The Future of Cities

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I.   MAJOR URBAN TRENDS

1 . New Economic Tropisms

Economists have amply described the profound changes in the production and trading systems and have postulated the establishment of a new "long cycle", the main feature of which would be a series of interdependent factors:

-   a new phase in the internationalization of production and trade and increased concentration within multinational groups;
-   the exacerbation of competition, the decline in many fields of the traditional mass production and consumption methods and the need for companies to develop new systems of production organization (i.e. flexibility and development of a wide variety of production services);
-   the development of a series of new technologies, first and foremost in the information and communication field;
-   the large-scale dissemination of information and communication technologies throughout all sectors of activity (generic technologies), bringing about considerable change in both companies and products;
-   the increased importance of research, training and management of human resources.

These new features of production and trading systems will come into being particularly through the spatial recomposition of economic activities. Many areas linked either to natural resources or to technologies and to "key" products of the previous economic cycle are gradually being abandoned.

At the same time, areas are developing where companies have access to:

-   pools of highly skilled labour, or cities and regions likely to attract that type of labour (e.g. the sun belt or university towns and cultural locations);
-   connexions to international transport and communications systems;
-   industrial and service fabrics which encourage "partnerships", the organization of sub-contracting networks (the development of limited flow systems), the farming-out of various components of company activity and the recourse to specialized services.

How much these factors matter to companies depends on a considerable number of variables, such as the nature of production and technologies brought into play, the size of the company or group, its history, the location of markets, property opportunities, public grants etc.

For example, sectors related to advance technologies may nevertheless continue to have a need for comparatively unskilled labour and may therefore attach great importance to the low cost and wide availability of such labour. This is true of producers of semiconductors who may sometimes choose peripheral locations in relation to the highly developed countries which use such components, provided they are connected to the international air transport system.

2.   A New Phase in the Process of Metropolization

The spatial recomposition of economic activities has led to new forms of metropolization, particularly in France, a country which became urbanized at a relatively late stage when compared with the other major industrialized countries.

Between 1950 and 1970, the location or move of industrial activities was carried out particularly through the setting-up of production units according to the Ford model which made use of a local labour force that was unskilled or of rural origin, usually with a complement of migrant workers.

This process contributed to completing the urbanization of France and encouraged the growth of a considerable number of medium-sized towns. It was encouraged by national territorial planning policy and, from that point of view, it can be said to have succeeded. The fact should not be overlooked, however, that this process made available land and labour in the Paris area which were put to new uses and thereby concentrated high-level service activities and high-tech industries around Paris (cf. work conducted by the STRATES team, 1991).

Moreover, several large cities were able to make use of their own potential and thereby benefit from the policy for "new equilibrium cities" in order to prepare for a new economic cycle and thereby play a part in the new "tropisms".

At an "intra-urban" level, the urbanization process successively took two major forms: initially, the construction of major housing programmes for the labour force and, secondly, the development of individual housing for the middle classes, on the outskirts of cities.

It is fair to say that France has undergone a steady process of urbanization, initially concentrated in certain areas and then adapted to the whole of the country, and subsequently more selective and concentrated on the outskirts of towns.

The results of the 1982 census may well have been misinterpreted in certain instances, particularly with regard to what was thought to be a long-term trend in the growth of cities. What was involved were phenomena of a suburban nature which heralded more selective urban growth.

There is evidence to suggest in France (and perhaps in other European countries too) a new metropolitan process is under way, corresponding globally to the economic changes referred to above.

Several major conurbations have experienced marked and usually centripetal development. The central areas have taken on a new form by making use of land opportunities related to technological and economic change (e.g. land formerly used for facto-

ries, railways and port facilities). The service industries have been introduced there and the upper middle classes have, for various reasons, returned to the city centres (gentrification). The inner suburbs now have a higher population density particularly with the settlement of households of skilled young people and the return of certain middle-class groups.

These phenomena have been accompanied by substantial private and public investment in city centres, particularly in the form of "major projects". Cultural facilities and tourism (particularly accommodation for professionals in the form of hotels, convention centres, exhibition centres), shopping facilities and communications networks have been the main causes for this new urban infrastructure. In the coming years, higher education amenities will also play an active part in this momentum.

