Why mobilize town dwellers? - joint management in Ouagadougou (1983-1990)

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SUMMARY: *This paper describes an attempt by the revolutionary government of Burkina Faso between 1983 and 1990 to mobilize the residents of peri-urban areas in Ouagadougou to build or improve urban services. During these years, more than 60,000 plots of land were provided with legal rights of occupancy: in each neighbourhood, elected "revolutionary committees" organized this and helped to mobilize and support substantial improvements in local public facilities - for instance schools, dispensaries, creches and water hydrants. This helped the poorer peripheral areas "catch up" with the central city. However, the paper also considers the limitations of such mobilization including its inability to initiate and manage large and more complex initiatives (for instance drainage and sanitation), its often antagonistic relationships with official agencies, its unparticipatory characteristics and its inability, without state support, to reduce inequalities between different parts of the city.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

AFTER 23 YEARS of government based on an alliance between civilian elites and the military high command, the coming of the popular democratic revolution led by Captain Thomas Sankara on 4th August 1983 marked a decisive stage in the political development of Burkina Faso.[1] Although, at the time, less than 13 per cent of the population lived in towns, these were at the heart of revolutionary policy. In seeking to develop an original path out of the economic slump that affected the African continent, the state came up with a voluntarist concept of urban development whose underlying practices were unheard of in view of the means available. However, beyond this distinctive and unusual feature, many town planning initiatives that were tried matched up with, or indeed anticipated, recommendations that are now commonplace: however revolutionary it might be, the

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1. Otayek, René (1985), "Avant-propos", *Politique africaine*, No.20, December, pages 3-9.

2. Stren, Richard E. and Rodney R. White (editors) (1989), *African Cities in Crisis : Managing Rapid Urban Growth*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, USA and London, UK, 335 pages, (African Modernization and Development Series).

3. World Bank (1991), *Politique urbaine et développement économique : un ordre du jour pour les années 90*, Washington, 99 pages; also *Les villes, moteur du développement économique des pays du Tiers Monde : Journées internationales de Lille, 6-10 novembre 1989*, Paris, FMCU/Cités Unies Développement, 1990, 2 volumes.

4. United Nations (1991), Programme de Gestion Urbaine, *Prospectus révisé: renforcement des capacités de gestion urbaine pour les années 90*, Washington, New York, Nairobi, 39 pages.

5. Stren, Richard E. (1993), "An elusive concept: 'urban manage-

regime was nonetheless faced with the same concerns and outside pressures as its neighbours.

The 1980s, a decade of crisis in African towns[2] characterized by the disorganization of official management systems as well as by a reassessment of the role of towns in development,[3] witnessed a profusion of policies aimed at restoring, or establishing, economic efficiency in towns. In the opinion of international donors, this meant better "urban management",[4] a rather vague expression[5] which, nevertheless, by its success gave birth to new priorities.

Management functions and recurrent running costs, long neglected, began to gain ground at the expense of design and investment: it was therefore imperative to find a regular supply of resources. By means of decentralization, local communities were given a share of this new responsibility: as facilitators of development,[6] they were in fact supposed to act as catalysts, releasing the dynamism that had previously been hidden by technocratic, centralized bureaucracies. This interest in management was also accompanied by a resurgence of calls for "citizen participation", highlighting two objectives: directing and channelling underutilized potential for the benefit of urban management; and consolidating social mechanisms fostering democratic engineering.

Much uncertainty remained, however, with regard to operating the three-way management/decentralization/participation approach.[7] What level of decentralization would most effectively promote urban management? Was popular participation possible and desirable in this field? What was meant by participation? The concept remains ambiguous and many different interpretations were given. A component of many operational set-ups, associated with the principles of cost recovery and potential for replication, participation is, on the one hand, a "top down" mechanism, a synonym for the investment of human or financial resources on an *ad hoc*, targeted basis. On the other hand, when it is included in reforms aimed at decentralization, it designates the mechanism by which power is shared and citizens play a part in decisions affecting them. In this second sense, participation relates only to a minority of local authorities and institutional arrangements in sub-Saharan Africa; in the first sense, it ends up as an ideologically acceptable packaging for a theory of economic efficiency designed for the poorest. However, it is beyond question that ways must be found for city dwellers to contribute towards the development of the urban environment: this was indeed the thrust of many reforms in the 1980s. Thus, to avoid the confusion surrounding the use of the term participation, we shall refer in this paper to forms of citizen **mobilization** to designate the channelling of hitherto unevenly tapped resources.

Some of the challenges and limits to such mobilization are illustrated by the example of revolutionary Burkina Faso.[8] Between 1983 and 1990, genuine mobilization took place in the outlying *sectors*[9] of Ouagadougou, a Sahelian capital of some 700,000 inhabitants and with a rapid population growth (8-9 per cent per year).[10] This mobilization, however, was not ac-

ment' in development assistance", in *Cities*, Vol.10, No.2, May, pages 125-138.

6. Venard, Jean-Louis (1992), "Questions à propos des projets de développement local", in Osmont, Annik, et al., *La gestion social urbaine dans les pays en développement*, Paris, Institut Français d'Urbanisme, pages 49-57, *Cahiers et Recherche*, No.3, December.

7. See, for example, Jaglin, Sylvy and Alain Dubresson (1993), "Gérer la ville: décentralisation, participation, démocratie", in Jaglin, Sylvy and Alain Dubresson (dirs.), *Pouvoirs et cités d'Afrique noire : décentralisations en question*, Paris, Karthala, pages 295-305.

8. This work is based on surveys conducted in Ouagadougou during the period 1983-1990 which covers the years of the popular democratic revolution and then, following the assassination of Thomas Sankara on 15th October 1987, the "rectification" phase led by Blaise Compaoré, elected President in December 1991.

9. Sectors are the basic urban administrative units, created in December 1983: Ouagadougou has a total of 30. In this text, we are concerned with the 16 "external" sectors which make up what we call the urban periphery. In 1988, their respective populations ranged from 2,000 to 38,000 inhabitants. To make the argument clearer and to avoid confusion with other meanings of the word "sector", this term is put in italics in the text.

10. The 1985 census recorded 450,000 people in the city and its suburbs and the urban area was estimated at 700,000 inhabitants in 1992.

11. Beeker, Coen (1990), *L'aménagement des quartiers d'habitat spontané à Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)*, Amsterdam, Institut de

companied by any institutional decentralization, which still remains on the drawing board in 1994. The mobilization did not survive the revolutionary period, but did it allow outlying areas to catch up in terms of town planning? Beyond this, did it have lasting effects on urban management? Finally, was the enhancement of local vitality in these peri-urban *sectors* accompanied by a spatial redistribution of public expenditure fostering a reduction in the disparities between the different urban *sectors*?

