

# Rethinking the Sustainable City: An Anthropological Approach to the Urban Through the Hybridization of the Social and the Spatial

**Sigue Moubassiré**

Department of Sociology, Norbert Zongo University, University Center of Manga, Manga, Burkina Faso

**Email address:**

[moubassire.sigue@yahoo.fr](mailto:moubassire.sigue@yahoo.fr)

**To cite this article:**

Sigue Moubassiré. Rethinking the Sustainable City: An Anthropological Approach to the Urban Through the Hybridization of the Social and the Spatial. *Humanities and Social Sciences*. Vol. 11, No. 5, 2023, pp. 169-175. doi: 10.11648/j.hss.20231105.11

**Received:** August 9, 2023; **Accepted:** August 28, 2023; **Published:** September 14, 2023

---

**Abstract:** The construction of the sustainable city as an emanation of sustainable development is based on the triple pillar of economic, social and environmental sustainability. The problems posed by urban sanitation can be approached from several angles. On the one hand, political anthropology is concerned with communal public sanitation policies and the relationship between municipal technical services for waste removal and citizens. On the other hand, social anthropology deals with the study of domestic sanitation and cleanliness practices, neighborhood conflicts generated by popular wastewater disposal methods and the resulting nuisances. While the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) n°11 are dedicated to sustainable cities and communities, the socio-cultural logics in the cities of the South augur compromising perspectives to the production of cities concerned with intergenerational equity. In this perspective, it is important that reflections are made in order to determine the contribution of gender to the problem of urban sustainability. What cultural practices are women incorporating that are antinomian to urban sustainability ? How are they more concerned with domestic urban sanitation practices ? To what extent does the use of tools, technologies and equipment by women reflect social relations of gender domination ? This article is theoretically rooted in the Chicago School's sociological theories of the urban phenomenon, in the sense of the city as implicated in the vital processes and lifestyles of the people who make it up. In a hypothetico-deductive anthropological approach, a documentary perspective as a secondary source focused on grey and academic literature complements the empirical tools resulting from semi-structured interviews and direct observation. The result is that the sociocultural logics internalized by urban populations are an obstacle to the production of a sustainable city.

**Keywords:** Gendered Logics, Woman, Gender, City, Urbanization

---

## 1. Introduction

Urbanization is a universal and irreversible phenomenon in Africa as in all countries of the world [4]. It has been the most significant contemporary development for humanity since the second half of the 20th century [4]. For several decades, the African city has been a real challenge for all specialists who think and act on the urban phenomenon. Architects, urban planners, engineers, sociologists and geographers have been questioning the nature of the city and the forms it takes [1]. They question its true motives and the forces that govern it. Indeed, "Africa is in crisis and cities have become the most immediately sensitive places of manifestation" [9] (p. 5). According to Godard (2001) [12], the urban growth of the

Third World is of a rare violence and in Africa in particular, this growth takes place without economic development, and is accompanied by the impoverishment of a significant part of the population. From this perspective, and according to Gendreau & al. (1996, p. 13) [11], "it is now clear that reference to the triplet 'population, environment and development' is indispensable for understanding the problems of the present world in all their complexity". Burgel (1993, p. 26) [7] shares the same vision when he finds that "in poor countries, (...) the urban revolution is social, before being economic and technical"

In the wake of sustainable development, research has revealed an interest in urban governance and environmental management of cities [12, 14, 18, 25]. This trend has led to a

flourishing of international seminars and scientific publications on the determinants of the concept of "sustainable development" applied to cities of the South [10]. During the World Climate Summit in Rio in 1992, the postulate that "everything must now be sustainable: (...) the city, mobility, buildings..." was emphasized [23] (p. 2). In his analysis of the rule and model of urban life in the perspective of sustainable urban development, Choay (1980) [8] suggested the transition from the bad society (polluting, wasteful, destructive of its environment...) to the good society (clean, thrifty, egalitarian, respectful of its environment...). In this urban dynamic, and particularly in the cities of the South, few studies have carried out an in-depth analysis of the implications of the internalization of socio-cultural practices on the production of the sustainable city.