The process of metropolization has resulted in serious problems of marginalization for certain social categories excluded from this new momentum, particularly those living in the municipal housing schemes. Furthermore, such intensive urban growth (in contrast with more extensive urban development in an earlier period) and the fact that public investment in transport has lagged behind, have resulted in preoccupying saturation of those large cities.

In those areas not directly concerned by this new metropolization, a number of towns have experienced, in addition to serious problems in municipal schemes, a more global stagnation or even a decline in the population which has caused much concern to the local authorities (cf. a recent symposium held in Albi by the Association of mayors of medium-sized towns). Nevertheless, a number of medium-sized towns have developed to a certain extent by making the most of their own specific assets or by relying on a particularly promising field of activity.

Lastly, the Paris area has had its own experience of change as its population has increased much faster than expected in recent years. While the French capital would seem to be playing an increasingly important international role (ranking among the top five megalopolises), the housing shortage, inadequate transport and the process of socio-spatial segregation are giving rise to considerable concern.

3. New forms of spatial organization and self-organization: fragmentation, polarization and networking

New changes in activities, new economic policies adopted by entrepreneurs, new types of metropolization and new lifestyles are emerging through new spatial forms.

Admittedly, space, like culture, has considerable inertia and belongs largely to a long-term process, but there would seem to be a certain number of identifiable trends. In this connection, many experts have referred to fragmentation, polarization and the establishment of networks.

These processes are related to a number of factors which include:

- Firstly, the development and increased use of high-speed transport, whereby trade is facilitated and production can be envisaged on a new scale. Physical proximity has therefore lost some of its importance at the expense of temporal proximity. High-speed transport systems, however, no longer serve the intervening areas as stops are more spaced out. This means that spatial continuity has been weakened. The effects of proximity are limited by thresholds and replaced by notions of accessibility. Space has become

polarized around the points of arrival and departure of the high-speed transport systems.

- The development of telecommunications, which, through the computer revolution, enable information to be exchanged on a scale in no way comparable with what the telephone formerly provided.

  In the coming years, new telecommunications technology and the use of satellites will make information technology available to all parties, regardless of where they may be, either in France or worldwide. The somewhat paradoxical effect of such new telecommunications systems will be to sweep away former economic and social territorial limits.

  In point of fact, access to such information or the possibility of exchanging it will no longer depend on spatial considerations (though perhaps still on the parties involved as some of them will control the networks, channels of exchange and data banks!).

  The spatially structuring role of telecommunication will therefore disappear. This will enhance all the more the role of all that cannot be transmitted through telecommunications. There is already evidence of this in the increasing importance of physical and social factors in the localization of activities : sun, the quality of a site, the history of a locality and its cultural reputation, the population which has settled there, the quality of urban amenities and, naturally, the presence of companies, whether partners or competitors.

- The setting up of networks: One of the combined effects of

  - the development of high-speed transport (which promotes major rail, air and sea "hubs"),

  - telecommunications (which eliminate barriers to communications),

  - and of new forms of production and trade (which develop links between companies and between separate units within companies),

  is to give special value to those points which bring together and connect the various high-speed transport networks for passengers and goods.

  These "hubs", which serve to irrigate the various transport and communication systems, are acquiring even greater importance as interconnection has become a key notion of development. Axes have lost some of their importance: it is the interconnection networks which matter.

Areas are gradually changing under the influence of these phenomena. Two forms are developing in particular: the urban area and the "city-state".

Switzerland provides a good illustration of the "urban area" phenomenon. Each city is of a relatively small size but the Swiss urban network operates virtually as a single metropolitan area, each of the poles of the metropolitan area being very near to a motorway, major cultural amenities and high education institutions etc., and less than an hour away from an international airport.

Toulouse, for example, aptly illustrates the phenomenon of the "city-state". Relations between Toulouse and Paris or Toulouse and Bristol are far more numerous than with the medium-sized towns of the Midi-Pyrénées region. The notion of a hinterland has lost much of its substance. The area surrounding these cities connected to international networks has been broadly relegated to a leisure vocation. (This is also

true of the non-urban part of Switzerland as the small valleys are less accessible than the more remote cities).

Two concepts seem to be particularly appropriate for describing these spatio-organizational phenomena: "hubs and spokes" and "face to face".