II. THE RATIONALE FOR JOINT MANAGEMENT OF LOCAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

NEGLECTED BY THE official town planning system, half the inhabitants of Ouagadougou were living on the periphery of the city at the beginning of the 1980s. These sprawling areas of unallocated land were dotted with little houses made of *banco* (local materials), crossed by a network of dirt tracks and almost entirely lacking urban facilities. The five-year process of regularizing the tenure situation (more than 60,000 plots were allocated between 1984 and 1989) profoundly altered their outlook.

a. Title to Land Versus "Participation"

Providing access to housing for everyone was an important priority for revolutionary urban planning. One of the most dramatic measures was the division into public plots for housing of the outlying areas of Ouagadougou (by government decision on 21st December 1983). The authorities' aim was also to curb illegal settlements and control urban sprawl. In seeking to achieve these objectives, the state began by strengthening its hand through nationalizing land ownership. This reform was followed by exceptional legislation to adapt allocation procedures - official terminology referred to division into lots, although what actually happened was restructuring. The main innovations which resulted from this were the simplification and speeding up of procedures, insistence on a contribution from beneficiaries, and more rational time management, hence the name "gradual development method" given to this urban development technique.[11]

The method consisted of land division on a gridiron projection, superimposed on the former urban framework by installing boundary markers. The inhabitants then had one year to move to the new plot and rebuild on the basis of the new plot division, if possible using materials salvaged from their former dwellings. In so doing, they discharged some of the obligations of the administration, which was able to reduce development costs by about one-third. The marked plots were handed over against payment of a uniform possession tax, set at FCFA 300 per square metre[12] and payable in two instalments to the state property department. The recipient had three months to supply a down payment of FCFA 25,000, which entitled him/her to a certificate confirming the allocation of a plot, and this provi-

Planification et de Démographie (Université d'Amsterdam), 30 pages ; Jaglin, Sylvy (1993), "Logiche fondiarie pubbliche e azioni dei cittadini nella periferia di Ouagadougou", in *Storia Urbana*, Anno XVII, April-June, pages 73-98.

12. 1 FCFA = 0.02 French Francs (exchange rate before the devaluation of January 1994).

13. Jaglin, Sylvy (1991), *Pouvoirs urbains et gestion partagée à Ouagadougou : équipements et services de proximité dans les périphéries*, Paris, Institut Français d'Urbanisme (Université Paris VIII), 1169 pages (Ph. D. Thesis).

14. For an account of their history, see for example : Martens, Ludo (1989), *Sankara, Compaoré et la Révolution burkinabè*, Antwerp, EPO Dossier international, 332 pages.

sional document could be used to back up requests for building permits. However, the urban residence permit, a transferable title which was the only document recognized for the purpose of obtaining a bank loan, was not issued unless the balance was paid within a period of five years (about FCFA 65,000 for 300 square metre plots).

The allocation commissions, consisting of members of the revolutionary committees and representatives of the administration, had a central role in this arrangement which they were charged with organizing and managing. In principle, plots were allocated to previously registered households who submitted requests, in accordance with criteria for determining priority which were established by decree. Apart from their responsibility for ensuring that the allocation procedures were respected, the commissions also had to check the identity of those making requests, in order to limit the accumulation of plots and speculation which were considered illegal.

Within a few years, the turn-around in the land tenure situation in the outlying areas was evident: only 20 per cent of the land was divided into lots in 1983, while the proportion had risen to 85 per cent by 1990. The regularization process was not just a technical operation though. The political and social rehabilitation of what had previously been areas that had been disliked by the authorities led to a double mobilization of the city dwellers: there was a mass invasion by people from the central area, attracted by new opportunities for gaining real estate from marked out areas and the surrounding areas that could be developed, while existing residents seized the opportunity provided by regularization to demand access to public facilities and services. Far more than official exhortations to "participate", it is this desire to assert newly acquired urban integration, to abolish the separation between suburb and centre and to "catch up" in terms of town planning which explains the vigorous mobilization of the residential communities in the outlying areas during the 1980s. This mobilization resulted in the establishment of joint management arrangements for local services.[13]

In fact, legitimizing the right to urban facilities and services in the periphery did not lift the financial constraints on the public administration whose resources were extremely limited. It was, therefore, necessary to find an original way of reducing inequalities but this meant not only changing the behaviour of the institutions involved but also ensuring accontribution from the urban population. The reluctance of the institutions was swept away by revolutionary dynamics, motivated by a fierce determination to break down the hierarchical, closed structure of the extremely conservative Mossi society: new senior officials and novel practices and procedures were thus introduced into urban bureaucracies. Citizen mobilization was catalyzed by the regularization of land title, as is shown by the fact that the most active groups were found only in the restructured suburbs. It was then supervized by the "revolutionary committees", political and administrative structures set up in 1983 and abolished in 1991.[14] Elected by the population of the 30 urban *sectors*,

the revolutionary committees were the mainstays of town planning innovations which allowed the outlying areas to catch up with the central city in terms of local public facilities (schools, dispensaries, creches, sports grounds, markets and so on) and improved the management of certain services such as the distribution of drinking water at the hydrants.

The initial philosophy of cooperation between the administration, revolutionary committees and citizen groups was based on a division of tasks. Although willing to provide facilities in the newly allocated areas, the state and various relevant institutions lacked the resources and thus suggested to citizens that they should join forces to speed up investment and improve the management of services which the public *sector* could not take on by itself. This implicit blackmail produced the following situation: having obtained security of tenure, the people were invited to organize themselves under the aegis of their revolutionary committees to supply the necessary labour and cash resources to provide facilities in their areas, in exchange for which institutional partners undertook to provide technical supervision and a limited amount of "counterpart funds".

This arrangement could only work if, on the one hand, there were resources available which could be mobilized by the revolutionary committees within each of the *sectors* to support and extend citizen mobilization and if, on the other hand, provincial and state institutions honoured their commitments in the division of tasks.

b. Local Resources: Pandora's Box?

Taking advantage of the vague official guidelines regarding their funding and the obvious discrepancy between the scale of their tasks and the modest nature of their resources, the revolutionary committees launched many initiatives, with varying degrees of success, to mobilize financial resources from various sources in the local area.

i. Informal Taxation

Initial revenue was procured through the "allocation taxes" imposed illegally by almost all the revolutionary committees. To place one's name on the list for plots, it was necessary first to pay a variable amount, usually between FCFA 1,000 (resident households) and FCFA 2,000 (non-resident households), to set the process in motion. This very lucrative levy did, however, suffer from the major drawback of being a one-off payment and many initiatives did not survive when this windfall had run out. A breach had nevertheless been opened and there were few *sectors* that did not rush into it.

