), Geneva (Switzerland), Bordeaux (France), Marrakech (Morocco) and Taipei (Taiwan). In the framework of decentralised cooperation, funding for projects has been brought by institutions such as the International Association of Francophone Mayors (AIMF), the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) or the European Union (EU). In total, between 1995 and 2008, 21.5 billions of FCFA have been invested by those partners in the city of Ouagadougou<sup>10</sup>. In 2009 the budget of the city amounted to 16 billions of FCFA of which 23% came from foreign funding.

Generally speaking, the mayor's management of the city is considered internationally as an example of good governance<sup>11</sup>, despite occasional internal critique and contestation. The technical adviser of the city of Ouagadougou between 2007 and 2010 in the framework of a collaboration with the agglomeration of Lyon (le Grand Lyon) in France, Frédéric Raynouard, thus describes Simon Compaoré as an “international mayor” capable of being “both a visionary and in the concrete”, “his feet in the local field and his head in the world”<sup>12</sup>. Other observers are more critical however. Quénot (2007: 77) describes a mayor who is “charismatic and energetic”. According to Quénot, however, Compaoré's determination to develop “his city”<sup>13</sup> blurs his function at the municipality for two reasons. First, his action generally bypasses the political hierarchy and thus creates tensions within the local administration. Secondly, he cumulates a large number of political mandates<sup>14</sup> and thus maintains a financial and political domination over the district mayors of Ouagadougou.

<sup>8</sup> Under the pressure of the World Bank in 2004, decentralisation has gained in importance in Burkina Faso and the total communalisation of the country was finally effective in 2006.

<sup>9</sup> The commune of Ouagadougou encompasses five districts. The district's mayors are elected by the population and then the municipal council elects the mayor of the commune.

<sup>10</sup> This corresponds approximately to 32.8 millions of Euros (1'000 FCFA correspond to 1.52 Euro). Source: City of Ouagadougou, *report on the municipal action*, 1995-2008.

<sup>11</sup> In 2004, for instance, the mayor received the UNESCO prize « Cities for Peace » for the city's action in favor of good governance and social cohesion.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Raynouard, 23.07.09.

<sup>13</sup> Local journalists usually describe the capital as « Simonville ».

<sup>14</sup> Apart from his municipal mandate, Simon Compaoré is treasurer of the International Association of Francophone Mayors, president of the Association of the municipalities of Burkina Faso and represents Ouagadougou at the United Cities and Local Governments organisation. He is also strongly involved in the political life at the national level as the second vice president in charge of foreign relations of the governmental party. There are no family ties between him and the President Blaise Compaoré (Compaoré is a very common name in Burkina Faso)

A real globe-trotter, Simon Campaoré travels a lot himself in search of new solutions and new inter-municipal collaborations. In some cases, he also travels to promote Ouagadougou's policies to other cities in the region. Such international relations have in fact been a priority of the local government since 1995. These relations have two main objectives: "insure the presence of the city on the international scene and use these international relations to achieve our objectives"<sup>15</sup>. International activism and the desire to promote the city's good governance tends to put a lot of pressure on the administration: "it is hard to follow, but the principle is: never say no"<sup>16</sup>.

What is particularly interesting with the "foreign affairs" policy of the city is on the one hand the strategic use of international relations at city level and, on the other, the fact that south-south collaborations have clearly gained in importance in recent years. The municipality receives regularly African delegations, for instance, from cities in Benin, Ghana, Djibouti, Madagascar, the Central-African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Cameroon or Tchad<sup>17</sup>.

The highlights during the visits of African delegations as well as the major successes of the city are the cleaning of streets, the waste management and green space policies. The green squad (Brigade Verte) for instance, working for the cleanliness of the streets in the city centre, has become a model both in the country and in neighbouring countries: the cities of Koudougou in Burkina Faso and of Cotonou (Benin) have created one after having visited Ouagadougou. Ouagadougou is not only an exporter of good practices in the region however, but also an importer:

*"We realized that a city like Cotonou is clearly ahead of us in their community policy. They work at neighbourhood level, with local committees that work very well, with their budgets, action plans and visions for future development. We are seduced by their experience and the mayor has planned a visit there so we can see better how it works and improve our practices".<sup>18</sup>*

This citation shows that cities in western Africa selectively borrow from each other solutions for different aspects of urban management. More generally, we have seen in this section that Ouagadougou draws on the different forms of inter-municipal exchange that were established during the three phases of its modern history (Saunier and Ewen 2008) in order to find the resources for its urban development. The municipality looks elsewhere for solutions in specific domains, just as European cities started doing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> c. It also uses the structured municipal networks of decentralised cooperation which find their roots in the 1960's and, finally, as we will see in the following sections, is engaged in the collective efforts for economic competitiveness characteristic of contemporary translocal urbanism.