The "hubs and spokes" concept owes its origin to the world of transport. It describes a form of polarized organization in which the logistic platforms are one of its facets.

The recent reorganization of the Air France network has meant that virtually all of its international routes have been concentrated on Paris while its internal routes are used as a standby system for the capital.

The concept of "hubs and spokes" would seem to be appropriate to some extent for describing the recomposition of intra-urban space. Major metropolitan areas have undergone a poly-nuclearization process. High-speed transport system stations and access to urban expressways, tunnels and bridges, and, naturally, to inter-regional and international high-speed transport systems are playing an increasingly centralizing role and selecting activities which can cope with the corresponding land prices.

This process has been strengthened by public policies on infrastructure which often seem to have changed from a resolutely innovative approach to one of mere regulation or, even more modestly, of accompaniment. This "fatalistic" approach leaves even greater scope for the forces of localization and the land and property mechanisms which concentrate "high-level" activities in key areas.

The "face to face" notion, after a period of relative fascination for new communications technologies, seems to be acquiring growing importance. In the past, experience derived from the development of the telephone had brought to light that it did not necessarily reduce direct contact (and therefore travel) but, in a number of cases, it tended, on the contrary, to encourage physical moves. In fact, the possibility of entering into communication, of contacting interlocutors or maintaining contact by telephone, has stimulated both the development of economic relations between companies and contact and joint activities between private individuals.

This phenomenon may occur again with the development of the new communication technologies. There are also the substitution phenomena. For example, time saved by telecommunications, whereby travel is no longer indispensable, is used for travel for other reasons. It is as if there was a certain amount of basic travel which could not be reduced.

As mentioned earlier, the development of telecommunications has turned ordinary, trivial, all that can be telecommunicated!

In this connection, Planque (1989) distinguishes between "monological" communications, which can be telecommunicated easily (and which facilitate functional and hierarchical separations) and "dialogical" or "multilogical" information which is difficult to control at a distance. This process gives even greater importance to direct contact which is obviously readily adopted by the economy, the essence of which is to adopt everything which distinguishes between values. The scarcity value - which is decisive in competition - is no longer the telecommunications system but physical accessibility.

This, to some extent, means that economic sectors, which, by virtue of their nature of activity, could be located virtually anywhere, are finally located where a "face to

face" situation is most easily obtained, that is to say, where all the other activities are located!

Conversely, it is quite likely that activities which handle information with a more limited added value may settle in those areas where land and labour are least expensive.

Intra-urban and inter-urban structures are changing under pressure from a variety of phenomena. As underlined by Camagni (1990) when he analyzed the replacement of high-density urban systems (theory of central location) by network systems, these are only trends which do not alter overall urban organization overnight.

Just as the high-density model which had, as it were, grown onto other urban structures inherited from pre-industrial or even pre-capitalist urban history, the new reticulated systems have also generated new focal points and channels of development in the previous urban systems.

The theory of central places was mainly based on stocks, as the size of population was a determining factor in the functions and hierarchical classification of towns. Conversely, it is the flux which has now become the determining factor, with network relations which develop between companies, towns, groups and individuals and through the growth and acceleration of the movement of materials, people and information.

"Relational" movements affecting information, may generate networks with little or no hierarchical organization and with multi-directional interconnections. Conversely, "physical flows", which, as we have seen, continue to be very important, give networks more hierarchical or constellated patterns of organization on account of technological or economic grounds. They point to the fact that transport infrastructure lies at the heart of urban development. Such infrastructure means that a series of new amenities (e.g. logistical platforms or interconnecting stations) are key points in the structuring of cities and urban networks.

4. Major Urban Operators and Complex Projects

Urban configurations also bear the mark of those who are directly responsible for them, and vice-versa.

From that standpoint, major operators have emerged in France who combine the functions of funding and promotion, development planning, production and management of construction programmes and all kinds of services and networks. Over and beyond the notion of "urban engineering" which already combined some of these activities, there has been a development in companies which assume sole responsibility for the funding, production and management of urban components.

These major operators, whose skills increasingly encompass the total process from conception to management, have become the partners of those public authorities who believe in "urban partnership" (PPP: public - private partnership.) They enjoy a certain scope for initiative but they often need the support of public authorities, particularly for clearing land or building infrastructure. And they have increasingly left their own mark on urban development. This means that they are responsible for designing or launching a particular type of operation which may be financed to a large extent through private funds and therefore adapted to their own requirements of profitability.