In fact, the only form of "participation" which was explicitly authorized by the regime was known as "human investment" (voluntary labour) at public works sites. This was inadequate and rapidly proved to be difficult to manage. The revolutionary committees moved away from this in favour of a system of cash levies on residents (a five-year plan "tax" amounting to FCFA

1,000 per household per year, contributions of FCFA 500 per household to build classrooms, FCFA 200 to establish a sports ground, etc.), on users ("fee" for a pitch at the new markets, registration "fees" at the new school, payment for the use of public conveniences) or on small-scale local activities ("taxes" on water carts, "voluntary contributions" from traders and so on). By channelling private resources for the benefit of local public works, they operated what amounted to an informal taxation system.

As these levies never had any legal or statutory basis, their success depended primarily on such consensus as could be reached between the various protagonists in the *sectors*. However, the revolutionary committees were not short of means to ensure compliance: their role as intermediaries in allocating plots, establishing national identity cards or registering requests to set up businesses gave them many opportunities to press their claims. There was, therefore, an often tenuous distinction between extortion and participation in the collective efforts of the *sectors*.

ii. Money from Collective Water Points: An Overexploited Source

In view of the fragile link between the revolutionary committees and the people, the yield from these taxes and contributions was uncertain. They were, therefore, abandoned in some cases in favour of a much more lucrative source of money, namely selling drinking water at public outlets.

Drinking water is a strategic matter in Ouagadougou. The scarcity of the natural resource is compounded by the inadequate production and distribution capacity of the network, the very weak state of public finances which forces Burkina Faso to depend on foreign capital, and the rapid increase in demand from an urban population whose purchasing power is low.[15] In this difficult context, the public water supply service showed worrying signs of weakness at the beginning of the 1980s: about 35 per cent of the total urban area (i.e. 3,700 hectares out of just over 10,000) was connected to the network and, with 14,000 subscribers, the ONEA (National Water and Sanitation Agency) was piping water to less than a quarter of households. Furthermore, where the network was in place, users were faced with an increasing number of failures in supply (for instance cuts or reduced pressure).

Along with its programme to regularize land title in the outlying areas of Ouagadougou, the revolutionary state, working through the ONEA, nevertheless opted for social management of drinking water. The slow increase in the number of private connections and the decline in specific consumption had to be balanced by an increase in the number of citizens having access to drinking water delivered through collective outlets, especially in the newly allotted areas. This was the basis for the system of sharing the resource which was the revolutionary government's response to the shortage. It was based on three principles: increasing the number of collective facilities (hy-

15. According to the World Bank, Burkina Faso had a per capita GNP of US$290 in 1993.

16. High performance boreholes, with an output of over five cubic metres per hour, equipped with a submerged electric pump feeding a metal storage tank and a series of taps.

17. Each revolutionary committee had its own methods: cooption, partisan solidarity, priority to the "needy", selection by "testing", etc.

drants, boreholes equipped with hand pumps, and independent water points[16]); official recognition of water carriers, although they were trading illegally, who draw water from the hydrants and then transport it in carts to people's homes; and transferring the management of the new collective water points, especially on the periphery, to the revolutionary committees. This latter step was based on a twofold rationale: the ONEA already had a long-standing tradition of leasing hydrants to private individuals, the *kôm Naba* ("water chiefs") and planned to extend this arrangement to the new facilities; for its part, the political authorities wanted to deprive the *kôm Naba* of a source of income and an instrument for controlling the citizens, while consolidating the revolutionary committees. In 1985, it was decided to entrust the latter with numerous leasing contracts.

By virtue of these, the ONEA retained ownership of the facilities and responsibility for depreciation and major repairs, including the costs of weekly checking of the meters. The revolutionary committees took over the management of water points, paying security of FCFA 15,000, covering normal operating costs (paying for water and minor repairs) and monitoring the ONEA sales tariff. It was also up to the committees to select[17] and pay the wages of the sellers responsible for organizing and supervizing water distribution, collecting fees, and reporting breakdowns.

The cost of the service was covered by a profit margin authorized by the ONEA. At the hydrant, where a cubic metre of water was bought from the ONEA at FCFA 95 and sold at FCFA 150, the manager obtained FCFA 55 per cubic metre sold. At prices of FCFA 51 per cubic metre and FCFA 155 per cubic metre respectively, a higher margin of FCFA 104 per cubic metre was allowed at independent water points, to cover additional maintenance costs. Alongside these official amounts, in practice managers enjoyed leeway to adjust the selling price according to the type of recipient used for purchase, the number of people using the water point and actual maintenance costs. Actual selling prices therefore ranged from FCFA 5 for a 20-litre bucket (FCFA 250 per cubic metre) at all outlets except those with hand pumps (FCFA 5 per two buckets), FCFA 30-50 for 200-litre barrels at independent water points (FCFA 150-250 per cubic metre) and FCFA 30-40 per 200 litres at the hydrants (FCFA 150-200 per cubic metre).

The initial effect of this way of organizing the service was to transfer the costs of managing public facilities to users, through charging for water at the tap. On the other hand, the service was generally seen to operate correctly: the facilities had long opening hours (from 5-6 o'clock in the morning to 8 or 9 o'clock in the evening in the dry season, sometimes much later), maintenance was properly done and closures because of nonpayment were relatively rare. Furthermore, collaboration between managers and users helped to alleviate the deficiencies of the public service (for instance filling barrels at night, day and night storage systems and extended opening hours to take advantage of good water pressure at night). Finally, the vigilance of the managers limited waste, as the invoice covered all the water

distributed, whether it was sold or lost at the tap.

In this way, the joint management of water which resulted from this arrangement between the public authorities and the revolutionary committees allowed a local service to operate correctly, over the period being studied, in the newly allotted areas. However, these effects on the quality and continuity of the service, although important, were not the primary motivation for the mobilization of the revolutionary committees. In fact, management of water points provided minor jobs in the outlying areas and allowed supplementary income to be redistributed; controlling the circuits by which these jobs were allocated was, therefore, a useful instrument in setting up their networks of dependence and social relations at *sector* level.

The main issue still related to the allocation of the resources generated through water sales, which almost always produced net profits after the deduction of costs. When paid into *sector* budgets, these profits were generally used for local investments, for instance building schools and dispensaries or setting up a local market. These cash transfers outside the water *sector* thus supported a considerable proportion of the social and economic activities of the revolutionary committees and formed an indispensable tool in maintaining community dynamism but they also had a pernicious effect on water management. Having been spent for other purposes, money was often in short supply when it came to repairs: while the service at the hydrants was not much affected, in view of the simplicity of the facilities, the story was rather different as far as poorly maintained independent water points were concerned.

