

SUMMARY

In a context of neo-liberal globalisation and of the implementation of decentralisation reforms informed by the New Public Management, Sub-Saharan Africa urban local authorities are today confronted with a dilemma: how to conceive launch/pilot urban policies likely to reduce social and spatial inequalities while stimulating local economic growth? What new arrangements and compromises does it give rise to at the urban local scale? What is the real room of manoeuvre of local authorities?

The new patterns of urban governance, defined as the set of processes of coordination between actors, social groups and institutions involved in collectively negotiated urban projects, are at the heart of the research programme. This approach gives way to a fundamental notion, which has been put under scrutiny by the participants: regulation at the local scale, its principles and its realisation. "Regulation" is used to describe the mechanisms (juridical, economic and political) to which, in a context of change, local public authorities resort to stabilise antagonisms, organise disorder, assure the changing reproduction of a social system.

The main empirical evidences are:

- "Local reforming complexes" are heterogeneous: Cape Town and Johannesburg metropolitan governments

(Un)cities are different but powerful compared to Addis Abeba, Dar es-Salaam, Ibadan and Lagos local authorities still dominated by central/provincial governments.

- Beyond their diversity, faced with the complexity of tasks, the diversity of objectives and differentiation of clienteles, all local urban authorities specialize and spatialize their interventions. with a large set of multiple new arrangements (privatisations, communitarization) for supplying utilities and services, implementation of governance principles entails "spatialisation" and intra-urban "territorializations" which increase the risk of urban fragmentation.

The main theoretical issues are:

- Spatialisation and territorialization express different modes of territorial governance, and reveal two major modes of regulation, a localised regulation (spatialised) and a local regulation (territorialized).
- A crucial question is to know if a public regulation is really possible at the local scale of urban authorities, whatever their institutional status: is a kind of urban local welfare state possible?