While the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) n°11 are dedicated to sustainable cities and communities, the socio-cultural logics in the cities of the South augur compromising perspectives to the production of cities concerned with intergenerational equity. Our purpose is to understand the impact of the internalization of gendered social logics on the production of a sustainable city. Therefore, the concern is formulated around the following questions: what are the cultural practices antinomic to urban sustainability internalized by the actors? how are women more concerned by urban sanitation practices? to what extent does the use of sanitation tools and equipment reflect social relations of domination between the sexes? This is the quintessential issue addressed in this article. Its theoretical roots lie in the sociological theories of the Chicago School of urban phenomena. These theories seem appropriate to explain the problem of cultural and customary norms incorporated by urban actors and their impact on sustainable urban development. The study of urban behaviours and lifestyles using an ethnographic and interactionist approach promoted by Chicago School thinkers, who described the city as a "social laboratory", is a scientific benchmark for an in-depth understanding of gendered social logics and their implications for the production of a sustainable city.

## 2. Research Design and Methods

The qualitative approach was favoured in this research, as the most suitable. It would allow us to find answers to the main objective of the research, which is to identify the effects of the internalization of gendered social logics on the production of a sustainable city. The anthropological investigation would therefore specifically allow us to apprehend the cultural constructions incorporated by both men and women and their impact on the urban environment. The empirical tools resulting from the semi-structured interview and direct observation were supplemented by documentary research [20, 21]. The observation focused on systems for recycling household waste, wastewater and excreta (dumped in public spaces); social interactions between men and women involved in urban waste management; and the dynamics of urban fragmentation due to irregular

settlements based on cultural justifications. The data collected from the priority target group, i. e. traditional authorities, customary leaders, heads of households (men and women) and institutional actors responsible for the environment, housing and urban planning, are supported by a literature review that has already been prepared. The reference to the respondents' speeches and to scientific productions relating to urban sustainability issues constituted the lever for the heuristic analysis of the societal implications of gendered logics on the production of the sustainable city.

The experiment took place in the city of Ouagadougou through semi-structured interviews with the priority target and direct observation of the study environment and social practices likely to have an impact on sustainable urban development. The importance of direct observation in the heuristic value of intellectual production is highlighted by Borlandi & al. (2005, p. 529) [4], for whom "the sociologist's investigation must be based essentially on the reasoned collection of facts, on intensive ethnographic-type inquiry, on the observation of practices in their contexts". It's a way of capturing the phenomenon under study as it happens, and not relying on the interpretations of those being surveyed. The survey, carried out in August 2022 and supplemented by updated data in July 2023, was part of a social reflexivity approach to understanding the social logics of urban actors. From a sociological point of view, reflexivity is understood as the mobilization of the researcher's own knowledge in the analysis of the social reality under study [22]. Drawing on one's knowledge, social position and experience to better analyze the problem under study is a guarantee of rigorous intellectual production.

However, steps were taken to respect axiological neutrality in the Weberian sense in order to avoid the biases that this reflexivity could cause. The approach consisted in giving the actors a voice on the issue of the impact of socio-cultural practices on the construction of a sustainable city. The data collection instruments and the informants were diversified in order to achieve triangulation [16]. The technique of content analysis was used to analyze the data. Content analysis is "a set of techniques for analyzing communications which aim, through systematic and objective procedures for describing the content of statements, to obtain indicators (...) allowing the inference of knowledge relating to the conditions of production (...) of these statements" [2] (p. 43). In total, thirty-two (32) individual interviews were conducted at the end of the field study. The constitution of the sample was guided by the technique of reasoned choice. The empirical and conceptual tools of the research have made it possible to highlight the obstacles to urban sustainability as a result of the incorporation of the actors' socio-cultural logics. The results of the research are grouped into three parts. The first part proposes an analysis of the socio-cultural considerations related to urban insalubrity and initiation rites, perceived as an infringement of environmental awareness, a handicap to sustainable urban development. The second part evaluates the preponderance of the place of men or women in the preservation of the urban environment and other urban

sanitation practices. Finally, the last part questions the problem of gender inequalities in the use of urban sanitation facilities.