Analysis should, therefore, reveal the two complementary lessons to be drawn: first, it appears that it is important to take a cross-sectoral approach when seeking to understand the concrete modalities of urban management at *sector* level, as these have very little in common with the *sector* based guidelines of institutional partners. Hence, joint management of drinking water owed much to the assistance of the ONEA but the impetus came from the political apparatus, whereas daily practice was based on cross-sectoral management pragmatism. In particular, the deficiencies of the service cannot be explained without remembering that the other activities of the revolutionary committees were dependent on cash transferred from the drinking water operation.

Furthermore, in showing that the dynamism of neighbourhood organizations is not always compatible with *sector* based logic, the example of Ouagadougou underlines one of the weaknesses of the association which is commonly made in contemporary urban projects between management rationalization and "citizen participation". While the cross-sectoral approaches of the revolutionary committees were able to flourish until 1990, they did not survive the revolutionary state: the subsequent reorganization, accompanied by a return to the compartmentalization of channels of intervention in the town, endorsed the renewed supremacy of *sector* based concerns in the management of urban drinking water supplies[18] and local forms of dynamism collapsed along with those approaches. Joint manage-

18. Jaglin, Sylvy (1993),"Gestion partagée de l'eau potable à Ouagadougou : pouvoirs urbains et contrôle social", in *Travaux de géographie de Reims*, No.83-84, pages 81-97.

ment of drinking water was not, therefore, a management model, nor an example of citizen participation. However, it did provide, as things stood in the 1980s, a relatively satisfactory response to the demand for drinking water from the newly allotted outlying areas and obtained the necessary resources for all their other mobilization initiatives.

c. The Coherent Framework Provided by Five-Year Plan

Few projects based on citizen mobilization avoid the disadvantages of a narrow local approach: seeking above all to tap into local resources, they often neglect the need to deal with the public administration, so that no one knows who is responsible for arranging, programming or planning to ensure that the schools built do not remain closed for lack of teachers or that increasing the number of hydrants is compatible with the actual availability of water resources. Conversely, joint management in Ouagadougou immediately established linkages between residential groups, the provincial administration, management institutions and public service agencies.

To ensure the coherence of operational linkages and an appropriate rhythm of intervention, such management was written into the 1986-1990 Five-Year Plan, which provided a synthesis of local, provincial and national programming. The revolutionary committees had to prepare their own documents, which were then centralized and coordinated at provincial level, these stages being considered necessary preliminary steps to protect the state from an influx of scattered requests and to ensure institutional backing for projects ratified locally by general assemblies of militants in the *sectors*.

Among these projects, the most numerous and most regularly carried through related to the construction of primary schools. Literacy training and basic education, which had been a government priority since 1983, were looked on favourably by the people, for whom school education is still the best means to social advancement. An agreement for each site specified the nature of the responsibilities to be shared between the partners and how these would fit together over time. In this way, the revolutionary committee usually began the operational procedure by collecting requests for the registration of school age children which had not been met at the beginning of the preceding school year. After being approved at a general assembly of the inhabitants and set down in a report specifying the number of classes needed, the timetable for the work, the estimated costs and the financial plan (nature and amount of funds to be used: revenue from the sale of drinking water, specific contributions, other resources), the file was handed to a "schools commission" formed of militants of the *sector*, which was responsible for obtaining authorization, approaching possible donors (e.g. NGOs) and then recruiting, supervizing and paying workers until the framework of the building was complete. For its part, the province provided a standard plan, undertook technical monitoring and, after checking the suitability of the premises (surfaces, ventilation, solid construction and so on), supplied the roofing

19. Compulsory military service.

sheets, metal doors and windows and furniture. Finally, the state appointed the teaching staff, recruited amongst primary teachers and young qualified conscripts from SERNAPO,[19] provided the revolutionary committee had presented a written request to the primary school inspectorate before May. As of 1984, this contractual arrangement came to dominate as almost all schools in the public *sector* were built under this regime: it was responsible for the dramatic increase in facilities and in the number of children in schools in the outlying areas (117 new classrooms between 1984 and 1989).

20. "Administrative" buildings designed to accommodate the activities of the revolutionary committees and various public services (civil service, popular conciliation tribunal, etc).

The construction of educational establishments was, however, only one aspect of the cooperation established in the five-year plan between *sectors* and the province. Health facilities, pharmaceutical stores, sports grounds, creches, public latrines and revolutionary committee "offices"[20] were also built according to similar procedures, although the tasks were divided up differently depending on the projects.

As long as the whole of the procedure was respected, the various protagonists in Ouagadougou respected the commitments made within the framework of the five-year plans. However, the mechanism soon started to seize up: a dispensary built outside the five-year plan remained closed for more than a year for lack of staff whereas, in another *sector*, whose two hydrants were already very poorly supplied with water as a result of insufficient pressure, the revolutionary committee tried to increase the number of outlets so that the deterioration in the service would incite the inhabitants to make more demands on ONEA, the National Water and Sanitation Agency.

Apart from these aberrations, joint management did make it possible to tap into new human and cash resources for the benefit of urban development. While regularizing the land title situation in the outlying areas was the decisive trigger for this mobilization of town dwellers, it must be stressed that it was deployed within an extremely centralized institutional framework that was not tempered by any subsequent administrative reform.

In allowing for decision-making at a lower level and in institutionalizing accountability, decentralization is often presented as a necessary initial step to greater popular participation. If there is any significance in the example of Ouagadougou, it shows that a centralized administrative apparatus can demonstrate extraordinary flexibility and can manage diversification of both partners and resources, especially those coming from groups within the community. This observation does not in any way preclude the necessity for decentralization, but suggests that forms of citizen mobilization are possible and desirable in the absence of institutional reforms, which are neither a pre-condition nor a guarantee of success in improving urban management. Other circumstances can bring about complementarity between centralized public administrations and intermediary micro-systems, which are geographically scattered around the town and manage fragmented demand for urban facilities and services.

III. CITIZEN MOBILIZATION AND URBAN MANAGEMENT: FRAGILE LINKAGES

MUCH CURRENT DEBATE has centred around the potential for a contractual partnership between municipal authorities and local citizen associations, which is supposed to facilitate the incorporation of locally-developed management practices into projects that would thereby be more appropriate.[21] Joint management in Ouagadougou, dependent upon the vote of a general assembly of inhabitants, framed by five-year plans for each *sector* and pegged into provincial level activities, was built upon these principles: the initiatives which emerged clearly show the priorities and the omissions of the mobilization which gave rise to it.