### ***Building and exporting a clean and ordered city (in cooperation with Lyon)***

Creating a clean and ordered 'feel' in a city is part of all growth policies. The municipality of Ouagadougou has been active in creating such an atmosphere through a series of actions such as: the development of asphalted roads, the eviction or regulation of informal commercial activities in the centre, the development of waste management and the organisation of a group of women cleaning the streets in the centre early every morning. As a pioneering organisation

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Adama Zerbo, head of international relations, City of Ouagadougou, 29.01.10.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Boureïma Kaboré, head of the planning department, City of Ouagadougou, 21.07.09.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Zerbo, 21.07.09.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Kaboré, 21.07.09.

in West Africa, the green squad is an initiative springing from the cooperation between Lyon and Ouagadougou [Box 1]. The relations between both cities were established in the early 1990's when President Blaise Compaoré visited Lyon in 1993 and expressed his desire to have garbage trucks in his capital. This was the basis of the cleanliness policy developed by Simon Compaoré, with the assistance of Lyon, after his election two years later.

**Photo 1 : A garbage truck offered by Lyon (Photo : P. Leu, 2010)**

[Photo 1\_Garbage truck Lyon.jpg]

This policy is part of a broader cooperation with Lyon, Ouagadougou's most important inter-municipal collaboration so far. In 1998 the city first signed a convention of decentralised cooperation with the Grand Lyon, followed in 2002 by another one with the city of Lyon. Three phases can be distinguished in these relations. The first corresponds to the sending of materials in the nineties. It was then completed by training exchanges in the following years. In this context, different delegations have been travelling every year between the two cities. During these two phases green spaces were improved in Ouagadougou, street lighting was reinforced, the number of stoplights was increased, and the technical services of the municipality were reorganised. The third period (2007-2010) corresponds to the three years during which a technical adviser from Lyon worked closely with the general secretary of the municipality. This is a new approach for French cooperation activities as it is the first time a bilateral donor directly supports a local authority<sup>19</sup>.

The cooperation with Lyon has also led to the establishment, together with the United Nations Institute for training and research (UNITAR), of a training centre for urban professionals in Ouagadougou in 2003, the CIFAL Centre<sup>20</sup>. CIFAL's main objective is to achieve sustainable urbanisation in the context of increasing responsibilities resting on local authorities. One of its priorities is to encourage South-South cooperation between local authorities in order to improve access to basic services. The CIFAL in Ouagadougou is part of a network of twelve centres across the world.

In many ways, the cooperation with Lyon is thus a pioneering one. It is also pivotal because of the role of Lyon's experience in urban planning for the reorganization of the city's administration. Other inter-municipal cooperations with cities of the former metropole have however been established by the Mayor in order to find resources for other aspects of the city's development programme.

<sup>19</sup> The stay of the adviser was funded by the AFD, the French development agency, in the framework of the project "opening up outlying districts and access to basic services". One component of the project aimed at strengthening the intervention capacity of Ouagadougou's municipal services in terms of urban management. Since 2007, the project is financed by a 15 million Euros direct grant from the AFD to Ouagadougou.

<sup>20</sup> International Training Centre for Local Authorities/Actors (Centre International de Formation des Autorités/Acteurs Locaux) created under the lead of Lyon with the support of the International Association of Francophone Mayors, United cities against poverty and the private company Veolia Environment.

### **Box 1 : the green squad**

For the green squad initiative, Simon Compaoré drew inspiration from the “neighborhood departments”, a social reinsertion policy in Lyon where socially marginalized people take care of public roads and collect garbage. The Mayor established the Green Squad in 1995. It is made of groups of (mostly) elderly and poor women (approximately 1700 in the whole), commonly called “Simon’s women” in Ouagadougou, who sweep the asphalt roads and collect garbage [Photo 1].