### 3. Results

The empirical data allowed us to group the main results around three main themes: first, internalized socio-cultural considerations as obstacles to sustainable urban development; second, a comparative analysis of the relationship between men and women in urban space; and finally, the nature of the sanitation facilities used as a revealing factor of social relations of gender domination. These results highlight the implications of the hybridization of the social and the spatial in sustainable urban development.

#### 3.1. Internalized "Deviant" Socio-Cultural Considerations: A Handicap to Sustainable Urban Development

This part deals with the existence of causal relationships between the internalization of cultural logics and the threat to urban sustainability on the one hand, and a fragmentation of the city justified by the prohibition of cultural expressions in rental housing on the other. It is reviewed the description of various "gendered" social logics not marked by urban sustainability incorporated by the actors.

##### 3.1.1. Urban Sustainability Under Threat from Internalized Cultural Logics

The term "deviant" socio-cultural considerations refers to the behaviour of Ouagavillois and their relationship to the urban environment. Deviance is a concern for sociologists and especially for politicians, who make the regulation of social practices and urbanity a priority for any sustainable urban development. The sociology of deviance thus encompasses "the study of delinquent phenomena and, more broadly, of any form of practice that deviates from the norms specific to a social group" [17] (p. 87). The practices in question relate to the way wastewater and excreta are treated, the management of household waste, real estate and land developments in the absence of any formal authorization, urban sanitation, practices contrary to the contents of texts including the environmental code, the urban planning and construction code, etc. Another aspect of the said social practices concerns, among others, the blocking of public roads for happy or unhappy events, religious or festive events. It is the same for the exhibitions of emptying, waste water and excreta in the nature as well as the filling of gutters by the citizens without forgetting the realizations of real estate without septic tanks.

It can be seen that the practices that are harmful to urban sustainability inventoried by the interviewees are diverse. They range from the issue of insalubrity to defiance of State authority, and include acts of incivism and indiscipline on the part of actors. Therefore, it is important to go back to the opinions of the interviewees in their diversity in order to situate the responsibilities in the "urban disorders".

In response to a request for a description of the practices of the actors that are not marked by urban sustainability, the

interviewees were prepared to carry out a diagnostic exercise of the said practices, which are multiform. For them, the city is developing at an accelerated rate. This is linked to the fact that today practically everything is concentrated in Ouagadougou, due to the absence of a country-wide urbanization policy.

In addition, the practices that are detrimental to the construction of the sustainable city originate in part from migration, or even from the importation of "rurality" into the city, as this interviewee criticizes:

Ouagadougou has a cosmopolitan population, and most of it comes from rural areas. Do you think that someone who is educated in the practice of city life will allow himself to collect his garbage and pour it into the gutters ? (Director of Urban Planning and Communal Land, interview extract, August 11, 2022).

With regard to waste management, there are two types of sanitation: solid sanitation, which concerns the management of solid waste (solid household waste, solid biomedical waste, solid industrial waste, etc.) and liquid sanitation, which concerns the management of wastewater and excreta. The importance of cultural considerations is exacerbated by the lack of sanitation facilities in the city. As far as liquid sanitation is concerned, it appears that the equipment is insufficient or even missing, and this exposes the actors to practices that are contrary to urban sanitation standards, as explained by the director of cleanliness of the Ouagadougou municipality:

The sewage system does not even cover 3% of the municipal territory. And worse, we are in Africa, there are considerations according to which dishwater, laundry, kitchen water should not be thrown into the toilets, so in the absence of a sewer, it is on the public highway that it happens in the city (Director of cleanliness of Ouagadougou, August 2018).

The populations dump them in the neighborhoods or at least connect to the gutters to dump them. All these considerations only play unfavorably to the maintenance of urban cleanliness because of the rejection of the said waste in inappropriate destinations. The consequences of this poor waste management include the promotion of breeding grounds and the proliferation of mosquitoes, vectors of disease transmission, particularly malaria, as well as pollution and flooding in the city of Ouagadougou.