Yet, a look at the five-year plans for the *sectors* and the minutes of the meetings that preceded their formulation shows that the activities organized by the revolutionary committees, far from dealing with all the developments needed to improve the environment of the town dwellers, systematically gave priority, with the notable exception of the sale of drinking water, to the establishment of local public facilities and, amongst these, projects with a strong symbolic connotation (revolutionary committee offices) or a strong social component (education and health). In this aspect of joint management, few activities meet **long-term** management concerns nor is there any forward thinking with respect to matters of general interest such as sanitation. There is little commitment to large-scale activities which require reliable, sustainable organizational capacity. Adhering closely to the demands of the citizens and their representatives, the activities bear witness to the latter's perception of immediate needs and the uncertainties of local "know-how".

a. Investing Rather than Managing

The major concern of the revolutionary committees was to provide local public facilities in the newly allotted outlying areas, although little thought was given to running and maintaining these facilities, and the organization of services such as the collection of household waste never became a high priority.

While playing a decisive role in the short term in getting buildings and infrastructure in place, the revolutionary committees' lack of interest in daily maintenance was a major cause of failure in the campaign for public latrines. Although a dozen public conveniences were provided in a joint operation involving UNICEF (who was responsible for financing the major work and the maintenance equipment), the province (which provided technical monitoring and carried out the masonry work) and the people (who supplied workers for digging and finishing off), use of the latrines was short-lived and barely influenced previous practice. Poor management, for which the *sectors* were responsible, is the primary reason for this lack of success: the revolutionary committees made little effort to arouse interest in the job of attendant, a job that was essential to maintain the facilities and collect the fees. Many of these jobs were only filled

episodically despite competition to take charge of managing water points or supervizing other public facilities. Dirty, smelly and suspected of causing disease, the conveniences were not used and then abandoned. The revolutionary committees preferred to replace the campaign for public latrines with the slogan "one plot of land, one latrine", thus off-loading responsibility for the problem onto families.

Attempts to collect household wastes were scarcely more successful. Conversely, success in providing facilities can be explained by the nature of the effort required: the construction or renovation of buildings to house local public services, simple to organize and implement, with a limited time scale and clearly tailored to individual requirements was a way of maximizing the efficiency of mobilization without new and original solutions.

22. In the 1980s, a three-classroom primary school built by a company required twice as much funding (about FCFA 10 million).

Schools, for example, involved relatively modest costs (about FCFA 5 million for that *sector's* revolutionary committee[22]); developing premises for a pharmaceutical store, shop or eating house did not exceed FCFA 1 million. Whatever the final use for the building, the straightforwardness and speed of implementation of the work (which took four to five months on average) attracted citizens who were keen to see a quick return on their efforts.

However, after inauguration, operating problems often emerged. The provincial health department did not hesitate to denounce faults in the dispensaries built by the revolutionary committees (cramped and badly ventilated) and their poor hygiene conditions (inadequate maintenance, defective hand pumps, latrines or electricity supply). While the pharmaceutical stores, due to a management and financial structure which was independent from that of the revolutionary committee offices,[23] often gave satisfaction, the shops and eating houses did not do well due, as even those in charge of them admitted, to inadequate management and accounting.

23. Although supervized by the revolutionary committees, the management of the pharmaceutical stores was placed under the responsibility of the manager and dissociated from the general running of the offices: in this way, profits from the sale of drugs were entirely devoted to the remuneration of the sales staff and watchmen.

Even in the schools, despite the fact that the province and the ministry were mainly responsible for running them, maintenance of the premises, repair or replacement of desks and benches, the purchase of teaching materials, and cleaning and emptying the latrines were not carried out properly. In principle, the budgets of the schools, enhanced by the registration fees of FCFA 1,000 per annum per pupil, were specifically intended to cover this expenditure but, inadequately endowed, poorly managed and sometimes misappropriated for the initial investment, they did not provide a satisfactory solution to the daily management of these establishments. Yet, the revolutionary committees did not come up with any answers: although effective in funding the investments, they neglected the issue of maintenance.

b. The Primacy of the Short Term

Citizen mobilization does not just tend to give priority to investment, it is also inclined, in the short term, to select projects where a degree of consensus can easily be obtained. Although the hazards of inadequate drainage were often mentioned, the inadequate initiatives to deal with this bear witness to this hesi-

tation with becoming involved in larger-scale activities that imply taking a long-term view.

However, by fostering the emergence of "at risk" sites, where destruction in the rainy season was increasingly common as a result of marking out plots with no regard for the area's topography, the accelerated urbanization of peri-urban fringes created a problem that was becoming less and less manageable at household level. Individual or household responses, such as dams and protective strips, created more serious problems for neighbours and made it more difficult to move around. In 1986, one *sector* was obliged to spend FCFA 70,000 to get an earth mover as an emergency measure to contain a backwater that was threatening to flood the houses on its banks. The following year, three revolutionary committees had reported their difficulties to the Provincial Highways Department and to the ONEA, asking for work to be done for which the community was prepared to make a financial contribution. Faced with the difficulty of draining off rainwater on either side of the ring road, which was built on an embankment in the southern half of the town, the revolutionary committees had the same reaction: they temporarily housed the affected families in the schools and passed on various complaints to the relevant government departments without even bothering to coordinate them.

Circumstances forced the problem onto the agenda, as no revolutionary committee had mentioned the issue of drainage in its five-year plan. Even when it was brought up subsequently and persistently in several *sectors*, it did not give rise to projects on any scale. Although aware of the problem, and intervening in emergency situations to house families, build dykes and dig temporary drainage ditches, the revolutionary committees generally did little more than bring the problem to the attention of the relevant authorities.

Inertia on the part of the administration probably had something to do with this relative abdication of responsibility, which was made worse by the lack of clarity about the respective roles of the province (responsible for highways), the ONEA (which received the sanitation tax) and the Town Planning Department (in charge of marking out plots). However, the primacy of the short term, the inability to reach a consensus at *sector* level and the weak organizational capacity of the revolutionary committees have more to do with their lack of effort in this field. Indeed, there is no point in having a partial network of drainage channels, so all residents must support their construction. Yet no revolutionary committee was able to impose such social cooperation on the inhabitants, most of whom were not directly affected by the problem and whose resistance was reinforced by the ineffectiveness of the few gutters that had been dug and then left unmaintained. Citizen mobilization, not difficult for *ad hoc* projects, had obviously reached its limits here, spontaneous mutual aid to repair damage being no substitute for proper contingency planning to design and fund adequate protective measures.

c. Mobilization to Catch Up

The *sector* experience in Ouagadougou shows that mobilization was at its most dynamic in efforts to "catch up": regularization of land titles had laid the foundations for extending institutional norms to the outlying areas, not only in terms of tenure but also in terms of local public facilities. Residents made use for a short while of the revolutionary committees - which in many respects they also "put up with" - as a way of speeding up the process of levelling disparities with the working-class neighbourhoods in the centre of town.