This cleanliness policy with a social character focuses on embellishing the inner city: the political and touristic heart of the city. It has proved successful as the city centre is generally considered as much cleaner than those of other capitals in the sub-region. The municipality has been awarded various prizes for its green squad. It is also the reason for regular visits of delegations from cities in the region such as Niamey, Bamako, Abidjan or Porto Novo. The Yaoundé prize (“Africités”) was awarded to Ouagadougou as the cleanest city in Africa in 2003. Three years later it received the Dubai prize for Best Practices in Urban Management in the field of cleanliness. Finally, in 2008 the municipality received the Prize of the prime minister of Bahrain, created by UN-Habitat. A delegation of “Simon’s women” went to China to fetch it.

The green squad is a good example of how the municipality has not only imported ‘ready-made’ urban policies from the North, but has managed to ‘indigenize’ it. If Lyon has provided technical tools and know how in waste management, the green squad created in Ouagadougou is a solution adapted to the economic means and of the municipality and the social situation of its inhabitants.

The green squad also has downsides. This spatially selective cleanliness policy tends to reinforce spatial segregation as the peripheral areas, or even unpaved roads in the centre, are not or poorly maintained. In this respect, there is a continuity between contemporary policies and the segregated planning of the colonial period which also neglected the fringes of the city (Quénot 2007: 77).

### **Photo 2 : The green squad on the pedestrian area of the Central Market (Photo: M.-C. Frieden, 2009)**

[Photo 2\_Green squad.jpg]

### ***Culture-based social and economic development (in cooperation with Grenoble)***

The cultural turn in urban policy has been spectacular in cities in the global North (Cochrane 2007). French cities, with which Ouagadougou is densely connected, have been at the forefront in this respect in the past thirty years as they have developed different strategies for the mobilisation of culture in urban development. The city of Grenoble for instance was in the 1990’s one of the pioneers for the support to places of artistic production (and not only performance), such as artist studios or equipments for the creation of contemporary music. In 1997, a collaboration between Grenoble and Ouagadougou was initiated when Grenoble’s head of international relations and culture department met an agent of the mayor of



Ouagadougou during a conference on “culture in African cities”<sup>21</sup>. This meeting led to a convention of cooperation between the two cities signed two years later. Then, through the personal implication of the mayor of Grenoble, four types of inter-municipal cooperation were developed: cultural, civic, institutional and academic, and they are still running. Civic cooperation is particularly interesting because it consists in micro-scale and thus in less institutional forms of interurban cooperation. Since 1999 a series of neighbourhood to neighbourhood partnerships have been established between the two cities<sup>22</sup>. It started with visits of groups of inhabitants of the Grenoble neighbourhoods to Ouagadougou. The aim of the cooperation is to establish long-lasting relations at the interpersonal level on the basis of neighbourhood solidarity. The most visible sector of the cooperation however is the cultural one which has taken the shape of a multifunctional cultural garden: the Reemdoogo [Box 2].

At the end of the nineties, both cities were looking for ways to professionalise and valorise their musical scenes. In Grenoble, “Régie 2c” was set up in 2001 in order to support two cultural places: “La Chaufferie” and “Le Ciel”. This organisation was then mobilised by the French NGO “Culture et Développement”<sup>23</sup> to develop a new approach to cultural development in West Africa in relation with political decentralisation in the region. At the same time, the mayor of Ouagadougou wanted to develop a youth policy, based on music, and its technical services therefore drew a sketch for a building in 1999. However, it was only in the framework of decentralised cooperation that a complete program for the building was developed by the NGO and “Régie2c”.

This cooperation with Grenoble follows again the ex-colonial route between Ouagadougou and France. It is not mediated at its origin by the State however as it haphazardly began with a personal encounter during an international meeting. The emphasis put by the city on international relations and its participation to such meetings explains why that encounter led to what has become a multidimensional and durable interurban cooperation.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Jean-Jacques Gleizal, former head of Grenoble’s international relations and culture department, 26.01.2010.