There has also been a multiplicity of increasingly complex operations, usually involving various service functions (shops, offices and convention centres), and sometimes including top category housing. These operations are usually located in areas with immediate or quasi-immediate potential and tend therefore to contribute to strengthening the momentum of polarization.

Their underlying philosophy based on profitability often requires spatial and economic control which results in an urban and architectural design that is somewhat centripetal and closed, with collective or quasi-public space kept to a minimum. In that way, they also contribute to a certain extent to the process of fragmentation referred to earlier.

It must also be emphasized that with this type of complex operation, part of the capacity to design and launch urban projects is placed in the hands of private parties. In point of fact, while the "concepts" of operations devised by private urban planners and developers are governed by their own economic logic of profitability, the fact remains that those private operators work according to a ten or fifteen-year perspective, which is sometimes considerably longer than the time-scale of public planners!

In actual fact, private operators are forced to look beyond short-term profit considerations as and when they stop thinking in terms of isolated or "one-off" ventures based on a land opportunity or on taking advantage of a public amenity. They are obliged to take account of the philosophy and interest of a variety of private and public contributors and partners from a long-term point of view.

This approach would seem to be all the more appropriate at a time when the local authorities themselves have been conducting an extensive reappraisal of their own efficiency criteria by introducing or adapting the principles and tools of private management into the administrative services, with varying degrees of success.

There has therefore been evidence of a shift in the capacity for initiative in town planning which has considerably altered the way territorial planning is conducted.

The practice of "partnership" in town planning which has developed in all the industrialized countries is not merely a new sharing of funding or a new definition of what is private or public prerogative.

Partnership in town planning is now part of the new urbanization processes, has generated new urban concepts and has been accompanied by new forms of town planning. Town planning is no longer merely governed by the provision of major public amenities. It has to be invented and implemented on the basis of complex operations in which the "concepts" involve a new combination of commercial activities, services, jobs, transport and communication systems and public and private options.

The task for local authorities is no longer to "control" the entire range of private initiatives within a city (as has sometimes been the case in certain town planning projects), but to intervene in a more selective way and to establish negotiation procedures whenever possible. Town planning is largely a matter of "bargaining", as has often been underlined by the English-speaking contributors. It is up to the public authorities to adopt the most favourable stance for this "bargaining" process.

5. New Urban Lifestyles

It is difficult to identify broad trends in this field as town planning practice is governed by social, geographical, ethnic and cultural differences. Nevertheless, a num-

ber of major phenomena seem to have had a determining effect on the way lifestyles have changed in a significant section of the population.

The major phenomenon has undoubtedly been the development of women's employment, the numerous consequences of which have not yet been accurately assessed. Admittedly, a connection is often established between women's employment and changing trends in family life, the birth rate, the popularization of domestic electrical appliances and new forms of distribution for everyday consumer goods. Rather less is known of the influence of women's employment on other phenomena. It would seem that the development of women's employment and the improvement of their professional skills have modified residential patterns and accentuated the trend towards settling in city centres again in order to ensure that all the members of a household can have ready access to their employment or even change jobs more easily.

A second phenomenon, partly related to the previous one, is that of developments in family life.

Much has been said about the growing divorce rate, the increasing number of unmarried couples and single-parent families. Broadly speaking, there is evidence of what some have called growing individualization. This does not mean that the individual has become completely separated from his family or roots. It does mean, however, that relationships have been redefined between the individual and their group, the source of "various services", to which individuals continue to belong while seeking to procure greater autonomy for themselves. Young people, for example, who actually live in the parental home for much longer than before, lead an increasingly autonomous lifestyle within that context. This phenomenon will probably lead to significant changes in housing and the housing environment.

The redefinition of the role of government and public authorities and the recomposition of society, often considered to be manifestations of a "political crisis" and the questioning of government, are indications of the transformations affecting cities and urban society. In general terms, a crisis has occurred in the traditional systems of social organization of society which has puzzled politicians.

French cities, in particular, developed very rapidly after the Second World War, bringing together an assortment of social groups within a framework that had been profoundly disrupted by economic, social and territorial change and by residential mobility.