Contradictions between institutional actors are apparent in the methods of waste management and the issue of the urban environment, and this works to the detriment of urban sanitation. Several dimensions can be analyzed from the statements of the respondents. In the case of solid waste, the Director General of Environmental Preservation explains the mechanism and situates the responsibilities:

"Waste management in general is the responsibility of the municipalities in accordance with the environmental code and the general code of local authorities. The role of the Ministry of the Environment is to support these municipalities so that they can set up collection and treatment systems for this waste. We have a role of support and advocacy. The communes are the actors on the ground

who have direct responsibility for waste management" (Director General of Environmental Preservation (DGPE), interview excerpt, August 24, 2018).

In addition, the cultural construction of certain ethnic groups that "men should not touch the broom" emerges from the respondents' speeches. The reading of this construction is that cleaning work is much more perceived as a female activity. In the wake of practices unfavorable to the construction of a sustainable city, a phenomenon considered "in vogue" in the city of Ouagadougou and raised by the informants relates to changes in land use. Plots of land used for housing and administrative reserves are gradually being transformed into commercial sites through tax evasion, with all the social consequences that can result, as the Director General of Territorial Development (DGD) points out:

"When you use a residential plot of land to build a gas station, imagine the consequences in the event of a fire for local residents and other users ! Similar cases are legion in the city of Ouagadougou and today we are thinking about setting up a land-use police force" (DGD, interview excerpt, November 21, 2018).

The above verbatim highlights the implications of the change in the destination of plots of land, particularly on the safety of city dwellers. By way of illustration, field survey data show that two hundred and eighteen (218) cases of change of destination of plots of land have been registered by the land use planning services in 3 years in Ouagadougou (DGD/DESAT, December 2018).

### ***3.1.2. A Breakdown of the City Justified by the Prohibition of Cultural Practices***

Socio-cultural considerations are most often at the origin of the proliferation of spontaneous and precarious housing in the undeveloped areas of Ouagadougou, in the social dynamic of the conquest of a "home". In this sense, it is important to emphasize the fact that the non-acceptance of socio-cultural practices in rental housing by property owners imposes on tenants a preference for their social independence in "makeshift housing" found on the urban periphery. Among these practices, it seems important to us to mention those that are related to human intimacy and the predisposition of the person concerned to assert himself in his living environment. The following revelations reported by an interviewee support the foundations of the actors' strategic options for circumvention:

"The promiscuity in the rental houses makes people prefer to go elsewhere to be free. For example, in our house, when there is a birth, the placenta is buried in the courtyard where we live. But once, a tenant buried it in a courtyard and the landlord ordered him to dig it up. The religious factor is also a cause. For example, you cannot have a wedding in the courtyard of an "extremist" El Adj because he will forbid you to drink alcoholic beverages, to eat certain "forbidden" foods (pork, dog meat, etc.). The same applies to the washing of the dead or other prohibited initiation rites when you are in a rental housing situation. In light of all these considerations, people are predisposed to go to precarious

housing commonly called non-housed where they feel free" (City Councillor District 12, President of the Environment and Local Development Commission, September 2018).

The practice of burying the placenta denotes a strong social bond and therefore continuity with the person from whom it originated and, consequently, cannot be buried in a rental housing situation. The affirmation of the freedom, especially of tenants, in the search for their private home is also underpinned by "stigmatizing" considerations, according to the comments of respondents. For them, the tenant, regardless of his or her standard of living or status in the environment, carries a label with a devaluing connotation. This is evidenced by the fact that city dwellers are referred to as "rent women", "rent men", "renters", etc. This perception of the tenant is the source of the proliferation of precarious housing, as a result of the cultural practices mentioned, and this has consequences for urban sustainability. Indeed, they compromise the policies of implementation of the actions of construction of a sustainable city by contributing to the urban extension. However, the dense city, the compact city is better controlled than the spread out city which is opposed to the perspectives of sustainability. And the Director General of Urban Planning, Development and Topography (DGUVT) to add:

"The spread out city everyone knows that it is not a city that is sustainable ! ecosystems are destroyed, there is the "motorcycle dependence" and pollution that results. The compact city is still a city that is more controlled from the point of view of its limits, which eventually preserves an environment around the city, making it possible to create an environment conducive to sustainable development" (DGUVT, August 2022).