<sup>22</sup> This “civic cooperation” (*coopération citoyenne*) has been developed by Grenoble’s service of international relations. Today it links three neighbourhoods in Grenoble with three neighbourhoods in Ouagadougou: Berriat with Gounghin, Villeneuve with Tanghin and Alliés with Dapoya.

<sup>23</sup> This Grenoble-based NGO has already experimented the issue of urban music between Abidjan, Ouagadougou and Grenoble through a program called “Sono de villes” (1998-2001).

### **Box 2 : Reemdoogo music centre**

As a popular musical garden, the Reemdoogo (literally, the home of play in mooré) is a new urban equipment which aims at sustaining and promoting the production of Burkinabè music. Its funding (375'000 Euros) was shared between the commune of Ouagadougou, the city of Grenoble, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union, and the International Organisation of La Francophonie.

The infrastructure is made of rooms for rehearsal, administrative offices, a terrace with a bar, and a semi-open scene for performances [Photo 2]. The scene has the shape of a half-buried amphitheatre in order to improve the acoustics and preserve the landscape. Developed in the context of the project, the street lighting and the asphalted road around the garden have reshaped the neighbourhood. According to the users we interviewed, the project has produced a new centrality, decreased the feeling of insecurity and made the neighbourhood cleaner.

During the conception, exchanges of experience and know-how were important between Ouagadougou and Grenoble: the local architect and the persons in charge of the management travelled several times to Grenoble. Members of “Régie2c” travelled several times to Ouagadougou.

Considered by all interviewees in Ouagadougou as a success story, the Reemdoogo has become since its inauguration in 2004 a central place in the cultural life of the capital and a reference in French-speaking West Africa. A talk-show of the national television is presented on the premises and the Reemdoogo participates in international cultural events of the capital like the *Panafrican Film and Television Festival*, *Jazz à Ouaga* or *Waga Hip Hop*. With the NGO “Culture et Développement” and the “Régie2c”, Reemdoogo is part of a network sustaining local music in the cities of Abidjan (Ivory Coast), Durban (South Africa) and Santiago (Cuba). Because of its success, the place will be extended and a Reemdoogo 2 is now developed in the eastern part of the capital. The product of translocal ties with Grenoble, targeted at developing a cultural policy in Ouagadougou, the Reemdoogo has thus become an export good to other cities in the continent.

### **Photo 3 : The amphitheatre of the Reemdoogo (Photo : J. Haenggi, 2009)**

[Photo 3\_Reemdoogo.jpg]

### ***Importing participatory procedures (through multilateral cooperation)***

During the past ten years ‘inclusive city’ projects elaborated through public participation have become part of the mainstream in the policy of international organisations (Pieterse 2008)<sup>24</sup>. The concept of community participation was first introduced in Ouagadougou during the third urban project of the World Bank (1996-2001). In 2003, a programme called the PRCCU<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> See also Pieterse for a nuanced critical evaluation of such policies.

<sup>25</sup> *Projet de renforcement des capacités des communes urbaines*. Led by the UNDP, the government of Burkina Faso and six municipalities, this project (2003-2006) aims at promoting good governance and decentralization.

which gets technical support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was developed to generalise such procedures and make them durable. Since 2007, the European Union (EU) promotes a new development policy based on the direct support of local authorities and non-state actors.

Attentive to this international context, the municipality recently put these issues on the top of its agenda. Thus, the third mandate (2006-2011) of Simon Compaoré focused on the promotion of good governance and civic participation. The “inclusive development” of the neighbourhood of Gounghin<sup>26</sup>, eventually supported by the EU, has been part one of the focal points of this policy. Of particular interest here is that the project included the application of collaborative planning procedures initially developed in Lyon.

This 18 months project (2009-2010) with a budget of 821'521 Euros was funded by the EU, by the Council of the central region in Burkina Faso, the International Association of Francophone Mayors, the city of Lyon, the PRCCU, and the Unified council of Gounghin's neighbourhoods<sup>27</sup>. The latter encompasses municipal representatives, religious and customary representatives, women and youth associations. The council defined the goals of the project, while its implementation was done by a team led by a French specialist in public participation with the support of the technical services of the municipality.