Local politicians can no longer rely, when wishing to "communicate with their constituents", on the traditional intermediaries such as prominent local figures and various channels (shopkeepers, caretakers, primary school teachers and clergymen) and local associations.

Society has become opaque which has meant that some have jumped to the conclusion that it has become destructured and overrun with "individualism" or "selfishness". In actual fact, local representatives are finding it increasingly difficult to defend the general interest and this is particularly true of projects for building new houses, roads or a light railway system in a given district.

Nonetheless, beneath the apparent chaos of society may well lie new modes of organization. It would seem that forms of solidarity previously provided by government are increasingly becoming replaced by new systems founded on "private" social networks.

Associations, for example, often strive less and less to achieve general representation and are increasingly enclined to adopt practical forms for organizing activities, gaining access to certain services and developing particular practices (particularly in the cultural and leisure field) or to rejecting public intervention (e.g. associations seeking to defend the sectional rather than general interest along the lines of the "not in my backyard" philosophy).

Government, and more generally local authorities, are often disowned in their ambition to represent collective interests. They are relegated - in ideological terms at least - to the former tasks of maintaining law and order, regulation and assistance (e.g. provision of the minimum wage in France). Furthermore, certain types of social solidarity are now becoming the responsibility of the private sector.

This phenomenon is obviously linked to other economic and ideological/political phenomena (e.g. the privatization of urban services). However, through fragmenting society and by bringing individuals together in a new framework, these trends ostensibly play a part in the urban fragmentation which we have referred to earlier in its other aspects.

6 . The Social Division of Space

In this field, French urban society has experienced significant changes which have perhaps affected other European countries less directly and on which it would be interesting to dwell at this juncture.

The French urban and social history and the importance of direct intervention on the part of government and public authorities in the field of housing, transport, health and education have probably contributed to limiting the spatial manifestations of social disparities.

The 1948 Housing Act, grants for the building of municipal housing, widespread use of expropriation rights, the construction of state schools and public hospitals and overall policy on public transport networks, etc., have obviously not eliminated social disparities. Some people have even endeavoured to show that these policies for the provision of public amenities had in fact reproduced or extended, if not actually accentuated, such disparities.

The fact remains that the spatial manifestation of social disparities and inequalities has been limited. The poor and the elderly have been able to go on living for a time in city centres. Municipal housing has been open to a fairly wide cross-section of the population. Variations in the provision of public amenities have been reduced although some inequality persists. Major hospitals have been built in certain suburbs. Over the last fifteen years, it would seem that these public "obstacles "to the spatial manifestation of social inequalities and disparities have had a shrinking effect.

As far as low-cost housing is concerned, the adoption of a policy of subsidies for construction, the seemingly massive encouragement given to ownership of individual housing and the decline in the relative importance of municipal housing obviously do not alone account for the problems facing low-cost housing districts (economic changes have been a cause of a more structural nature), but they have resulted in a spatial configuration which has probably made them worse.

Apart from housing, the development of private education, private clinics and individual car travel, combined with a slowing down in investment in public transport infrastructure, have obviously contributed to the spatialization of social inequalities.

And yet it was in that particular context that France undertook a process of decentralization and witnessed early signs of new growth in a number of areas. Thanks to decentralization, local authorities have been faced with management and funding constraints of a completely new kind. This has often led to austerity policies which have limited orientating and regulating intervention on the part of local authorities.

At the same time, the private sector has displayed considerable dynamism in a number of cities and in certain inner city areas. There has been a proliferation of offices, shops and luxury housing in those areas with high social and economic potential. In parallel to this, the phenomenon of "gentrification" has developed in numerous inner city areas which have been taken over by the upper middle class.

Mention must be made of the importance of the educational phenomenon in this process of social polarization. It is widely recognized that education has increasingly become the indispensable key to social and professional success. A distinctive feature of the mobility of the more priviledged section of the community has been the quest for the best schools.

In cities, children's access to a school depends mainly on its physical proximity. The residential mobility of those social classes which can choose where they live has therefore become increasingly determined by the quality of local schools. Furthermore, within our social and socio-educational system, the "standard" of a school depends largely on its student intake.