These versions of the respondents indicate that the dense city offers more opportunities to city dwellers and reduces the additional costs that are noticeable in the dispersed city, in terms of distance and hydroelectric investments to be made by the state or municipalities.

### ***3.2. A More Perceptible Societal Involvement of Women Than Men in Urban Sanitation Practices***

Men and women have different relationships with the urban environment. Taking the gender dimension into account in the analysis of urban sanitation is a kind of barometer for assessing the state of environmental precaution accorded to the urban environment, from the point of view of gender and the material and technological potential used to achieve it. With regard to the role of women in the prevalence of sanitation in Ouagadougou, it is mainly women's practices that consist of dumping dishwater, laundry water, etc. on the public highway or in the gutters, which are mostly open to the air. This behavior is, moreover, dependent on the cultural construction that posits that such waste should not be poured into the toilet. This is also what emerges from the words of a respondent who links the problem of urban sanitation to the behavior of women, but also to the fact of religious affiliation:

"There is a six-meter by which I pass to get home. There, you can't even tell the difference between the dry season and the winter season. All the time the area is wet with

puddles all along the six-meter. And that's because there are three El Adj in the six-meter... you see generally these are people who have a lot of wives and children, so the washing up and the laundry, it's almost every day, and unfortunately they have the means but they don't want to build cesspools to receive this dirty water. The solution for them is the six-meter which is a public space, so you see with this mentality, it is not simple" (Head of the waste treatment and recovery department at the cleanliness department of the Ouagadougou commune, August 2018).

The predominance of women's involvement in urban sanitation and insalubrity practices is also a constant that is apparent in the discourses of the respondents, as one informant states: "Women are more sanitation agents than men in domestic practices and in public and private services in the city" (Head of household, August 2022). For example, in the contracts for cleaning the administrative buildings awarded to the companies, women are essentially the most represented in this task. Men are virtually absent and see cleaning as a socially assigned role for women. The work of sweeping/cleaning is thus seen as a gendered task, assigned primarily to women. This view is shared by the following interviewee:

'At home, it is very rare to see the Mister sweeping the house or the yard, it is a task generally attributed to women. For example, the green brigade, created to take care of the cleanliness of the city of Ouagadougou, is made up mostly, if not exclusively, of women (Institutional actor in charge of the environment, Ouagadougou, August 2022).

In another trajectory of analysis, women are more involved in family education, in cleanliness and hygiene education. Education is the primary instance of structuring the child's future personality. From this point of view, women are the main actors in the transformation of the child so that the latter's actions are marked by a basic environmental awareness and an attachment to urban unhealthiness.

In fact, women are both upstream and downstream of urban sanitation/insalubrity. Although certain domestic sanitation practices of women are more detrimental to the urban environment, it is important to emphasize that they are, paradoxically, the main actors in formalized sanitation activities in the city of Ouagadougou. This is the case with the "green brigade" and the companies involved in urban hygiene and sanitation, in which women are affiliated and strongly represented.

### ***3.3. The Use of Sanitation Equipment Reveals Social Relations of Domination Between the Sexes***

In addition to the differentiated involvement of men and women in urban sanitation practices, the equipment and materials used for the work reflect social differentiations. When asked what the respondents think of the population's behavior with regard to the urban environment, most of the answers put forward the absence of a real sanitation policy, coupled with the prevalence of uncivil behavior on the part of city dwellers. In addition, the responses highlight the greater involvement of women in the preservation of the urban

environment, even though they are more inclined to use simple or even rudimentary technologies and equipment than men.

The observation in the city of Ouagadougou is that men drive trucks and tricycles to remove waste, while women very often do so with the help of donkey-drawn carts (Head of household, Ouagadougou, August 2022).

As can be seen, the reflexivity of the researcher and the realities of the field make it possible to understand that in the context of waste collection, women generally use used containers, brooms, wheelbarrows, or at most donkey-drawn carts. The men, on the other hand, use emptying tanks, dump trucks and even tractors, reflecting a sexual division of labor and technologies used to preserve the urban environment.