The timetable for school construction shows that after an initial delay in implementation, most establishments were erected between 1985 and 1987. At first sight, the reasons for the subsequent drop are not very clear and appear to relate to a combination of factors: the end of the school building programmes within the five-year plans of the Ouagadougou *sectors*; the ministry's parallel concern to direct its efforts towards the rest of the country; the evolution of the regime and its influence on political demobilization. After that date, however, many revolutionary committees continued their activities, and their "depoliticization" did not necessarily affect their commitment to developing the neighbourhoods.

On the other hand, it appears from interviews conducted at the time that joint management had achieved its goal, as the under-equipment of the outlying areas in terms of schools was at a level comparable with that of the town as a whole: in 1989, public *sector* schools in the outlying *sectors* were accommodating half of all children attending school in Ouagadougou. Concern moved away from school projects in favour of other fields of intervention, especially health. This did not mean that the situation was entirely satisfactory (because of excessive numbers, more than 80 pupils per class in 1988, the schools were still turning away many children) but progress had been made in evening out disparities and the residents of the outlying areas were expecting the same treatment as other city dwellers. Far from triggering a process of increasing autonomy, joint management seems to have acted as an appeal to the public authorities as service providers. It was an exceptional measure "...to bring things up to standard" and to prepare the ground for the re-integration of long neglected urban areas within orthodox town planning.

Less than three years later, local people's lack of interest in joint management arrangements for drinking water was also obvious. The process of consolidation of family real estate recently acquired in the outlying areas had gradually accentuated inequalities and shifted the emphasis away from collective strategies: the most well-off households withdrew to their plots and tried to improve their own comfort by individual connection to the networks. The construction of four new water towers in 1991 and the installation of piping in a large proportion of the outlying areas seemed to favour such behaviour, as people were emboldened by the fact that those in power were concentrating on personal enrichment strategies. As for the least well-off, they

were no longer in a position of strength which could enable them to preserve the collective options which had prevailed between 1985 and 1990.

Catching up thus gradually lost its mobilizing power. Apparently institutionalizing rather than redressing the unequal treatment of the neighbourhoods in public investment policy, citizen contributions gave way to individualism, and the collective dynamism which had nourished the joint management experiments of the 1980s was fragmented.

This dissipation of citizen mobilization was the result of mechanisms which, in our view, go far beyond the specific situation in Ouagadougou. There was no well thought-out plan on the part of the revolutionary committees for improving the built-up areas and, in reproducing models and techniques made commonplace by government administrations, they did not implement novel architectural or technical solutions. They probably did not have time, as leaders of the revolutionary committees had *a priori* no specialization in the field of town planning and urban management. They also systematically avoided certain issues because some of the problems required new local level solutions, as in the case of many management arrangements which needed to be invented, while the future aims of certain projects should have led to these being incorporated into a long-term programme.

In fact, although many leaders, to whose ranks technicians and senior staff from the administration were recruited, were able to take enough of a long term view to find technical solutions to some of the problems, their place within the revolutionary apparatus as well as their roots in the local social milieu constantly prevented them from innovating or imposing original choices which went against the political hierarchy "above" or specific local interests "below". Restrained, and weakened by challenges to their legitimacy, they constantly vacillated between authoritarian procedures and collective generation of consensual solutions. If they acted as tyrants, they broke solidarity with the people and exhausted their forces in vain; in the improbable role of catalysts of popular consensus, they involved the residents in decision-making but, neutralized by antagonistic pressures, often proved inefficient.

24. On the role of leaders in citizen mobilization, see: Ndione, Emmanuel Seyni (1993), *Dakar, une societé en grappe,* Paris, Karthala-ENDA Graf Sahel, 213 pages, (coll. Les Afriques).

Then there were intermediate situations, dominated by charismatic personalities[24] who mobilized personal resources drawn from elsewhere in the political and economic networks gravitating around the state apparatus. Handing over leadership, the revolutionary committees then became the executive arms of "eminent personalities" and citizen mobilization became a form of allegiance. In terms of urban investment, such situations were the most fruitful. Mediating between citizens and administrations, they seem also to have been the most lasting since a certain number of these personalities, whether or not they came from the ranks of the "cadets" of the revolution, survived the institution of the revolutionary committees with their function intact. This kind of situation does not, however, provide a satisfactory response to the question of participation of ordinary citizens in dealing with the city's problems. Nor does it offer

any guarantee of the stability required for any forward-looking decisions and any type of management arrangement for which long-term continuity is needed. Finally, it leaves unanswered the question of horizontal linkages: although they fitted into the provincial planning process, how were the *sector* projects coordinated at the local level ?

IV. MOBILIZATION ON THE PERIPHERY: BETWEEN URBAN INTEGRATION AND BALKANIZATION

LOCAL LEVEL MANAGEMENT catalyzed mobilization to catch up, enabling outlying areas to be supplied with facilities. This undoubted improvement in living standards was correlated with a proliferation of local initiatives, the involvement of more players in urban management and the increased use of the potential of town dwellers themselves. But it was also associated with competition for access to resources which exacerbated conflicts between differentially endowed residential groups and introduced new imbalances. Yet, while support for local "participatory" development[25] frequently mentions the first three objectives, it is rarely associated with the need for a coherent policy of spatial redistribution and a balancing out of public expenditure. This leads to inequalities which, in Ouagadougou, may be appreciated at various levels. Within the *sectors*, joint management gradually tended towards selecting "solvent" clients; at the level of the outlying areas, it exacerbated competition between *sectors* whose heritages and potential were extremely ill-matched; finally, in terms of the urban area as a whole, it left in abeyance decisions regarding the principle of budgetary resource allocation between the town centre and outlying areas as well as the issue of heavy infrastructure and urban networks.

a. Personalization of Services and Increased Social Differentiation

The individual potential of the different urban *sectors* with respect to joint management was very varied. In some cases, land titles were soon sorted out, while other *sectors* had to wait several years; some had numerous well-supplied public water points available, whereas others had few, and yet others, faced with uncertain distribution, were able to gain only mediocre cash resources from supplying water; some could rely on residential groups belonging to the middle classes who were dynamic and knew how to deal with people, whereas others, which were economically more homogeneous, had a less solid social base. Moreover, the revolutionary committees showed varying degrees of aptitude in exploiting or getting around such disparities and in exploring the institutional vacuum left by the failure to complete administrative reforms.

In this way, in the absence of clarification of local finances and their distribution amongst the various management levels, the ability of the revolutionary committees to come up with flex-

25. See, for example, Venard, Jean-Louis (1993), "Bailleurs de fonds et développement local", in Jaglin and Dubresson (see reference 7) pages 19-33.

ible financial arrangements was, more than any other, decisive. Whether they usurped provincial taxes which had more or less fallen into disuse, such as the registration and taxation of water carts, or whether they improperly substituted themselves for the local public revenue office in collecting certain fees, such as those relating to the new markets in the outlying areas, these attempts to raise funds were often reduced to guerilla warfare with the provincial administration, which was the legitimate holder of the only official local taxation machinery. Thus, when some arrangement seemed to consolidate itself and thwart the operations of the province, the latter tried to impede it, if necessary denouncing the pragmatic cooperation which had previously supported joint management.