The impetus of the social regrouping of advantaged classes is therefore inherently sustained, with the additional support of the price mechanism for housing (and also maintained by the inadequacy of urban public transport). Completely symmetrical phenomena are to be found in the low-cost housing districts, caught in a downward spiral of impoverishment which public policy usually cannot succeed in correcting.

We may well ponder also on what future lies in store for the housing estates at the outskirts of cities. From the early 70s to the early 80s, towns throughout France became surrounded by a peri-urban belt of individual housing for the middle classes, often grouped into what came to be called "housing estates". This process was encouraged by government and by many local authorities until comparatively recently. Today, however, there is evidence in these areas of what have come to be known as the "casualties of home ownership". These are people who, when buying a house, had arranged a mortgage which corresponded to their professional aspirations and a rising income and who, when their career did not map out as well as expected or even resulted in unemployment, could no longer either pay back their annual instalments or sell off their dwelling whose market value had considerably declined. Besides this, experience has shown that the middle classes who had chosen to live in individual housing are now returning to more urban districts and collective housing, which seem more suitable for teenage children and to professional occupations when both parents work.

Is it not likely - in this new context of remetropolization and urban repolarization - that a process of devalorization- degradation of housing estates will occur in much the same way as that which has already affected the tower-block housing schemes? Would this not mean that those who continue to live in the housing estates at the outskirts of cities, within a context of premature deterioration and difficult reha-

bilitation, would be those who really had no other choice? And might they not be joined by those who had been forced to leave the inner cities by the return of the middle classes?

The social fragmentation of urban areas has also taken the form of what is referred to as "purpose-built" accommodation, that is to say, housing specifically for students, the elderly, single-parent families, executives seeking temporary accommodation, and even for, as recently suggested, polygamous households!

In parallel to this fragmentation linked to public policies, there is that resulting from the so-called "market segmentation" dear to the private sector philosophy. Major developers have now devised increasingly "tailor-made products". Competition on private markets has led them, as in other economic sectors, to target households more and more accurately with products corresponding to income groups and even lifestyles.

This segmentation occurs, firstly, in locations (intensifying the phenomena referred to earlier), but also in terms of the types of housing, the number of rooms and their layout and even the architecture.

The segmentation of a product such as housing which has a considerably longer life cycle than run-of-the-mill consumer goods is obviously likely to hinder future developments in cities (and all the more so as the layout and the building methods and materials of this type of housing make it much less flexible than the apartment buildings typical of 19th century Paris).

7. Renewed Theories and Concepts

The world of science has been significantly influenced in recent years by new lines of investigation particularly in the field of physics and biology. Chaos, order-disorder, non-linear models, auto-organization and complex and divisive systems are the most common notions and concepts.

It is by no means sure that these concepts can be applied to the social field and to the analysis of urban phenomena but the manner in which they extend beyond previous linear theories which governed the frame of reference of those who used to fashion town planning, will evidently have significant consequences.

> "Our obsession with order, which is reflected in simplification and reductionism, was formerly a traditional avenue of knowledge (and of action -my remark),... We cannot expect to master complexity (of cities in particular - *ibid.*), whether intellectually or practically, by strengthening a control process. We must learn to penetrate and to manage complex systems while observing the autonomy of the implied processes and the various elements existing within those systems. We have to think up new ways of conceiving order and disorder and to accept that disorder is not only negative but may also be a prerequisite for the creation of new forms of order" (M. Soedjatmoko: Introduction to the United Nations University Seminar on "Science and the practice of complexity", 1984).

It is plain that these new approaches are in tune with the social and economic thinking of all those who, sometimes for conflicting reasons, bring into question the intervention of the public authorities. The introduction - metaphorical for the time being - of these concepts into patterns of social behaviour has been encouraged both by those who wished to rehabilitate and renovate free market principles (by showing, firstly, that the market is not a state of disorder but contains subcomponents capable of

auto-organization and, secondly, that governments cannot claim to reduce and manage complex systems) and those who wished to promote "alternative" methods and establish on a theoretical basis the auto-organization of various groups.

The use of these notions, however, was soon to extend beyond those circles and seems to have gradually become something of a new paradigm, common to a wide variety of socio-political projects.