A more detailed analysis shows that the inappropriate treatment of urban waste is dependent on the gender-specific use of materials and equipment for the preservation of the urban environment. Consubstantial connections can be made between the precariousness of the equipment used by women and the inappropriate disposal and incineration of waste. This has harmful effects on the environment and human health.

The complexity of urban sanitation beyond the problem of "gendered" equipment is partly due to social perceptions of responsibility for this work. In the words of respondents, "the public authorities have a responsibility to ensure urban sanitation. We already pay taxes for this on our bills" (head of household, Ouagadougou, August 2022). This means that waste management, disposal and storage are seen as a political problem. The attitude of the interlocutor mentioned in the verbatim responds to a dialectical and contradictory vocation of the actors' practices when he finds that he already pays the sanitation taxes through his water and electricity bills.

In other words, by dumping wastewater on the public highway, emptying septic tanks in the middle of the street at night, blocking rainwater drainage gutters and using them as garbage cans or sewers, city dwellers express their uncivil behavior and show that they do not care about hygiene and cleanliness awareness campaigns or that they are unaware of the regulations in force.

From this point of view, the problem of the preservation of the living environment and the urban environment is not exclusively related to a question of "gendered" equipment. It is rather the result of the conjunction of a set of perceptions and social representations to be deconstructed for the benefit of a sustainable urban development.

## **4. Discussion**

The results of the research show the existence of causal relationships between the internalization of gendered cultural logics and the production perspectives of the city concerned with intergenerational equity. These results are discussed here in the light of the work of other authors. Women are situated both upstream and downstream of urban insalubrity/salubrity through their cultural practices that create dirt, but paradoxically, they are also major actors in urban hygiene and cleanliness. The conception of the position of women in

relation to the urban environment makes Verschuur (2007) [24] say that "Women (...) are particularly affected by the degradation of the environment and the urban habitat. In the emergency, and in front of the lack of public services, women intervene actively, in a more or less organized way, in the basic movements to claim, resist, propose solutions" [24] (p. 14).

In the same trajectory of analysis and according to [26], women are more responsible for and more concerned with health problems and, consequently, with sanitation, unhealthy water, urban space and ambient pollution. These observations are consistent with those already made by Hainard & Verschuur (2003, p. 534) [15], who show that women respond to urban problems differently from men in that "they (...) know how to organize themselves to improve the environment and safety, and to initiate and develop services (health, childcare, water, waste recycling, construction, transport)". However, compared to men, they are forced to use simple, even rudimentary materials and equipment in their efforts to preserve the urban environment. This situation is a revealing indicator of what Bourdieu (1998, p. 124) [6] calls "the perpetuation of social relations of domination between the sexes" and a reflection of their subordinate position in society.

The author finds that the regularities of the social order exclude women from noble tasks, assigning them inferior places and tedious, lowly, petty tasks. In addition, it deplors the fact that in their strategy for managing the urban environment, women's know-how is scarcely valued or considered at its true worth, while the tasks they perform are increasingly physically demanding in the face of non-dynamic technology.

The lack of environmental awareness, the inappropriate management of waste and the prevalence of unhealthy practices seem to be justified by social representations of public space in the city. In this perspective, "according to popular conceptions, the characteristic of public space is that it belongs to no one. It is therefore, according to custom, freely accessible" [5] (p. 147). The urban problems diagnosed during the Assises de Saint Louis are part of this perspective. The issue of the management of urban space in its dimension of anarchic occupation of the public highway by the informal sector, the insecurity linked to the electricity networks, the non-respect of the urban plan and the irregular occupation of spaces were mentioned.

This situation corroborates what Borlandi & *al.* (2005) [4] consider to be major obstacles to the preservation of the urban environment, due to anarchic installations that obstruct stormwater runoff. From this point of view, "the worst thing is not the existence of such unacceptable behavior, but the silence of the municipal authorities. It is therefore urgent to put an end to this rampant anarchy.