To avoid being worn down by this permanent confrontation, some revolutionary committees fell back on increasing specialization in cash contributions and the organized selection of beneficiaries. For instance, one revolutionary committee slightly changed the fund-raising procedure for building a school in 1989. Giving up the idea of a general contribution which would be difficult to monitor, it waited until it had 70 firm enrolments from parents for each of the three classrooms it was planning to build. The parents had to pay a considerably larger contribution (FCFA 1,500 instead of FCFA 500) for each child enrolled. In just a few years, the revolutionary committee had thus moved from a levy system bearing equally on all households in the *sector* without distinction, whatever the nature of the project involved, to an arrangement which applied exclusively to the parents of the future pupils of the new school. Easier to manage and much more lucrative, this formula gradually found favour with the most enterprising revolutionary committees.

One perfected the mechanism by choosing not only improved targeting of clients but also by basing itself on "entry fees" rather than funding the investment itself. In 1988, with the comfortable cushion of a budget which had initially been set up with money received from the allocation of plots, the revolutionary committee undertook to establish a market with 2,000 market stalls, using existing funds. On completion, interested traders had to pay an "installation fee" of FCFA 1,000-10,000 according to the size of the business, making it possible to reconstitute working capital and build a school whose "registration fees" were set at FCFA 5,000 per pupil at the beginning of the next school year. The revolutionary committee then started thinking about building a maternity clinic.....

Being both cause and consequence of the refinement of the system of cash levies on residents, the search for better cost recovery and a closer fit between the project and the potential users seems to have encouraged a mutual learning process. The elected elite learned how to channel demands from the population and about the need to be accountablefor the use of the cash collected; the residents gained a sense of responsibility through increased control over choices and more selective mobilization. Although these achievements are part of the democratic engineering process which "participatory" projects are trying to convey, they should not obscure other worrying developments.

In fact, these various practices led to a considerable, although uneven, increase in the monetary demands made on some categories of the population, which raises several problems, above all the issue of the responsibility of the public authorities. Balking at an unpopular reassessment of tax scales and the cost of rationalizing the tax system that would be needed to improve public service provision, they seem to have found, in the parallel levies of the revolutionary committees, a way of avoiding both debate and policy-making with regard to local taxation. Handing the task of collecting new resources down to *sector* level does not resolve the underlying questions of how can social justice and economic efficiency be reconciled. What should be taxed and who should pay? How should taxes and fees be distributed? What form of taxation is most appropriate, fixed or progressive?

In the absence of clear political choices, this serious abdication of responsibility by the public authorities accentuated inequalities in treatment between citizens which could not be justified by any reference to objective differences in respect of public services or common interest. Yet, no one could be misled by fine words seeking to liken management by the revolutionary committees to an expression of community solidarity and voluntary aid in the face of increasingly sharp social differentiation which gradually excluded the worst off. Under the ideological banner of "community participation", more effective but less socially conscious management practices began to take shape, substituting individual payments and remedies for collective expenditure and use. This shift enabled some revolutionary committees to save their activities from disaster by developing loyal, solvent clients, but also led them to exclude the poorest.

This exclusion mechanism is extremely common, although there is little mention of it in speeches about "participation", the supposed vector of "relative solidarity". No doubt the logic which drives it is inevitable - original disparities between residential groups do exist and those which result from the revolutionary committees' quest for efficiency are, apparently, a necessary condition for their operation. On the other hand, a policy that tackles social disparities between locations could counter the ensuing social consequences. This implies the recognition that citizen mobilization engenders inequalities and exclusion; that it does not contain within itself any antidote to these negative effects and that, conversely, it requires the design and management of redistributory mechanisms. If they do not do this, the public authorities deprive themselves of instruments of financial adjustment which would allow the imbalances to be suitably corrected.

b. Increased Competition between Groups of Citizens

Beyond these tensions within the *sectors*, joint management did, however, look as if it could be the driving force behind the integration of all outlying *sectors* into the urban area, along with the rapid insertion of tens of thousands of new citizens into the

official city area. Besides, in a symbolic way, as it tried to extend the scope of its ceremonial representation throughout the national territory by moving celebrations from one province to another, the revolutionary state showed a concern for endorsing the extension of the city's official border by "decentralizing" some of its receptions and ceremonies to the outlying areas. Yet was this newly united city not an illusion? Far from fostering collective development activities, joint management sharpened competition between *sectors* and, along with clientelism and attempts to outbid each other, caused further dislocation. This competition arose initially from emulation which was sometimes stimulating but more often led to costly attempts to outbid rivals.

The mechanism is perfectly illustrated by the case of the revolutionary committee offices, the construction of which was the main object of avowed rivalry. This originally modest building, designed to accommodate the various administrative activities of the revolutionary committees, was gradually transformed into an ostentatious edifice characterized by increasing size and architectural quality, reflected in ever higher construction costs (FCFA 12-18 million in 1987 and 1988).[26] The escalating estimates and plans showed that the *sectors* became involved in more and more risky operations, as confirmed by the increasing length of time needed for construction work which, in some cases, went uncompleted. Yet, the state and the province did, in some respects, sanction and reward this rivalry, for instance by giving the *Mana-Mana* prize to the best executed offices in March 1988. By so doing, they vindicated the revolutionary committees who, forced into such competition by the scarcity of resources, had turned it into a means of seeking favours from the central or provincial authorities. One of the tactics used was to move the implicit "blackmail" applied to the power structure into the political arena: by playing on the ambiguity of the offices as functional premises and, at the same time, as "markers" of the spatial deployment of the revolutionary political structures, they paid court to the political authorities in the expectation of material gain in return.

Although such rivalries might sometimes be a mere detail, three comments should be made. First, they again underline the way citizen mobilization appeals to the authorities, the offices being used by the people and their revolutionary committees as proof of goodwill which they expected would lead to a reciprocal gesture in the form of public investment provision. Furthermore, the exiguous means available and the competition this triggers are obviously likely to lead to an increasing gap between the needs expressed by the people and the projects actually implemented. The episode of the offices provides an excellent illustration of the perverse effects of this tactical opportunism, which was destined to gain a good position in the competition for resources. Finally, these rivalries thwarted any horizontal coalitions which might have been formed between adjacent urban *sectors*. They were already hindered by the rigid mechanism of five-year planning which locked each *sector* into a network of bilateral relationships with the provincial or national administration.