Some of these ideas are also to be found in the field of company management and planning, particularly with "heuristic management" (a sort of strategic pragmatism) or in the field of risk management (with probability methods adapted to complex systems).

Last, but not least, as regards the subject of concern to us here, there are also significant traces of these concepts in some architectural and town planning thinking which has drawn inspiration from them and developed a kind of "aesthetics of chaos". The "model" of disorder (illustrated particularly by the juxtapositions and apparent fractures in the Japanese urban fabric) is naturally one of the major references of such thinking, without forgetting the "deconstructivists" who decompose and recompose, as they please, the various elements of architectural vocabulary in a project which, from a certain angle, ties up again with modernity.

II   NEW APPROACHES TO URBAN PLANNING

New forms of urbanization, new actors and new representations of society and the way it works, all belong to the field of urban planning and town planning.

This is all the more so as regardless of the trust we might place in mechanisms of auto-organization and auto-regulation, it has become increasingly clear to decision-makers in the urban field that external regulations and interventions are indispensable. Even British private developers, faced with the overall degradation of Greater London, have stressed this need and have called for a return to a minimum of urban planning... and to public investment (particularly in transport).

1 .   Urban planning and strategic management

For many years, urban and town planning policies have been geared to four types of separate instruments:

- general long-term planning documents (development plans, master plans, outline plans);
- specific land regulations (legislation on land use);
- operational town planning procedures;
- public investment programmes.

This particular division would no longer seem to be adapted to the current complexity of urban development, to the objectives of public authorities and their resources and to the new relations which exist between the public and private parties involved.

Consequently, cities have attempted to acquire new instruments which would enable them simultaneously to prepare medium and long-term projects and to manage the short-term, that is to say, to cope with or put to advantage all sorts of unforeseen

events or opportunities, to react to changes in the environment and to take into account the philosophy of the various partners involved.

In fact, it has become increasingly difficult for the public authorities to decide what their cities will be like in twenty to thirty years time and to implement such a long-term project through public operations or by telling private actors what they must do and where they are allowed to do it. The environment is much too open and fluctuating for local decision-makers to be left to dream of such methods. In point of fact, the major problem for most local authorities, except in some specific areas, is less and less to prevent or to control private projects. Town planning can no longer be conducted in terms of "managing" or even "policing". On the contrary, the main concern of local politicians has become to attract private investment which will create jobs and have a multiplier effect on the local economy.

However, this concern has sometimes led local authorities into competing and overbidding which, through repeated renunciation, from grants to tax allowances and funding made available to private investors, have resulted in mortgaging the overall development of their town and jeopardizing the general interest.

In this partly new context, giving impetus to and carrying through urban development requires that less rigid and more efficient means be brought into play. As it is increasingly difficult to make reality (urban development and its actors) square with the framework which has been prepared for it (plan, programme and schedule), it is necessary to define with greater accuracy the objectives to be reached and to leave greater flexibility for methods for their implementation.

Cities share this problem with major companies. In recent years, the latter have actually devised new methods of planning and management ("heuristic management" and "strategic piloting") which have opened up opportunities for the renewal of urban development and town planning.

New approaches such as these, somewhat more pragmatic in nature, require in return the definition of more explicit projects and strategical options which meet with a very broad consensus, in order to preserve them as much as possible from political fluctuations and to enable all sorts of actors to get involved in them and to compete in a creative fashion.

Far from bringing planning, particularly physical planning, into question, this new approach provides an opportunity for taking a fresh look at the production and management of urban components.

2. Town Planning Based on Partnership

The public authorities no longer have the means to implement all their urban projects alone and in a technocratic manner. Local authorities have therefore endeavoured to find private partners in order to spare their own resources. To achieve this, the projects in which they wish to involve those partners must be partly or wholly compatible with the private sector approach. Furthermore, the "multiplier effect" of this partnership is even greater if the private parties are involved in the design stage.

In fact, it is also to the advantage of the private parties to bear public philosophy in mind when designing their own projects. Consequently, in most countries, partnership has developed between the public authorities and private parties which has led to a hybrid manifestation of their respective approaches, whereby the public authorities

have integrated into their own projects the philosophy and constraints of the private sector, and vice versa.