This means that the behavior of urban actors is structural and based on counterproductive social logic. From this point of view, starting from a socio-anthropological approach to the practices of actors in relation to sanitation, it seems important to us to consider, with Olivier de Sardan (1995) [20], the anthropological perspective of sanitation issues, which

involve an approach based on the intertwining of social, political, economic and cultural logics, the analysis of which constitutes a classic object of development anthropology.

In connection with this anthropological insight, we can mention a cultural consideration that is strongly rooted in the mentality of city dwellers, as mentioned by Biehler (2006, p. 74) [3] in an analysis of Urban Renewal based on the city of Ouagadougou. For this author, certain considerations are an obstacle to the production of the modern city. This is the case, for example, with family graves in courtyards, which are an obstacle to urban renewal. These burials reveal the difficulties of adjusting between the traditional way of life and city life, marked by the constant transformation of urban space through urban planning operations. To do this, people will have to adapt to the new rules of the modern city.

In addition to the cultural considerations used to justify the prevalence of practices that are out of step with the production of sustainable cities, the absence of a real political will and the laxity of public authorities in anticipating actions are also highlighted. To this end, the therapy to be considered, as recommended by many authors [9, 14, 26], could be based on real city planning actions.

In this respect, it's worth noting that the particularity of the urbanization process in African cities in general, and in Burkina Faso in particular, is centered on the abusive consumption of public land, one of the consequences of which is urban sprawl [17]. For a very long time, subdivisions were the measure adopted by the State to satisfy social demand for housing and other socio-economic infrastructures. Indeed, of all the urban development operations recognized by urban specialists, subdivision has emerged as the preferred urban development technique for decision-makers in Burkina Faso. With this in mind, Burgel (1993) [7], in his work on "The city of today", finds that there is room for doubt as to the effectiveness of urban policies, and disapproves of this social reality in the following terms :

"The great disorder of all urban planning (...) stems from the naïve belief that political voluntarism and implementing regulations alone can bring about social and spatial reactions, when at best they can only correct or influence them" [7] (p. 193). As we can see, responsibilities are shared when it comes to the internalization of gendered social logics and their consequences for the construction of sustainable cities. From a sociology of public action perspective, both institutional and societal actors need to rethink their actions with regard to urban norms and codifications. This can be achieved by reinforcing coercive and punitive measures, or through communication aimed at changing the behavior of urban actors.

## 5. Conclusion

This research has made it possible to establish the consubstantial relationships between the internalization of gendered social logics and the production of a sustainable city. The notion of sustainable city, understood as an offshoot of sustainable development, is based on the three pillars of

environmental, social and economic sustainability. Our analysis, which focused on the environmental and social dimensions, shows that the cultural constructs incorporated by the actors are a handicap to sustainable urban development. This is the case of the shared counterproductive representations according to which "man must not touch the broom", or "dishwashing or laundry water must not be poured into the toilet". In the context of rental housing, the prohibition of cultural practices relating to the washing of the dead or other initiation rites, the burial of the placenta after childbirth, the prohibition of food and alcoholic beverages on the occasion of happy or unhappy events, engender the proliferation of spontaneous and precarious housing in the peri-urban area. All of these considerations stimulate peri-urbanization and the fragmented city, contrary to the prospects of urban sustainability. However, cultural constructions are not the only explanatory factors. The practices that are not marked by urban sustainability are also the result of a lack of foresight on the part of the public authorities and of insufficient rigour in the application of urban regulations. To do this, a pedagogical approach coupled with a pedagogy of the approach must be carried out for a culture of environmental awareness at the base and the internalization of urban standards.