The project principally aimed at renovating the neighbourhood and training women to raise their incomes. Among the different aspects of the project (the rehabilitation of schools and clinics, the creation of green spaces, street lighting, etc.), the restructuring of the market is particularly interesting since it consists in the formalisation of informal commercial activities through a participatory process [Box 3].

Here again, decentralised cooperation between Ouagadougou and Lyon has played a decisive role in the making of the project and its approval by the EU. Lyon is well known in Europe both for its public space policy and its experience in participatory procedures<sup>28</sup>. The head of Ouagadougou's planning department first travelled to Lyon to collect information concerning its neighbourhood policies. Then, the technical adviser from Lyon at the municipality of Ouagadougou has been following the realization of the project in terms of its content and its communication.

North-South translocal ties are not the only ones involved here however as the municipality has also studied and learned from a community project in Cotonou (Benin). According to the municipality, this is a pilot project which can be replicated in other neighbourhoods in the city. The issue at stake here is to what extent the municipality will be capable of 'indigenizing' participatory planning as it did with its solutions for waste management and the green squad. This will require an assessment of the 2006-2011 experience and an intensification of exchanges with other cities of the region on such questions.

<sup>26</sup> *Projet participatif d'aménagement des quartiers Gounghin.*

<sup>27</sup> 73.4% of the total amount is funded by the EU.

<sup>28</sup> For an assessment of participation in Lyon, see for instance Toussaint and Vareilles (2009).

### **Box 3 : the restructuring of the market of Gounghin**

The restructuring of the market of Gounghin is mainly motivated by the fact that it is overcrowded. This has led to the informal occupation of the surroundings. Women sell fruit and vegetables along the nearby national road, which creates a series of problems in terms of hygiene and security. The restructuring consists in building 154 covered stalls, divided into seven modules [Photo 3] for these women. The modules are constructed in the middle of a street which is perpendicular to the national road. The infrastructures differ from the standards of other markets in the city (apart from the central market) as street and stalls lighting, public toilets, parking for cars and motorbikes, and storage space will be provided.

A modernised spatial frame has thus transformed the informal women's market of Gounghin. This modernisation is the product of a negotiation between experts involved in the project and the women of the neighbourhood organised in a professional association. Our fieldwork in Gounghin has shown that this participatory process has not been without difficulties. Participation was limited to representatives of the associations involved and communication on the project and its development tended to stop at the level of these representatives. As a consequence, most of the direct beneficiaries were not directly involved in the decision-making. Given the low literacy level of the representatives of the women association, communication took place orally at meetings which were characterised by strong asymmetries between actors: the "intellectuals" (members of the team project, the municipality, the architects) on the one hand and the "illiterates" (the beneficiaries) on the other, to use the categories of the participants. Insufficient skills in reading architectural plans also led to some disappointment: some of the women complained about the small dimensions of stalls, even though they had formally approved the plans. The Gounghin market project shows therefore the necessity to develop more place-specific participatory procedures.

Similar problems of translocal collaboration emerged in 2009 with the reconstruction of the central market, Rood Woko, which also followed a collaborative protocol. In this case, the problems were also related to the import in Ouagadougou of a new urban type: the pedestrian area. Since its opening, this area around the market has indeed been contested by users and inhabitants. Riots have taken place with the police as people oppose the interdiction of motorised traffic and commercial activities in the pedestrian area.

### **Photo 4 : The market of Gounghin, construction of covered stalls (Photo : P. Leu, 2009)**

[Photo 4\_Market of Gounghin.jpg]

### **Conclusion: limitations of the city's development strategy**

Simon Compaoré has been the only mayor of Ouagadougou since the beginning of political decentralisation in the country. According to the project manager of foreign relations of Lyon, this guarantees the permanence of the interurban cooperation (Pierre-Louis et al. 2007: 252). Moreover, the mayor has since the beginning put a lot of emphasis on foreign relations in a country which was progressively stepping out of a period of political and economic isolation. Financially, he has managed to find support for projects that promote social cohesion, cultural

development and community participation. Technically, his municipal services benefit from the knowledge of foreign experts. Politically, different prizes recently awarded to the management of Ouagadougou show that his promotion and style of local governance is well considered by foreign partners. These results are the consequence of an efficient strategy aiming at finding the right partner to meet each of the main objectives of his programme. The municipality's achievements since 1995 appear therefore as quite exemplary.