3. Town Planning as the Rule of the Game, a Performance Standard and an Incentive

The need for projects for the city's future but uncertainty about that future; the need for multiple partnership but according to different philosophical bases; the need to promote creativity, but the obligation to respect equality in the eyes of the law and regulations; all this means that emphasis is placed, firstly, on the need for urban development but, secondly, on the need to invent new forms of regulation.

The need has emerged for urban planning and regulation which would be conceived as rules of the game, that is to say, which would define the framework in which all the parties would operate and would specify the main objectives to be attained, but would leave each party involved responsible for finding the best means of achieving the goal.

This, to a certain extent, is what the French government has developed with the local authorities over the last fifteen years by replacing subsidies by contracts. It is also what the local authorities have developed when they have organized competition for areas and programmes which bring together town planners and developers.

Another path would seem to be that of performance town planning, also referred to by OECD as "performance standards". This involves defining "achievement requirements" for specific areas and leaving responsibility to private operators to find the most appropriate means for achieving them.

"Incentive town planning" is also being more widely practised. This involves encouraging private operators to intervene in certain areas for which the urban potential has been clearly specified. The Concerted Development Areas are a particular form of this type of town planning. The local authorities developed a wide variety of incentives, extending well beyond the manipulation of authorized maximum occupation densities. By clearly defining those areas for which dispensations might be granted, together with the nature of such dispensations and the reasons for making them, the local authorities no longer depart from the law and the principle of equality for all in the eyes of the law. It could be said that they practise the technique of judo, that is to say, they do not attempt to oppose private influence but seek to channel it, divert it and even unbalance it!

4. The Use of "Master Projects"

Master projects represent a very effective solution that is being used increasingly often. In certain cases, a master project may advantageously replace a master plan.

The principle involves implementing a so-called strategic project with a twofold function:

- to provide a specific urban project: station, hospital, museum, etc.
- to introduce through and around the amenity an urban impetus (for growth, change or restructuring).

The master project is therefore an instrument both of urban planning and operational town planning. The question of land occupation density is less important at the

outset of this approach than the project prepared for an urban district and the impetus for change or transformation which may thereby be triggered off.

A master project may act as a lever (it chooses a decisive point and exerts the appropriate thrust on it) or as a catalyst (it brings about "reactions"). It is an instrument which is adapted to particular areas and objectives, but it cannot be used throughout a connurbation as a whole. It is particularly useful when, for a given area, the local authority does not have complete control over all funding, land ownership or phasing. If it is to be effective, it had better be designed according to the logic of partnership town planning, that is to say, it must explicitly combine the public project and the criteria of the private actors involved in its implementation or in the transformation of the surrounding area. It requires a subtle knowledge of the context and the network of actors involved, as well as a fairly accurate follow-up procedure in order to decide on complementary interventions which may accompany the master project, affording adequate control over its effects and ensuring its complete effectiveness.

5. Major Projects

The principle of a major project is to implement a vast venture the impact of which will be beneficial to the city as a whole, or even to the region or country. This role has often been played by Universal Exhibitions, the Olympic Games and World Cups, etc. In addition to promoting the image of the city and bequeathing a number of urban amenities, major projects often leave a strong symbolic imprint on their location (the Eiffel Tower is perhaps the best known example of this kind). In recent years, the major cultural projects in Paris have played a decisive role in making of Paris the capital of Europe.

The effect of these major projects have extended well beyond the cultural field and has helped Paris to bring its image up to date, particularly in competition with London in the field of business, and more generally in the political field.

From an urban point of view, such major projects have raised the standard of architecture and town planning requirements in quite a remarkable way. In their wake, urban ambitions and methods can no longer be quite the same as before.

What is particularly interesting in terms of town planning and urban development is the threefold dimension of these major projects :
-   they fulfil specific purposes (in Paris, the purpose has been cultural);
-   they contribute to producing a new cultural image of the city; they transform what is cultural into an economic investment;
-   they have a significant spatial effect as they are operations that structure or restructure the city.

One of the essential dimensions of a major project is the strength of its image. This strength should enable it to extend beyond its initial function and to reflect favourably on the image of the city or on the dynamism of a particular district. As the image of a city or a district, the remarkable quality of a particular object, an urban project understood and imitated by various actors, all these aspects highlight communication at the heart of the conception of major projects as well as in new urban planning.

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