## References

- [1] Aloko-N'Guessan, J. (dir.) (2010). *Villes et organisation de l'espace en Afrique*, Karthala, Paris.
- [2] Bardin, L. (1977). *L'Analyse de contenu*, PUF, Paris.
- [3] Biehler A. (2006). Renouveau urbain et Marginalisation. Le cas d'habitants du centre-ville de Ouagadougou – Burkina Faso, Armand Colin | « *Revue Tiers Monde* », 2006/1 n° 185, pp. 57-78, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-tiers-monde-2006-1-page-57.htm>
- [4] Borlandi, M., Boudon, R., Cherkaoui, M., Valade, B. (2005). *Dictionnaire de la pensée sociologique*, PUF, Paris.
- [5] Bouju, J., (2009). « L'assainissement et la gouvernance urbaine », in Atlani-Duault Laëtitia et Vidal Laurent (dir.), *Anthropologie de l'aide humanitaire et du développement: des pratiques aux savoirs, des savoirs aux pratiques*, Armand Colin, Paris, pp. 123-154.
- [6] Bourdieu, P. (1998). *La domination masculine*, Seuil, Paris.
- [7] Burgel, G. (1993). *La ville aujourd'hui*, collection pluriel, Hachette, Paris.
- [8] Choay, F. (1980). *La règle et le modèle*, Le Seuil, Paris.
- [9] Coquery-Vidrovitch, C. (1993). *Histoire des villes d'Afrique noire: des origines à la colonisation*, Albin Michel, Paris.
- [10] Dorier-Apprill, É. (2002), « Gestion de l'environnement urbain et municipalisation en Afrique de l'Ouest: le cas de Mopti (Mali) », *Autre part*, 2002/1 (n° 21), pp. 119-134.
- [11] Gendreau, F., Gubry, P. et Veron, J. (dir.) (1996). *Population et environnement dans les pays du Sud*, KARTHALA, Paris.
- [12] Godard, F. (2001), *la ville en mouvement*, Découvertes Gallimard, Paris.
- [13] Godard, X. (dir.), (1994), *Les transports dans les villes du Sud. La recherche de solutions durables*, KARTHALA, Paris.
- [14] Grafmeyer, Y. (2000). *Sociologie urbaine*, Nathan, Paris.
- [15] Hainard, F. et Verschuur, C. (2003). « Relations de genre et mouvements urbains de base », *Revue internationale des sciences sociales*, 2003/3 (n° 177), pp. 529-544.
- [16] Le Meur, P. Y. (2002). *Approche qualitative de la question foncière. Note méthodologique*. Document de travail de l'UR 095 IRD, Montpellier, n°4.
- [17] Lebaron, F. (2014). *Les 300 mots de la sociologie*, Dunod, Paris.
- [18] Levy, A. (2009). « La "ville durable." Paradoxes et limites d'une doctrine d'urbanisme émergente. Le cas Seine Arche », *Esprit*, 2009/12, (n° 12), pp. 136-153.
- [19] Olivier De Sardan, J.-P. (2003). *L'enquête socio-anthropologique de terrain, Enquête Collective Rapide d'Identification des conflits et des groupes Stratégiques*, Etudes et travaux n° 13, LASDEL.
- [20] Olivier De Sardan, J.-P. (1995). *Anthropologie et développement, essai en socio-anthropologie du changement social*, Editions KARTHALA, Paris.
- [21] Quivy, R. et Van Campenhoudt, L. (1995), *Manuel de recherche en sciences sociales*, Paris, Dunod.
- [22] Sigué, M., et Diabougba, Y. P. (2021). « Réflexions sur de pratiques socioculturelles en marge de la durabilité urbaine: Ouagadougou en exemple », *Revue Internationale Dônni*, n°1, Volume 1, pp. 357-369.
- [23] Sorignet, A. (2013). *Des éco quartiers à la ville durable: Appropriation et diffusion des principes de l'urbanisme durable à Toulouse métropole*. Mémoire de recherche, Institut d'Études Politiques de Toulouse.
- [24] Verschuur, C. (dir.), (2007). *Genre, mouvements populaires urbains et environnement*, L'Harmattan, Paris.
- [25] Vrain, P. (2003). « Ville durable et transports: automobile, environnement et comportements individuels », *Innovations*, 2003/2 (no 18), p. 91-112.
- [26] Yapi-Diahou, A. (2001). « Politique urbaine en Afrique: les normes en question », in Winer G., Chauveau J. P., Courade G., Coussy J., Le Pape M. et Levy M., *Inégalités et politiques publiques en Afrique: Pluralité des normes et jeux d'acteurs*, KARTHALA et IRD, Paris, pp. 225-241.