There are two important limitations to this translocal strategy however: the social dualisation of the capital and the personalisation of political authority. First, projects realised through interurban cooperation do respond to a series of important needs, but they are also part of an image-building process. The example of the Green Squad shows for instance that the municipality chooses to clean in priority the city centre and the main roads in order to produce a favourable impression to the outside. Working on the image of the city is certainly necessary for its long-term development because of the municipality's budgetary dependence on foreign aid. Image-building seems however to have taken too much importance in Ouagadougou's urban policy. The president of the Order of Architects of Burkina Faso<sup>29</sup> considers, for instance, that the main goal of municipal action is to "bring some friends and then say: look, we are working!" while:

*"There are neighbourhoods that are completely flooded. After the rainy season, people cannot access their home. Houses fall! Here few spaces have gutters. Even those that existed are blocked. It is still the responsibility of the city! It is not just about sweeping some corners and putting flowers so it looks good. "*

While some aspects of urban development, which are on the international agenda, receive the attention of the municipality, others, sometimes more important for the basic needs of the population, tend to be neglected<sup>30</sup>. This selectivity of scope is related to a spatial selectivity leading to an increase in socio-economic segregation. The State-led ZACA and "Ouaga 2000" projects for instance clearly contribute, as we have seen, to a process of socio-spatial dualisation, which is frequently considered as a signature of urban globalisation (Marcuse and Van Kempen 2000). The ZACA project, conceived to provide the city with the services but also the image of a capital, has led to the destruction of housing and the eviction of poor city dwellers from the centre. The development of "Ouaga 2000", initiated in 1994 and planned for 90'000 inhabitants, means that Ouagadougou is now flanked by a second sister city for the rich<sup>31</sup>.

Secondly, Ouagadougou's urban policy is highly dependent on the charisma, initiative and authority of its mayor. This personalisation is both efficient in the present and problematic in the long run. In the words of a French consultant who has worked with the World Bank to improve the functioning of the administration in the nineties<sup>32</sup>:

*"There are many actions that depend on the will of the mayor. My fear is based on the fact that many decisions are centralised, more than that, they are personalised.*

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Alain Gilbert Koala, 02.07.09.

<sup>30</sup> The problem of poverty is also related to a central issue in Ouaga's contemporary urban development: the importance of demographic growth and urban sprawl caused by internal migrations.

<sup>31</sup> The municipality is not blind to such policy problems however. It recognizes their existence and asked Lyon in 2007 to elaborate a Local Agenda 21 in order to evaluate the efficiency and relevance of municipal action.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Eduardo Brisson, architect at the French office "Groupe Huit" specialized in municipal and urban development, 19.05.2010.

*Obviously, the risk is that when the person is gone, things do not happen any longer. There are neither stable structures nor delegations of authority within the municipality. So, this personalisation of the decision seems extremely dangerous.”*

To what extent the aspects of good governance in Ouagadougou can persist after the departure of the mayor, or, in other words, whether a durable institutional culture has been created since 1995, is an important question. Especially if one considers the recent political instability in the country with the contestation in spring 2011 of the head of state and of his clan's grip on economic and political power.

Ouagadougou's recent municipal experience is thus interesting to understand and follow through time as the municipality has developed innovative ways of mobilizing formal and informal international connections with other cities. Three future challenges are particularly important. First, the capacity to indigenize imported urban policies and to further develop exchanges with other African cities. Participatory procedures need for instance, as the Gounghin market project shows, to be conceived with an attention to the forms of communication and the power relations specific to an African city like Ouaga. Second, the capacity to develop a more spatially and socially inclusive policy. The large projects, which mobilise most of the local and foreign capital investments, have not, as we have seen with the State-led interventions in the city, responded enough to the needs of the majority of the population, such as access to basic infrastructures. Finally, the capacity to depersonalise municipal action. Ouaga cannot be 'Simonville' in the long run. Political stability has helped creating a staff of competent administrators within the municipality. It is important in the years to come to allow the city's development strategies to be associated more with technical competence and less with a single political figure.

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