26. While the price index in the construction sector remained stable overall in 1987-1988: Banque Centrale Des Etats De L'Afrique De L'Ouest (1989), *Statistiques économiques et monétaires*, No.386, October, page 18.

c. The State and the Centre/Periphery Dualism

The relocation of management arrangements thus helped to segment and split up claims from the outlying areas. Was this balkanization strategy intended by the central authorities? It is difficult to be sure what they had in mind. However, there is little doubt that the state condoned the situation, which enabled it to transfer management responsibilities without the risk of being submerged in the short term by the collective grievances of the outlying areas.

Shifts in thinking in the *sectors* do, moreover, clearly show that the revolutionary committees gradually grasped the disadvantages of such fragmentation. Until 1986-87, they made no attempt to deny the competitive nature of their relationships and almost all spoke approvingly of "healthy" competition. Since it was an opportunity to deploy local forces, it seemed to them to demonstrate an awakening of the people's energies, the logic of "confrontation" lending itself to a theory of revolutionary citizenship in which individuals became the empowered and dynamic agents of local development. The skill of each revolutionary committee, its adroitness and its political and symbolic resources were seen as something to be acquired rather than taken for granted and the conditions of the competition were no doubt acceptable at the time because the game seemed to be very open.

However, the first stirrings of opposition rapidly became apparent. As of 1988, some leaders thought that rivalry between *sectors* was reducing the scope for coherent development and penalized many of them; others began to regret the absence of discussion at provincial level to harmonize projects and formalize mechanisms to allocate revenue to the *sectors*. The negative effects of this competition were also perceived by the revolutionary committees' institutional partners, who deplored redundant projects and the consequences of overbidding. This scepticism came about largely as a result of practical experience. As they became more management minded and less militant, the revolutionary committees gradually moved away from fervent but unrealistic belief in the "virtues" of mobilization. They had come to realize the potential as well as the limitations in dialogue with the administration and had experienced the limits of the protection afforded by the political power structure. Their pessimism also reflected growing awareness of the real disparities between *sectors* and the unfairness of a competition in which not all players had the same level of power and resources. The situation had indeed changed: during the initial euphoria, the revolutionary committees had been unaware that competition resulted not from the need to inject a note of "sporting" rivalry amongst residential groups but from a shortage of resources. In this context, some were always likely to lack what others gained in struggle. As the public authorities continued to suffer from a lack of finance and inadequate logistical arrangements, the revolutionary committees realized that exacerbated competition had the effect of compartmentalizing and separating the outlying *sectors*, which were no longer seen as a whole, while massive public funding was given over to the develop-

27. Seven "revolutionary estates" were built in Ouagadougou: they provide a total of 2,000 public housing units - villas or apartments - for rent or hire purchase, intended for the middle-classes or indeed for the most well-off social groups (as in the case of "Cité An 4 A"). See Olavarrieta, Antoine (1988), *Eléments pour la préparation d'un projet habitat à Ouagadougou*, Paris, ministère de la Coopération et du Développement, 21 pages, annexes.

28. Beeker, Coen (1990), "Human settlements and sustainable development : conflicting issues in African cities", University of Amsterdam Institute of Planning and Demography, typed document, page 8.

29. See also Marie, Alain (1989), "Politique urbaine : une révolution au service de l'Etat", *Politique africaine*, No.33, March, pages 27-38.

ment of estates[27] for the middle-classes and to major urban projects in the centre of the city.

In fact, it is important to stress the imbalance between the broad media coverage of the operations to regularize the land title situation in the outlying areas and their real place in urban funding, as these were not accompanied by investment and a public works policy implying a redistribution of expenditure towards the peri-urban fringes.

Although precise figures are not available, roughly four of the six billion FCFA budgeted for urban investment in the Popular Development Plan (October 1984-December 1985) were earmarked for the reconstruction of the central market, while the 1986-1990 Five-Year Plan, apart from marking out and allocating plots in the outlying areas, made provision for restructuring the central commercial area and building middle-class estates: in terms of the number of beneficiaries and areas concerned, the land allocation operations were undoubtedly more important but projects to modernize the centre of town took the major share of investment.

Despite appearances, the primacy of the centre and the social groups which traditionally benefited from public investment programmes was barely affected by the revolutionary project,[28] which was, moreover, backed up by the World Bank's second urban project in which major work to build and maintain highways was almost exclusively concentrated in the neighbourhoods which had formerly been allotted. If in fact, despite everything, inequality between urban areas was reduced, this was mainly due to the new resources mobilized in the outlying *sectors* themselves.

As a counterpoint to the major works in the centre of town and the housing programmes for the middle classes, joint management of the process of "catching up" in terms of town planning in the outlying areas looks in many respects like a clever way of compensating these areas. In the absence of any decentralization of power or major transfer of public resources, it absorbed some of the contradictions of state policy and endorsed a form of social management of the urban environment. This is why it was seen by the central authorities as a means of controlling social consensus and, in the final analysis, asserting the primacy of the state rather than as a vector of local development.[29]

What lessons should be drawn from mobilization in Ouagadougou? When channelled towards joint management of local facilities and services, it was the driving force behind the "catching up" process, by absorbing the demand for public services from residents of the outlying areas who had benefited from regularization of the land title situation. Apart from this adjustment, the long-term influence on urban management has been minimal.

The contractual arrangements were themselves ephemeral: less than ten years after they were put in place, they had all disappeared. By virtue of leasing collective facilities to small private contractors, i.e. individuals who took on several contracts, joint management of water supply was swept away and,

with it, the financial transfers on which the *sectors'* activities were based.

The precarious nature of these arrangements is not merely the result of political changes and shifts in the position of the players involved, it also derives from the characteristics of citizen mobilization itself. In giving priority to small-scale investment projects and local levels of intervention, the latter seems no more capable of sustaining long-term management than of providing funding for heavy infrastructure, although this is certainly needed in the outlying areas which still have none. It is also possible to show that, in bringing about the emergence of "social cadets"[30] and the erosion of the conservative forces which kept the society closed, it contributed towards a relative democratization of the urban power structure,[31] without thereby providing a satisfactory answer to the question of genuine popular participation to which only the poor and the pioneers in the outlying districts were invited, while the centre of town was supplied by the state.

Citizen mobilization cannot promote the democratization of the decision-making process as well as providing a means of combatting urban inequalities unless it is accompanied by a vigorous public policy taking responsibility for long-term financial and management options on the one hand and mechanisms for arbitration and evening out socio-spatial inequalities on the other. Far from replacing the deficient functions of the institutional powers, mobilization can only have a lasting effect within the framework of a voluntarist public policy of administration of land and people.

30. With regard to the role of "social cadets" in the Burkina Faso revolution, see reference 1, page 8.

31. See reference 13, pages 526-543.